

KNOWLEDGE SOMETIMES A SNARE.

We have noticed some of the bad effects of knowledge (freedom from superstition, etc.) on the depraved world, – in the futile efforts of fallen men to govern themselves by the simple power of love of right; for the twofold reason of their lack of wisdom, and their lack of strength of character.

Let us next notice, the bad effect of knowledge (freedom from errors and superstitions) upon believers in Christ who do not submit themselves fully to his control. They are exposed, by their freedom to greater besetments from their own imperfect organisms. Thus for illustration: Some who had dreaded to speak an untrue word; who had been scrupulously honest; who had been generous toward the poor, and in support of religion; who had been prompt and regular in worship, both in the public gatherings of believers and in private and family worship; who in a word were exemplary persons, – more than they perhaps imagined have been held and bound to such a life, by a fear that eternal torment would be their lot if any other course were pursued, than by real love of righteousness. It is easily seen that a knowledge of God's love and gracious plan, setting free such a one from his bonds of superstition, must have one of two effects upon him: –

The effect may be to make him less careful of his word, – of his business and social engagements; less generous toward the poor and toward religious work; less regular in God's worship, public and private; more disposed to gratify self, and less disposed to sacrifice anything for God or for fellow creatures than before; because the impulse of fear is removed, and *must* is replaced by *may*; and may is fought against, by every *selfish* interest which before selfishly urged the other course.

Or, the effect may be the very reverse: The fear being removed, and the love of God being seen the more clearly, the effect may, and

certainly should be, to overwhelm the heart and lead it, bound in loving gratitude and appreciation, to the feet of the Redeemer; consecrated fully and forever to his service, and anxious, if but permitted, to share even the humblest part in carrying forward the great work which God has foreordained. Such a one will be blessed and enlarged in every way by his freedom. Seeing God's goodness and love, and having consecrated to God's service and will and plan, he will seek to copy and imitate his character and methods. Seeing the firmness and justice of God, he will seek to be more and more just. Seeing God's love and benevolence more clearly, he, while just and firm, will be more generous toward the weak and erring. Partaking of the spirit (the mind, the plan, the sentiment) of God, gradually, he will lose that selfishness which is always seeking its own advantage, and will begin to take so deep an interest in God's plans as to gladly sacrifice selfish desires, plans and conveniences, etc., etc., in the effort to fulfill the divine plan. His love for all for whom Christ died, will make him more than ever kind to the poor and sympathetic toward the unfortunate. More than ever will he desire to use money, and time, and influence, in God's service; because now, love has made self-sacrifice a pleasure. More than ever will he desire to acknowledge the Lord in all his affairs, and to worship him in private and with his family. More than ever will he be desirous of meeting both publicly and privately for worship, and for the study of the Master's will, with those "of like precious faith" and consecration. And less than ever will he crave other fellowship or company, except he can at least have a hope of telling them of the full salvation and of the gracious Master he has found.

Some of his unconsecrated friends, may think and say of him, that he is a fool – a very slave to Christ, doing and enduring in his Master's service (willingly, gladly), what they would not endure under any consideration; not even in the interest of *self*, the master they chiefly consult and seek to please. **[R1067 : page 4]**

But oh, how differently the truly consecrated feel: –

"Oh what comfort it brings,
That soul sweetly sings;
I am safe from all danger
While under his wings."

A slave? – Yes, a willing slave; and yet free to leave the service and go away, if he wills. A menial servant? – Yes, and one whose chief anxiety is to do the work to the approval of the gracious Master. One whose only fear is to displease, or to be rejected from the work. These are the only ones on earth to whom knowledge and liberty have brought the proper fruit so much desired by all, namely *contentment*. And truly as it is written, "Godlikeness with contentment is great gain." Then –

"Farewell ye dreams of night,
Jesus is mine!
Mine is a dawning light
Jesus is mine!
All else my soul has tried
Left but an aching void;
Jesus has satisfied!
Jesus is mine!"

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