

An old man said,
“Whensoever a man readeth the Divine Books,
the devils are afraid.”

The Paradise of the Holy Fathers, tr. Budge, Vol. II, p. 24, #107

IF THE DEVIL WILL NOT DARE to approach a house where a Gospel is lying, much less will any evil spirit, or any sinful nature, ever touch or enter a soul which bears about with it such sentiments as it contains. Sanctify then thy soul, sanctify thy body, by having these ever in thy heart, and on thy tongue. For if foul speech defiles and invites devils, it is clear that spiritual reading sanctifies and draws down the grace of the Spirit.

Saint John Chrysostom,
Homily XXXII On Saint John’s Gospel, NPNF, Volume XIV, p. 114

IF THE PURE OF HEART ARE BLESSED [*because they see God*], those with sordid minds are altogether miserable, because they look at the face of the adversary. Further, if the divine character itself is impressed on the virtuous life, it is clear that the evil life resembles the form and face of the enemy.

St Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Beatitudes*, Sermon Six
Ancient Christian Writers, The Newman Press, p. 153

IF IT IS TRUE that the recollection of virtuous men renews the desire for virtue within us when we ponder over them, then it is evident that the recollection of the licentious, when we dwell upon them, renews shameful desire in our mind. For the memory of each imprints and inscribes in our reflections the distinctive nature of the deeds of those recollected, and shows us, as with a finger, either the shame of their deeds or the loftiness of their manner of life accordingly as they are virtuous or licentious. This strengthens in us thoughts and movements belonging either to the right or to the left. We meditate upon them in the secret place of our mind, and in our mind’s meditation the peculiarity of their way of life is depicted, so that we are always obliged to behold them. Therefore not only does meditation upon evil harm the man who is engaged in it, but also the sight and the recollection of those who do evil things. And again, not only does the working of virtue greatly help him who accomplishes it, but he is also helped by the imagination of the mind which is fashioned from the recollection of the persons who perform virtue.

The Ascetical Homilies of St Isaac the Syrian, Hom. 54, p. 405,
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