

Sermons  
New Testament  
I Timothy  
2:1-4

Date written: July 29, 1950

Theme: Christian Influence on Leaders

Proposition: Christians can influence leaders for Christ and peace effectively through inclusion of them in prayers and other devotions.

Text: I Timothy 2:4 -- "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Sources: Macartney's Illustrations, pp. 267 & 270.

Places and dates preached:

*Cranston  
& Kennerly, Mass., July 30, '50*

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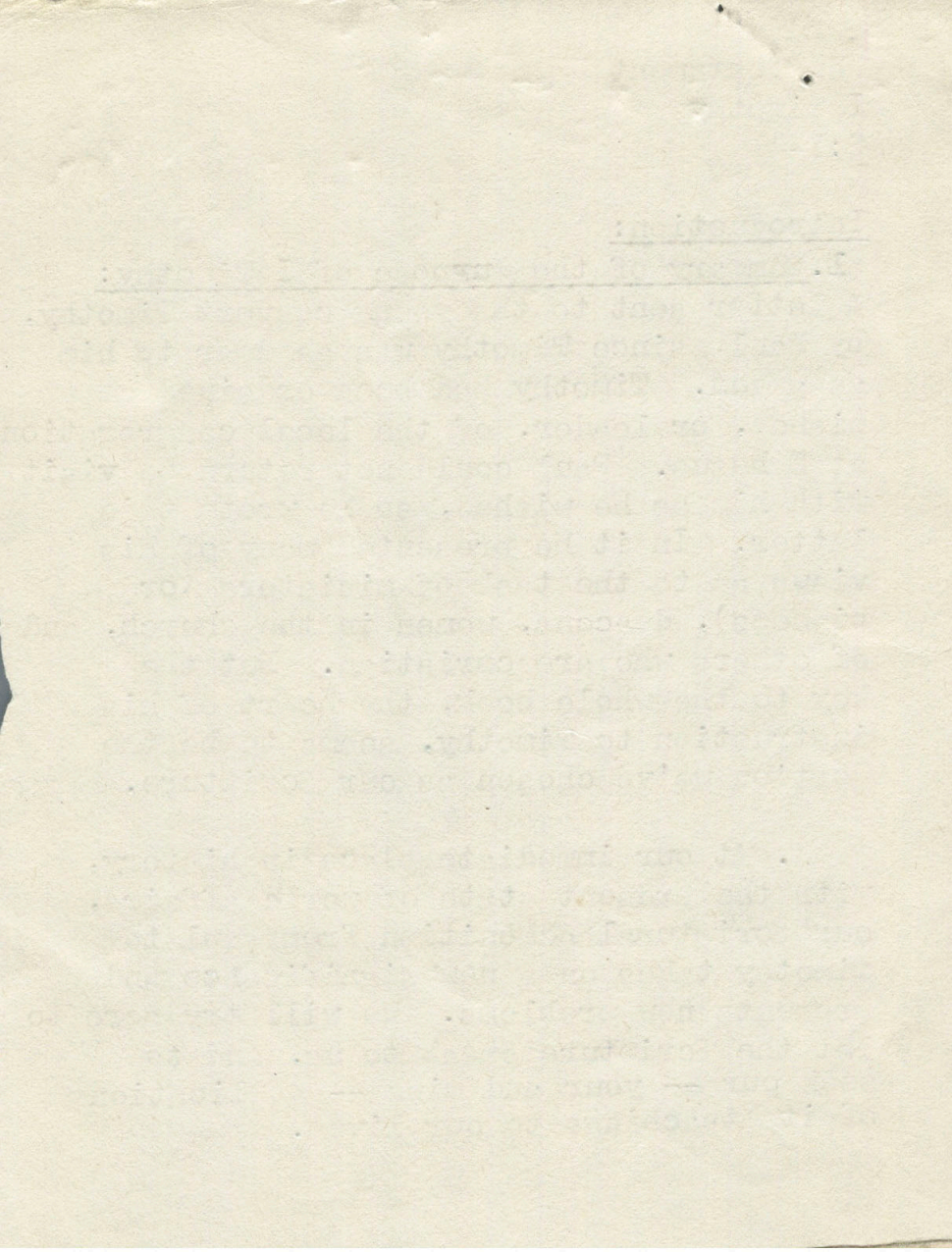
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Introduction:

1. Summary of the purpose of I Timothy:

A letter sent to the young convert Timothy, by Paul, since Timothy was as dear to him as a son. Timothy had been ordained a bishop, or leader, of the local congregation at Ephesus. Paul could not return to visit with him as he wished, so he wrote this letter. In it he presented many of his views as to the task of ministers (or bishops), deacons, women in the church, and of others who are christian. But the key to the whole book, the heart of his instruction to Timothy, seems to be the portion we've chosen as our Scripture.

2. At our immediate place in history, with the present state of world affairs, our Scriptural admonition from Paul to Timothy takes on a new significance and presents new problems. We will try here to let the Scripture speak to us, and to seek our -- your and mine -- application of its teachings to our lives.



I. The effort we should expend in behalf of others.

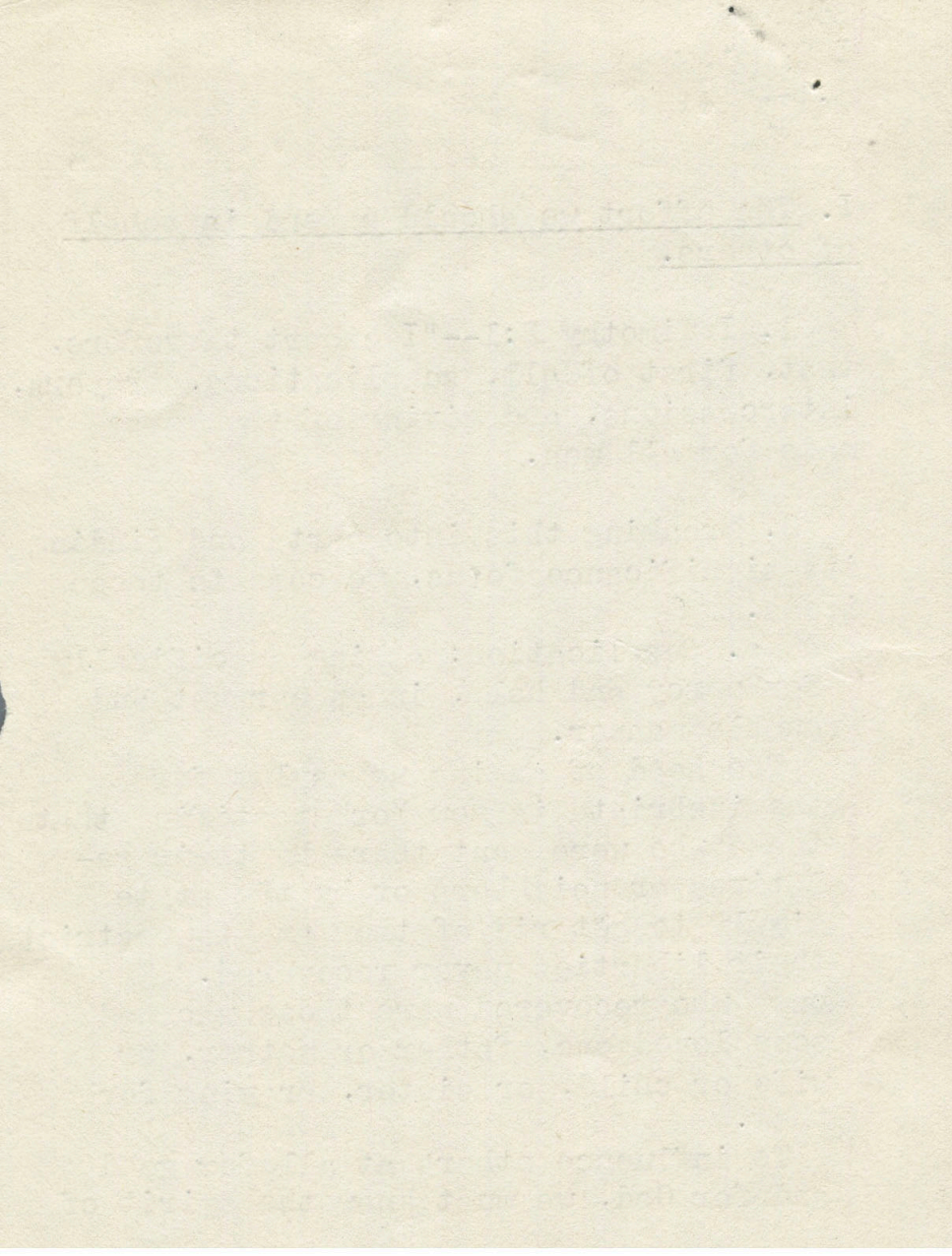
1. I Timothy 2:1--"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men."

2. Breaking this into parts and finding its significance for us, we come to these ideas.

a. Supplication: asking specifically for mercy and help, in an earnest and humble manner.

The head of an insane asylum for the inebriate in New York testified that those who were sent there by their relatives or neighbors or by the state simply to get rid of them and to restrict their liberties never recovered. The ones who recovered were those who had some loved one, father or mother, or wife or child, or sister, praying for them.

To influence others at all for good and for God, we must know the spirit of

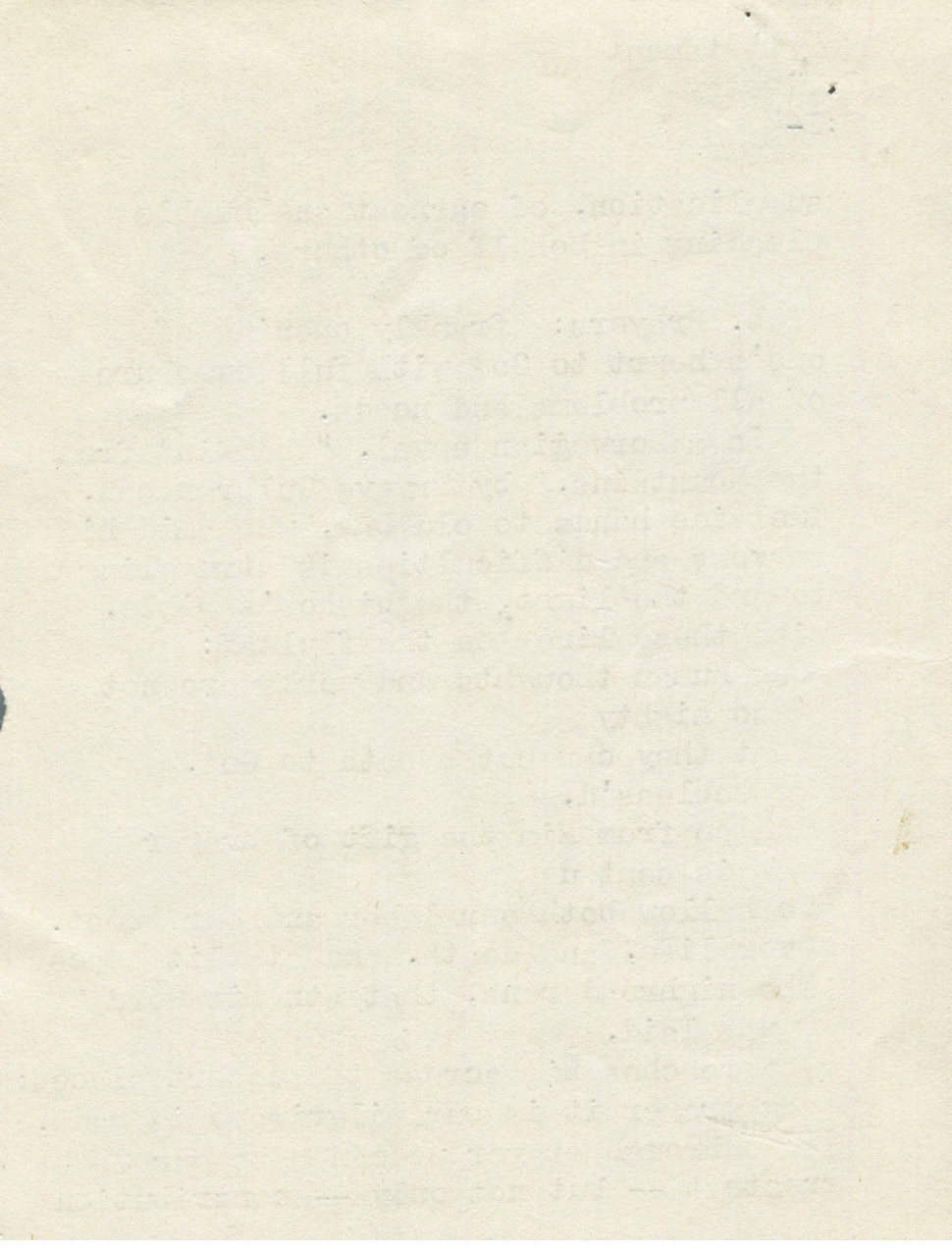


supplication, of earnest and humble pleading in behalf of others.

b. Prayers: frankly opening of one's heart to God with full exposure of all problems and needs.

In a Norwegian novel, "The Wind from the Mountains," by Trygve Gulbrandsen, Adelaide hands to old Dag, who amid his sorrows and difficulties is struggling toward the light, the bishop's Bible, with these lines on the flyleaf:

Our human thoughts and works are not  
so mighty  
That they can cut a path to God,  
unbless'd,  
And so from Him the gift of prayer  
is sent us  
To hallow both our labor and our quest.  
Over life, and death, and starlit spaces  
The highroad runs, that atk His word  
was laid,  
And reaches Him across the desert places;  
By prayer it is our pilgrimage is made.  
Through prayer we can make our  
greatest -- but not only -- contribution





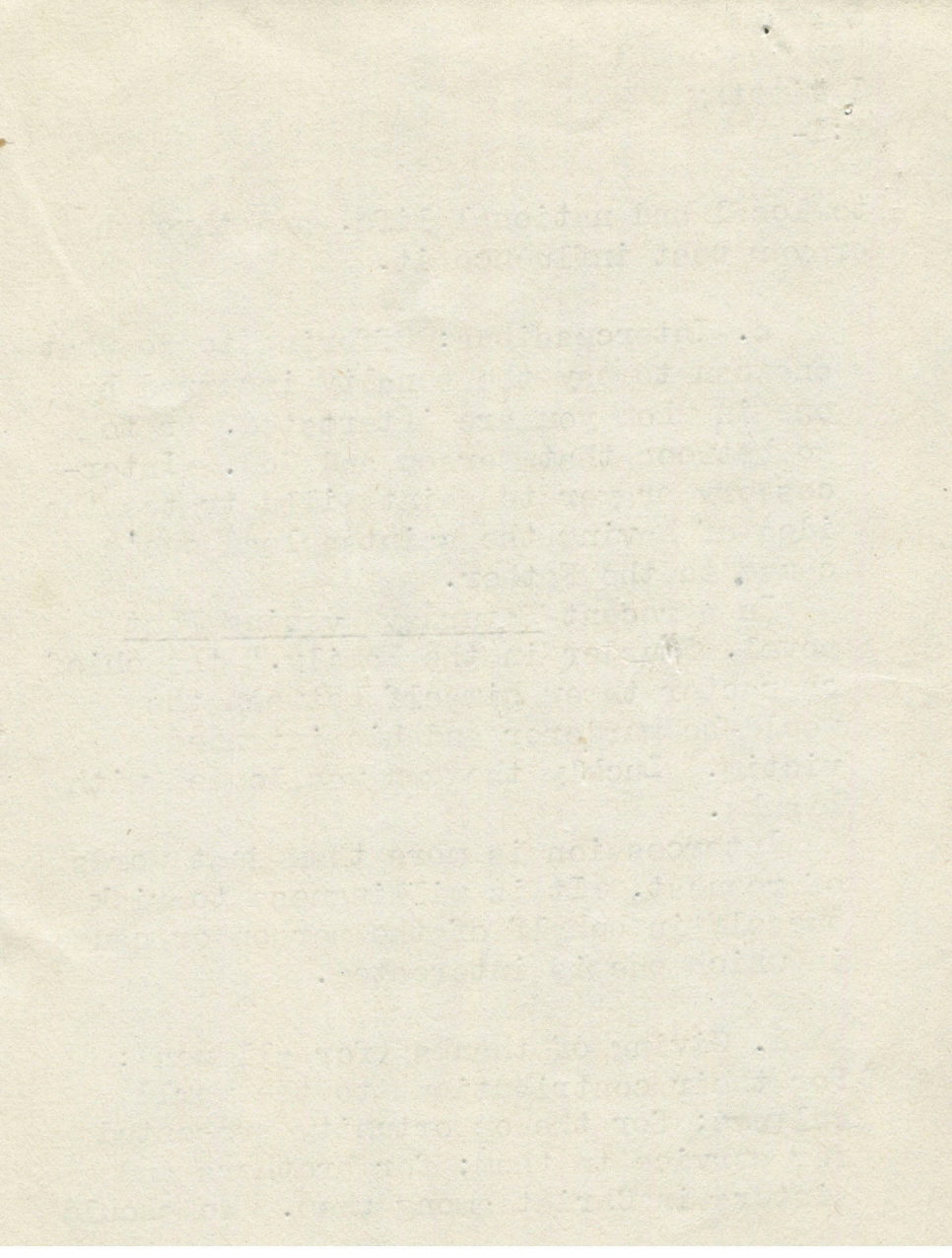
to local and national life, and through prayer best influence it.

c. Intercessions: Offering to do what one can to pay the penalty incurred by one in whom you are interested, or to go between that person and God. Intercessory prayer to saints illustrates the idea of having the saints plead one's cause to the Father.

In a recent Saturday Evening Post novel, "Murder in the Family," the chief character threw himself between the would-be murderer and his intended victim. Luckily the gun was loaded with blanks.

Intercession is more than just words of request. It is willingness to risk oneself in behalf of the person or cause in which one is interested.

d. Giving of thanks (for all men): For their contributions to the world culture; for the opportunity presented for service to them; for brothers and sisters in Christ among them. We should



recognize good wherever we see it, even in Stalin and among the Russians, and give thanks. <sup>informed</sup>

Many ~~former~~ observers of the Russian scene over the last 30 years say that the Russian people have in those 30 years come from the depths of greatest poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, and superstition to the position of a modern, scientific 20th-century nation. This transition has been made faster than in any other nation's history. Of course, we can't approve of or believe in much of the basic philosophy or in many of the methods responsible for this advance. Nevertheless, we should thank God for the good that has been done in millions of Russian lives. Especially should we give thanks that in spite of ruthless methods, the Russian government has been able to do much good.

In similar manner we should endeavor to be truly thankful in our hearts to God for good accomplished by any nation or leaders, while perhaps still concerned about their methods and philosophy.

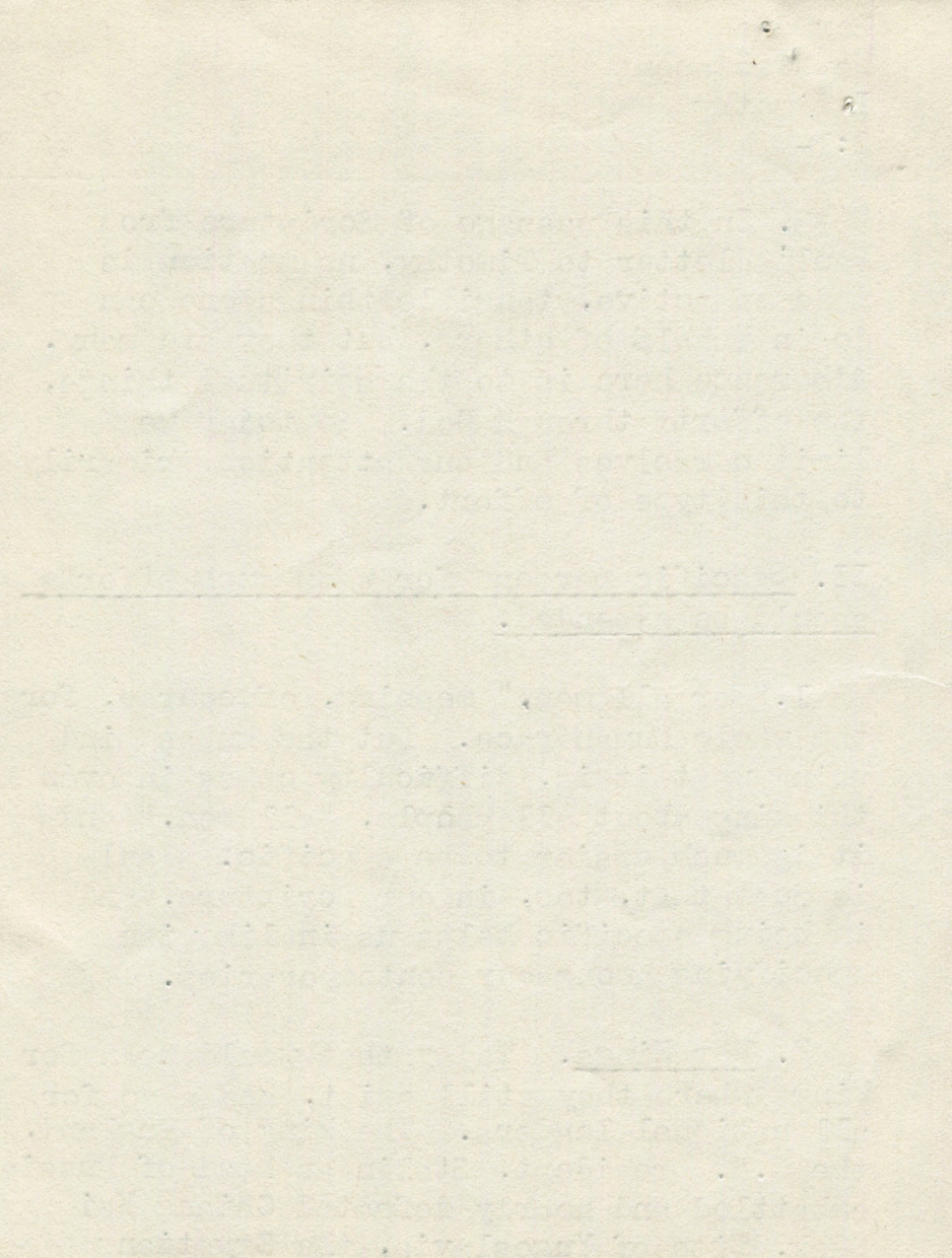


3. In this passage of Scripture from Paul's letter to Timothy, no mention is made of active, tangible things one can do in behalf of others, but they are many. Adherence here is to the spiritual things, the efforts through God. So today we limit ourselves and our attention primarily to this type of effort.

II. Specific persons for whom such efforts should be expended.

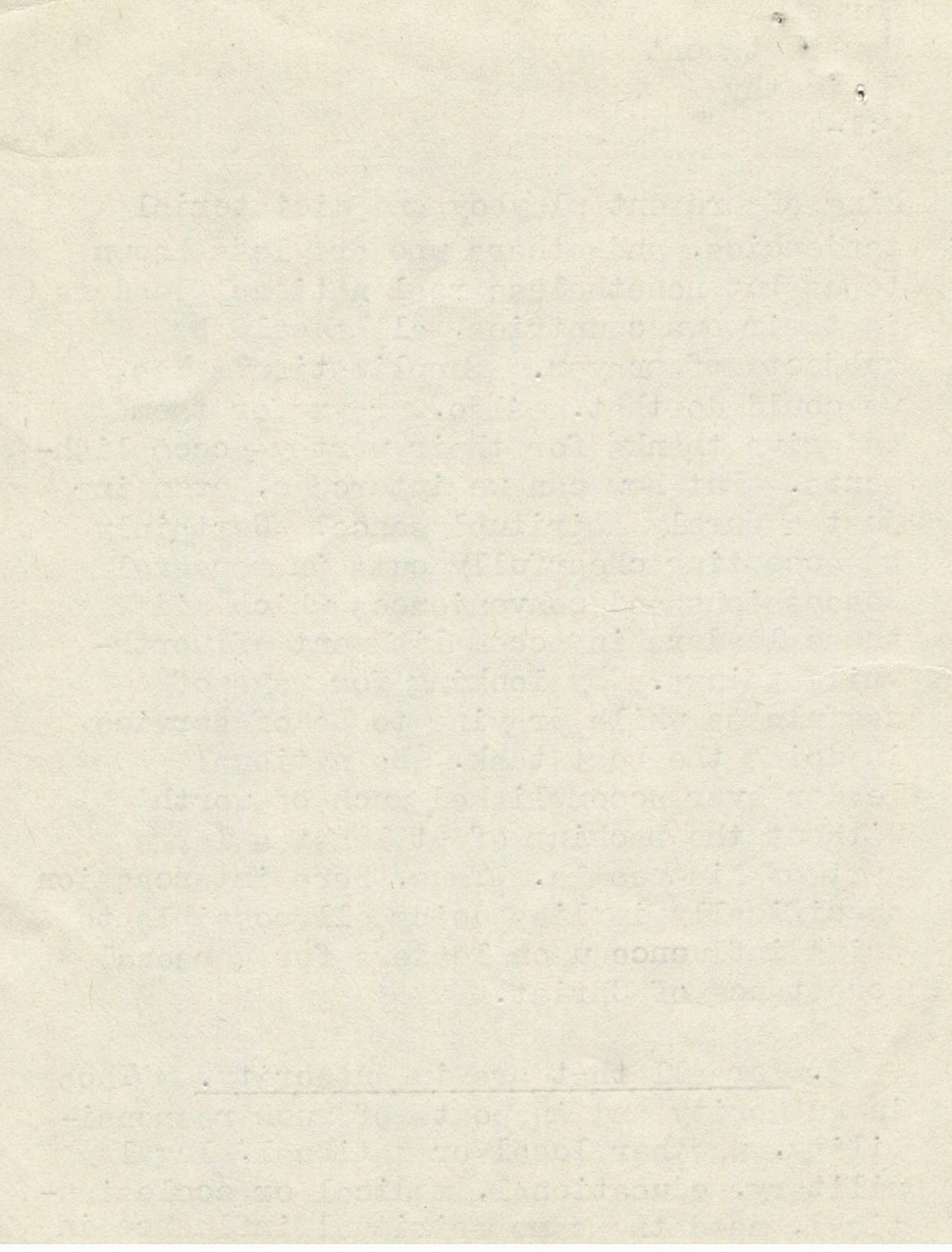
1. "For all men," meaning, of course, for the whole human race. But the human mind being what it is, difficulty comes in even thinking about all people, "all men," and it is much easier to be specific. Paul is just that, too, in our Scripture, and in being specific helps us in likewise specifying among our contemporaries.

2. For Kings. Today that would mean for kings where they still exist, and also for all national leaders. The king of England, the U.S. president, Stalin as head of Russia, embattled and nearly defeated Chiang Kai Chek, Tito of Yugoslavia, the Egyptian



king of present playboy and dictatorial tendencies, and others who are less known to us but nonetheless real national leaders in their own countries, all should be subjects of prayer. Supplication? Yes, we could do that. Also, pray for them and give thanks for their worthy accomplishments. But how can we intercede, even in just a purely spiritual sense? Certainly by accepting cheerfully cuts in personal possessions and conveniences which aid these leaders in accomplishment of worthwhile things. By looking for ways of usefulness while praying to be of service in doing the best task. No national leader ever accomplished much of worth without the backing of at least a large part of his people. Thus, here intercession specifically implies doing all possible to bring influence upon leaders for personal acceptance of Christ.

3. For all that are in authority. Those in authority and in posts of much responsibility, whether local or national, legal military, educational, medical or ecclesiastical, need the same spiritual influence in



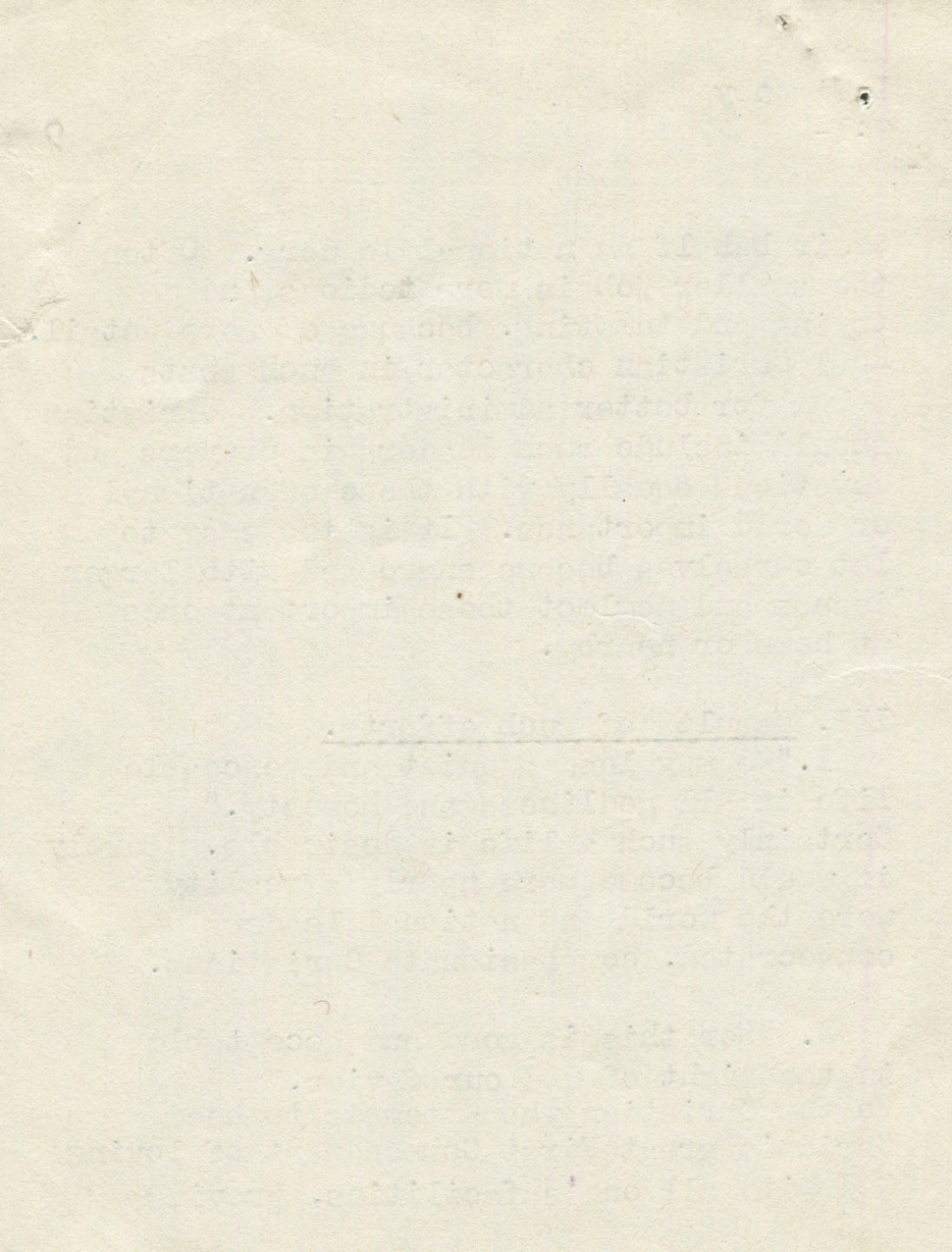


their behalf as national leaders. Often the smaller job is more tedious and trying and tempting, because of more detail. Real Christian character in such posts makes for better administration. Christians should include such leaders in prayers and devotions equally with those of national or world importance. It is too easy to let ourselves become engrossed with larger issues and neglect those important ones at home or nearby.

### III. Results of such efforts.

1. "We may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Certainly such a life is desirable. Surely it would become more nearly a reality were the world and national leaders consecrated, compassionate Christians.

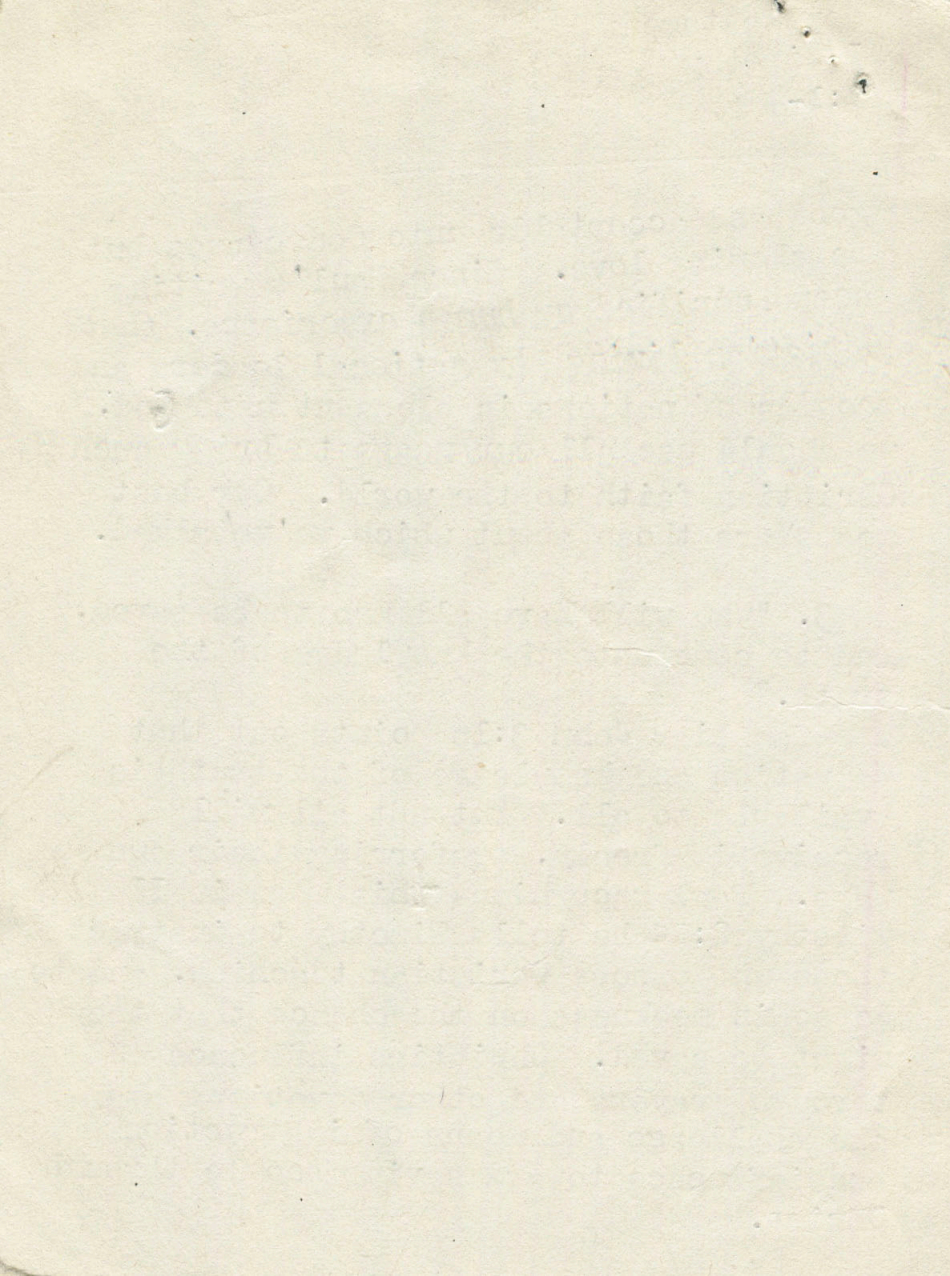
2. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior." To the Christian who attempts to heed Christ's great First Commandment of loving God with all one's faculties, proving



good and acceptable unto God cannot but be showing love. Since Paul's writing seems verified by human experience, that Christian living by national leaders and peoples of nations is pleasant unto God, we should use all our means to bring such *Christian faith* to the world. Our best means are those about which we've talked.

3. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

The familiar John 3:16 points out that salvation and knowledge of the truth is available to all. But not all will receive it freely, preferring their own ways. Paul recognizes this when in II Timothy 2:25 he tells Timothy to instruct those who oppose Christian teaching, and to do so in meekness on the chance that they might be saved. Christian influence through prayers and other devotions are the challenge and means of instruction and influence toward saving people through Christ.



Conclusion:

Christians can influence leaders for Christ and peace effectively through inclusion of them in prayers and other devotions.

Such are by no means the only ways that Christians have at their disposal, but they are very important ones. May we use them to the fullest and help bring peace to the world, Christ to men's hearts, and pleasure to God, who, as our text tells us: "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of truth."

