

ment. Anterior to a well-grounded belief in the objects of religion, there is a preparatory season of religious scholarship, commencing with childhood and reaching onward through successive stages in the growth of intellect—a very early and useful season of aspirations and inquiries prompted by a sense of duty even to the yet unknown God. Here it is, that the ethics of our science and the objects of our science stand most noticeably out from each other—for, at the very time that the objects are unknown, there is an impellent force upon the spirit, of a clear ethical dictate, enjoining us to acquire the knowledge of them.

23. And this early education can be vindicated not only on the score of principle, but also on the score of effect. Whether it properly illuminates or not, it at least prepares for those brighter means of illumination which are competent to a higher state of the understanding. If it do not rationally convince, it at least provides a responsibility, though not a security for that attention which goes before such a conviction. It does not consummate the process; but, in as far as the moral precedes the intellectual, it makes good the preliminary steps of the process—insomuch that, in every Christian land, the youth and the manhood are accountable for their belief, because accountable for their use or their neglect of that inquiry, by which the belief ought to have been determined. There is no individual so utterly a stranger to the name and the conception of a Divinity as to be without the scope of this obligation. They have all from their infancy heard of God. Many have been trained to