

IS NOT THE DOCTRINE DANGEROUS?

SOME Christians, whose hearts have been greatly blessed by the opening of the eyes of their understanding, on the subject, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," – ask, with fear, Is it not dangerous to give this teaching to our unconverted friends and children? Will it not hinder their coming to God? If they have for years failed to come to God while under the fear of eternal torment in hell, would not the gospel of God's love and mercy merely harden their hearts and prevent their coming at all?

And is it not a dangerous doctrine even for Christians? Is there not danger that such, if they should lose the fear of hell, might become thieves, robbers, murderers, or otherwise evil doers?

We answer, No; there need be no such fears. The professing Christian who would become an evil doer upon learning that his fears of everlasting torment are groundless, never was a Christian; never was a child of God; – was at best only a tare, a "child of the wicked one."

And as for those who for years have had the fear of eternal torment before their minds, we suggest that what fear failed to do, God's love may do for them. It is written, "The *love* of God constraineth us" – or draws us – to him and his service. True, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" – but the *true fear* or *reverence* of God's mighty power is meant; – that inspired by the Scriptures and not that which results from human misrepresentations of the divine character. Concerning the latter the Lord says, "Their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men." – Isa. 29:13.

Many unsound minds have been completely unbalanced by these awful fears. And no sound mind can weigh and then accept the thought that an infinitely wise and just being could have arranged such a plan as is generally accredited to our God by his people, – That he created billions of human creatures under conditions which (all denominations agree) exposed them to the risk of an eternity of misery. Some even go further in saying that he predestinated [R1603 : page 374] which should go into this unthinkable misery before he began the work of creation; and that, although he has created billions, he has unalterably arranged that only a "few" shall find the narrow way and that, all told, only a "little flock" shall be saved from everlasting misery.

True, some comparatively sound minds, some seemingly wise people, do accept these doctrines; but we deny that they ever really *weighed* them. They were told that the Bible so taught, and that "to doubt is to be damned." So they believed without proof or any kind of evidence, – except that certain parables of our Lord and certain symbols of Revelation might be so construed.

Indeed, those persons who have persistently refused to believe such doctrines (presented by all denominations in the name of over one hundred millions of the most intelligent people of the world) deserve credit for having more than ordinary soundness of judgment.

As the *truth* was the very food that *your* soul needed and still needs, so it is the food needed by all sound minds; and it is still more needful to those of unsound minds. Let the light of God's Word shine out. It will scatter darkness, and bring, instead, joy and peace and blessing.

If you know one upon whom the truth has had no good effect, you know a score upon whom its effect has been blessings beyond price; and you know of not a single one that has been *injured* by it. The man or woman who becomes outwardly

more *wicked* by a knowledge of God's goodness and love manifested in Christ's sacrifice for our sins, – to grant to the children of Adam a full *individual* opportunity of gaining everlasting life by obedience to the terms of New Covenant – is really *none the worse* at heart, but merely acts out his true character more openly. But these, if there are such, are very few. On the contrary, the instances of conversions through the knowledge of the truth are very many – not only infidels and skeptics, but many open law-breakers. Three prisoners in Sing Sing Prison, N.Y., are rejoicing in the truth, and preaching Christ and a gospel of the love and justice of God, of which they and we are not ashamed. – Rom. 1:16.

However, while doing good in spreading the truth to all whom we can reach, as we have opportunity, we are to remember that the special design of the present truth is for the household of faith, and for them we do and should make our special effort, as the Apostle enjoined.
