

CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE
CONQUERING EVIL
I. SAM. 19:20-21.

This service has been looked forward to for many weeks. We are indeed delighted to have you here to pray with us, to scotch for us, and to hold up our hands. Now right at the outset let us begin to think of Christian or righteous influence conquering evil.

Nature's forces carry their atmosphere. The sun gushes forth light unquenchable, coals throw off heat, violets are larger in influence than bulk, and spices crowd the house with sweet odors. Man also has his atmosphere. He is a force bearer and a force producer. It was said of Kossuth, "We must first recon with the orator's physical bulk and then carry the measuring line around his atmosphere." Thinking of evil emanating from a bad man Milton made Appolon's nostrils to emit flames. A man's personality is the center of out reaching influences. If light is in him he shines, if evil he shades. If his heart glows with love he warms, if frozen with selfishness he chills, if corrupt he poisons; if pure hearted he cleanses.

We watch with wonder the apparent flight of the sun through the heavens glowing upon dead planets, shortening winter bringing summer with birds, leaves and fruits. But that is not half so wonderful and thrilling as the passage of a human heart, glowing and sparkling with ten thousand effects as it moves through life. The soul like the sun has its atmosphere and is over against its fellows for light, warmth, and transformation.

In our lesson tonight we see where Saul (King Saul) sent his messengers to arrest David who was with Samuel over at a school for prophets. The officers hearing the prophet decided to be the good mans protector rather than to capture. He sent a second and a third time and all of them remained to prophesy. Saul became angry and went himself to see what was the trouble. But when he rushed in and saw the courage, the fidelity, and integrity Saul was over come and he pulled off the royal robes for the day and the night and prophesied until people asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Righteous influence overcoming evil. King Agrippa sitting in royal splendor on his throne was afraid when Paul lifting his chains, fronted him with words of righteousness and judgement. Carlyle tells that in 1848 when the riot was in Paris, the mob swept down the streets blazing with cannon, killed the soldiers, and spiked the mouths of the cannons to be stopped a few blocks beyond by an old white haired man who uncovered his head and signalled for silence. The leader of the mob said, "It is Dela Eure. Sixty years of pure life is about to address you." And just here let us remember that stout hearted Pilate, with a legion of mailed soldiers to protect him, trembled and quaked before his silent Prisoner--Jesus. How wonderful if we might have written on our tombs, "HIS PRESENCE MADE BAD MEN GOOD."

But mans atmosphere is equally powerful to blight and to shrivel. Not time but man is the great destroyer. History is full of the ruins of cities and empires. Think what we would have to enjoy to day if the statutes and temples of the Greeks, the broad roads and massy walls of the Romans, and the architecture of the Middle ages had not been ground to dust by the rage of man. Disobedience to law has made cities a heap, so that man is the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noon day. This is all bad but nothing to compare to the wrecked lives and homes

that we see in every community on God's green earth to day. How we need the spirit of goodness as it was in Christ Jesus to become power in our lives to the transforming of the bad even in our own community. Those who are ever awake to keep that which is evil before our citizenship.

We may have that power if we will to have it. Witness the conversation of Stratten with the drunken bookbinder. Now we know that book binder as John B. Gough the apostle of temperance. Witness Moffat's words that changed David Livingstone, the weaver, to David Livingstone the Savior of Africa.

Lord Shaftesbury said, "When I feel age creeping upon me I am deeply grieved, for I can not bear to go away and leave the world with so much misery in it." He liberated the boys and girls who were slaves in the mines and factories. He would be seen out at midnight, after parliament had closed its sessions, seeking for prodigals sleeping under bridges and some times would carry twenty of them to his shelter. No wonder when he died that the boys from the ragged school raised a banner on which were the words, "I was hungry and naked and ye fed me."

We have our unpurposed influence either for good or bad. Suspicious People fill all their circles with envy and jealousy. Moody men distribute gloom and depression. Hopelessness drains off high spirits as cold iron takes heat from the hand.

But the apostle walking along healed people on whom his shadow fell he being unconscious of it. Jesus healed people who even touched His garment. Your influence will also last after you are gone to heaven.

The greatest example of influence is Jesus. Acceptance of Him, Obedience to His voice, and companionship with Him are the keys of power to an influence that will conquer evil.

Working among the poor of London, an author searched out the life career of an old apple woman. Events had appointed her to poverty, cold, and two humble rooms in a tenement. But there were three little orphans sleeping in an ash box whose lot was harder. She found them took them home with her and cared for them. During forty two years she reared some twenty orphans. The Greek poet said that men knew when the goddess visited Thebes because of the blessings she left behind. As she passed by the tree that the lightning had struck she paused and the wood bine sprang up and covered its nakedness. She lingered by the stagnant pool and it became a flowing spring. Oh beautiful prophecy fulfilled 2000 years later in the person of the old apple woman, who following Jesus carried an atmosphere that sweetened bitter hearts and made evil into good.



Amen