

that is great and good in his nature, to fit him for and confer on him new enjoyments, to fit him for new and enlarged spheres of usefulness—that, surely, must be the good and useful; and here it is “Godliness is profitable for all things.”

1. What is Godliness? and 2. What are some of its advantages? A few remarks on each of these queries—

I. What is Godliness? We might reply very briefly to this question, by saying that Godliness is true religion—true piety. But though this definition of godliness may be plain enough to some minds, to others it may not be so plain, and require to be illustrated just as much as the subject defined—What, then, is godliness? what principles, dispositions, thoughts, and acts does it comprise?

1. It comprises a proper Scriptural knowledge of God’s perfections and character. God is the object of this knowledge, as far as he has revealed himself or can be known by man. This is the very first element of godliness. It comprises or implies a knowledge of God, not only as the Creator, preserver, and proprietor of all things, who has manifested his glorious perfections in all the works of his hands; but also, as the God of providence and grace, as he has made known his character and perfections in his Word. The testimony of God’s works and Word respecting his existence and perfections agree, what the one declares the other corroborates. The eyes of true godliness see the visible glories of the invisible God in all his works. God, by the light of the truth and by the power of his Holy Spirit, has removed from the mental eyes of the Christian those films of sin which so much obscured his spiritual vision, and he sees and acknowledges the Divine perfections in all things. This vision of God’s glories in all things not only satisfies the soul of the believer, that God is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, but it also furnishes matter for devout meditation, holy thought, and comfort. It is the Christian alone who can view the clear and indelible marks of God’s presence and character in his works. He sees in all things many and indubitable evidences of the divine perfections. To him all things appear to be full of God, The heavens, the earth, the air and sea, all animate and inanimate creatures, all rational and irrational beings, proclaim to him the glory of God, thus—

“The soul that sees him, or receives sublimed  
New faculties, or learns, at least, to employ  
More worthily the powers she had before,  
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze  
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked.  
A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms  
Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,  
The unambiguous footsteps of the God,  
Who gives its lustre to an insect’s wing,  
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.”

“But the God whom the Christian knows and receives, is the God revealed in Scripture. “Who is love. Who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but might have everlasting life,” whom he knows as the God and Father of his Saviour, who is possessed of every conceivable perfection, the author of all things, and the finisher of his faith.

2. In connection with the knowledge of God, godliness comprises or implies the existence of devout reverential feelings. This is invariably the case where piety exists. To God, though unseen, the heart of the believer rises spontaneously in feelings of holy devotion, faith, and delight. On him his hopes rest with feelings of a deep and holy complacency. From the daily toils of life, from the allurements of the world, from the sorrows and cares of our earthly state, from the darkness and sufferings of bodily pain or family bereavements, from the pressure of hopes disappointed—the soul of the believer, under the