

## **The Christian's Influence**

*(Original Idea for this Article  
came from Frank L. Cox, Deceased)*

An individual's influence is witnessed everyday and is therefore very important for discussion. Some influence people or events with their wealth, prestige, or political prowess. Christian's are to influence by means of the Word of God and their actions. The way we live influences those around us. An individual who professes to be a Christian but practices the same lifestyle as those in the world is a hypocrite. One who professes to be a Christian but does not attend Bible Classes, Worship Services, and other Scriptural opportunities for spiritual growth tells others, by their actions, that those assemblies are not important. A person who gets up and leaves in the middle of a sermon or lecture, without good reason, tells those around him, by his actions, that the information being presented is not crucial and therefore unneeded.

As recorded in the Book of Matthew, Jesus metaphorically portrays the proper example and influence that His followers should show forth.

1. "Ye are the salt of the Earth" (Mat. 5:13).

Salt enhances the flavor of certain foods. In some cases, the salt is the only quality which makes a particular food palatable. Salt is also used as a preservative, which is of great import to the context of Jesus' statement. Those in Jesus' day did not have freezers or refrigerators to keep food fresh for lengthy periods of time. Salt was therefore a key ingredient to preserving food and sustaining life. In like manner, Christian's can, by their example and influence, make life a little more palatable in the midst of an ungodly world. The Christian's influence can also preserve the earth from total moral corruption and chaos. Remember also, it is the faithful Christian's prayer that God hears. Without such influence, the world would be a very miserable place indeed.

2. "Ye are the light of the world" (Mat. 5:14).

The Word of God "is a lamp unto my feet, and a **light** unto my path" (Psa. 119:105, emphasis B.G.). Christians are, therefore, the light to the world because we spread that light by teaching the Word to others and by living our lives in accordance with God's Laws. There are many examples and influences shared throughout the world on a daily basis, but there is only one influence that can lead them to salvation. Salvation can only be found in the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17) and the world must be led to that light by the good example and teaching of faithful Christians.

3. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven" (Mat. 13:33).

Though the Kingdom of Christ, the Church of Christ, had not yet been established at the time this parable was spoken (see Acts 2:38, 47; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9), it is that one body (Eph. 4:4) that can be likened unto leaven today. This parable is therefore prophetic of

the influence that Christians, members of the Church of Christ, have on their surroundings. "Leaven is used metaphorically in the Bible of an influence that can permeate whatever it touches" (Nelson's Bible Dictionary). Many believe that the only way their influence can be effective is to be loud and overt. In addition, others believe that as long as they are quiet and hidden, their influence is not observed at all. This parable teaches that the attitude and example, in word and practice (cf. Col. 3:17), can be of great influence though it be silent and seemingly undetected until the point it brings forth a certain result. No one can see leaven in bread; it is only after the bread rises (the result) that the proof can be evinced that leaven was present. Paul stated, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). The influence of Paul and Apollos could only be seen after an individual obeyed the Gospel, but the influence of those men was present long before the resulting action of obedience. Paul also stated, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). Just as a little bad influence can cause a great deal of damage (1 Cor. 5:1-7), a little good influence can lead many to glorify God in Heaven (Mat. 5:16).

Our example, whether good or bad, is seen daily. Let us live our lives in accordance with God's Word so that we can glorify Him and influence others to do the same.

- *Brad Green*