

the Christian instructor. These objections, of whatever kind, can be shown to be of little or no weight in comparison with the strength of the evidence; many of them can be shown to be groundless, or founded on misapprehension; others can be so explained as to fortify the Christian position. And even the great objection in which the unbelieving mind has revelled in later times—I mean the objection drawn from speculations in cosmogony—can be so handled as to strengthen the proof of the inspiration of the Mosaic record.* Without going into details, my object has been to show that much good might be done, and much evil prevented, by a little systematic instruction bearing upon the issues raised by infidelity, which, while immensely important, are really much less numerous and far simpler than is generally supposed. Sooner or later, the objections to Christianity involved in these issues come to be presented to our young people; and the question is, Shall they, as they grow up, first hear of these objections from those who would lead them astray, or shall their religious instructors *anticipate* the efforts of the destroyer? Is it not far better that their minds should be *preoccupied*, by their being made acquainted with the way in which these objections can be met, than that their first knowledge of them should come to them in such a way as to lead them to think that they have been imposed upon with fables? However assured we may be of the safety of the genuine Christian, it can hardly be questioned that the great majority of our young people do not grow up so surrounded by an atmosphere of piety as to make their early conversion likely; and that accordingly the great majority of them do not give any very satisfactory evidence of their possession of genuine piety. And, though we shall always find that there are many who will not take their views of Christianity except from those who oppose it, and misrepresent or even caricature its teachings, we shall find many others—some of them “not far from the kingdom of God”—for whom much has been done, not without valuable results, in the way of instilling good principles into their minds; and if, with the training of their conscience and their sympathies in connection with Christian truth, there were combined appeals to their understanding, in relation to the important issues above referred to, their minds might be so intelligently prepossessed on the side of Christianity, that they would not be injuriously affected by assaults before which many succumb, and would also be helpful in preserving others.

* See Note C.