

subject with proper dispositions, we will only involve ourselves in denser darkness and weightier condemnation.

This subject, too, deserves to be approached with the utmost degree of thoughtfulness and care, on account of its superlative importance. The knowledge of God is fundamental to all science : there is no true science without it. He is the centre and source of the universe, and until we know Him we cannot know it. We must have a correct theology before we can have a correct cosmology. It is only in proportion as we understand the character and will of its author that we are prepared to correctly understand and interpret the facts and laws of the universe itself. Without this clue we will never be able to thread the labyrinth of Nature ; without this key we will never be able to unlock its secrets or to explore its mysteries. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Whatever knowledge there may be without this will prove in the end to be but learned and pretentious ignorance. Men may, indeed, observe, collect and classify the facts of the external world without the knowledge of God, or that state of the affections which is implied in the possession of it, but they can never properly understand them. They may indeed be able to deduce from them some practical lessons, which will be more or less valuable in their relation to the affairs of this life, but they will never be able to draw from them lessons which will be of any real value in relation to those tremendous interests which lie beyond the boundaries of time, or which will have any natural tendency to elevate and ennoble the souls of men. All knowledge which is not based upon the knowledge of God is "of the earth, earthy," and its inevitable tendency is to develop in man only that which is of the earth, having both its beginning and its end in the present imperfect state of being. Its tendency, in fact, is to despoil man of the highest attribute of his being, to bear down and crush out the spiritual element in his nature, and, by robbing him of his hope of immortality, at once to quench his noblest aspirations, to take from him his highest motives of virtue, and to deprive him of his most powerful consolation amid the trials and sufferings of the present life.

Our subject is properly the omniscience of God ; but this perfection of the divine nature is so nearly allied and closely related to His omnipresence, that they can scarcely be treated apart from each other. The first passage we have to examine occurs in the 15th