A Network of Virtuous Influences

I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. Psalm 119:63.

Young people desire companionship, and just in proportion to the strength with which their feelings and affections fasten upon those with whom they associate, will be the power of those friends to be either a blessing or a curse to them. Then let parents beware. Let them guard every influence of association. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20). The youth will have associates and will feel their influence....

Wax does not more certainly retain the figure of the seal than does the mind the impressions produced by intercourse and association. The influence is often silent and unconscious, nevertheless it is strong and impressive. If wise and good men and women are the chosen companions, then you put yourself in the direct way of becoming sound in thought, in ideas, and correct in principles. And such intimacies are of highest value in the formation of character. A network of virtuous influences will be woven around you, which the evil one will not be able to break with his seductive wiles....

But let the youth choose the influence of, and become associated with, men and women of bad principles and practices, ... and they are polluted. Silent and unconscious influences weave their sentiments into their lives, become a part of their very existence, and they walk on the very brink of a precipice and sense no danger. They learn to love the words of the smooth tongued, the honeyed words of the deceiver, and are restless, uneasy, and unhappy unless they are carried to the pinnacle of someone’s flattery.... To walk in the counsel of the ungodly is the first step toward standing in the place of sinners and sitting in the seat of the scornful.

The only safe course for the youth is to mingle with the pure, the holy, and thus natural tendencies to evil will be held in check. By choosing for their companions such as fear the
Lord, they will seldom be found disbelieving God’s Word, entertaining doubts and infidelity. The power of a truly consistent example is very great for good.

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