**Wealth by Andrew Carnegie**

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***This article would become famous under the title, “Gospel of Wealth.”***

Head Note: *Andrew Carnegie, one of the self-made rich during the late 1800s, had established a valuable steel business near Pittsburgh, PA. He had also recently experienced the shock and public anger from the Johnstown Flood, for which he was partially blamed. Written by Andrew Carnegie in 1889, “Wealth” describes Carnegie’s beliefs about the role that the wealthy should play in society.*

The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, so that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers… The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us to-day measures the change which has come with civilization.

The price we pay for this salutary change is, no doubt, great. We assemble thousands of operatives in the factory, in the mine, and in the counting-house, of whom the employer can know little or nothing, and to whom the employer is little better than a myth. All intercourse between them is at an end. Rigid Castes are formed, and, as usual, mutual ignorance breeds mutual distrust. Each Caste is without sympathy for the other, and ready to credit anything disparaging in regard to it. Under the law of competition, the employer of thousands is forced into the strictest economies, among which the rates paid to labor figure prominently, and often there is friction between the employer and the employed, between capital and labor, between rich and poor. Human society loses homogeneity…

In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to use the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all. Neither the individual nor the race is improved by alms-giving. Those worthy of assistance, except in rare cases, seldom require assistance… But the amount which can be wisely given by the individual for individuals is necessarily limited by his lack of knowledge of the circumstances connected with each. He is the only true reformer who is as careful and as anxious not to aid the unworthy as he is to aid the worthy, and, perhaps, even more so, for in alms-giving more injury is probably done by rewarding vice than by relieving virtue.

Thus is the problem of Rich and Poor to be solved. The laws of accumulation will be left free; the laws of distribution free. Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor; entrusted for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community far better than it could or would have done for itself. The best minds will thus have reached a stage in the development of the race in which it is clearly seen that there is no mode of disposing of surplus wealth creditable to thoughtful and earnest men into whose hands it flows save by using it year by year for the general good. This day already dawns. …[Y]et the man who dies leaving behind many millions of available wealth, which was his to administer during life, will pass away "unwept, unhonored, and unsung”…Of such as these the public verdict will then be : "The man who dies thus rich dies disgraced."

Such, in my opinion, is the true Gospel concerning Wealth, obedience to which is destined some day to solve the problem of the Rich and the Poor, and to bring ' Peace on earth, among men Good-Will."

Source:[*Wealth, by Andrew Carnegie*](http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ABQ7578-0148-88)*, North American Review Vol.148, Issue 391 pp. 653–665, June 1889.*

Online, 2013*:* [*http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/rbannis1/AIH19th/Carnegie.html*](http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/rbannis1/AIH19th/Carnegie.html)