

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

February 11, 2014

Issue No. 131 Mark Aites, Editor

Influence

"The humblest individual exerts from influence, either for good or evil, upon others." – Henry Ward Beecher

"Hold fast to the Bible. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization and to this we must look as our guide in the future." – Ulysses S. Grant

"Influence is to be measured, not by the extent of the surface it covers, but by its kind." – William Ellery Channing

"The most important influence in my childhood was my father." – DeForest Kelley

"Public opinion is a permeating influence, and it exacts obedience to itself; it requires us to drink other men's thoughts, to speak other men's words, to follow other men's habits." – Walter Bagehot

Everyone in this world has influence. Someone once said, "If you can't be good, at least you can always serve as a bad example."

The apostle Paul pointed out, "For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself" (Rom. 14:7). We interact with people all the time. True, there were those who sought to retreat to monasteries to live an ascetic lifestyle, but that is an extreme case and contrary to the very idea of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15).

We don't like to think of the idea that there is a good influence and a bad influence. Be very careful. Many a Christian has thought they would influence others and bring them to Christ, only to have the influence of the lost pull them down and away from Christ. There is an old analogy that we would be wise to consider. If you have a man standing on a table, and a man standing on the floor next to the table; it is easier for the man on the floor to pull the man on the table down, than it is for the man on the table to pull the man on the floor up.

It is interesting that the word *influence* is not found in Scripture, yet the concept is unmistakable. There is a great compliment paid to righteous Abel: "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks" (Heb. 11:4). Isn't it amazing to consider that even though Abel has been dead for centuries, his influence for righteousness lives on!

What kind of influence are you providing for others?