Influence--A Power for Good or Evil

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.... Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:30-32, NKJV.

The life of Christ was an ever-widening, shoreless influence, an influence that bound Him to God and to the whole human family. Through Christ, God has invested men and women with an influence that makes it impossible for them to live for themselves. Individually we are connected with other human beings, a part of God's great whole, and we stand under mutual obligations. No one can be independent of their fellow beings; for the well-being of each affects others. It is God's purpose that each person shall feel necessary to others' welfare, and seek to promote their happiness.

Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own--an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. Or it may be heavy and chill with the gloom of discontent and selfishness, or poisonous with the deadly taint of cherished sin. By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no one can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither.

If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed.

Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing.--Christ's Object Lessons, 339, 340.