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Positive Proofs
OF A
Future Life
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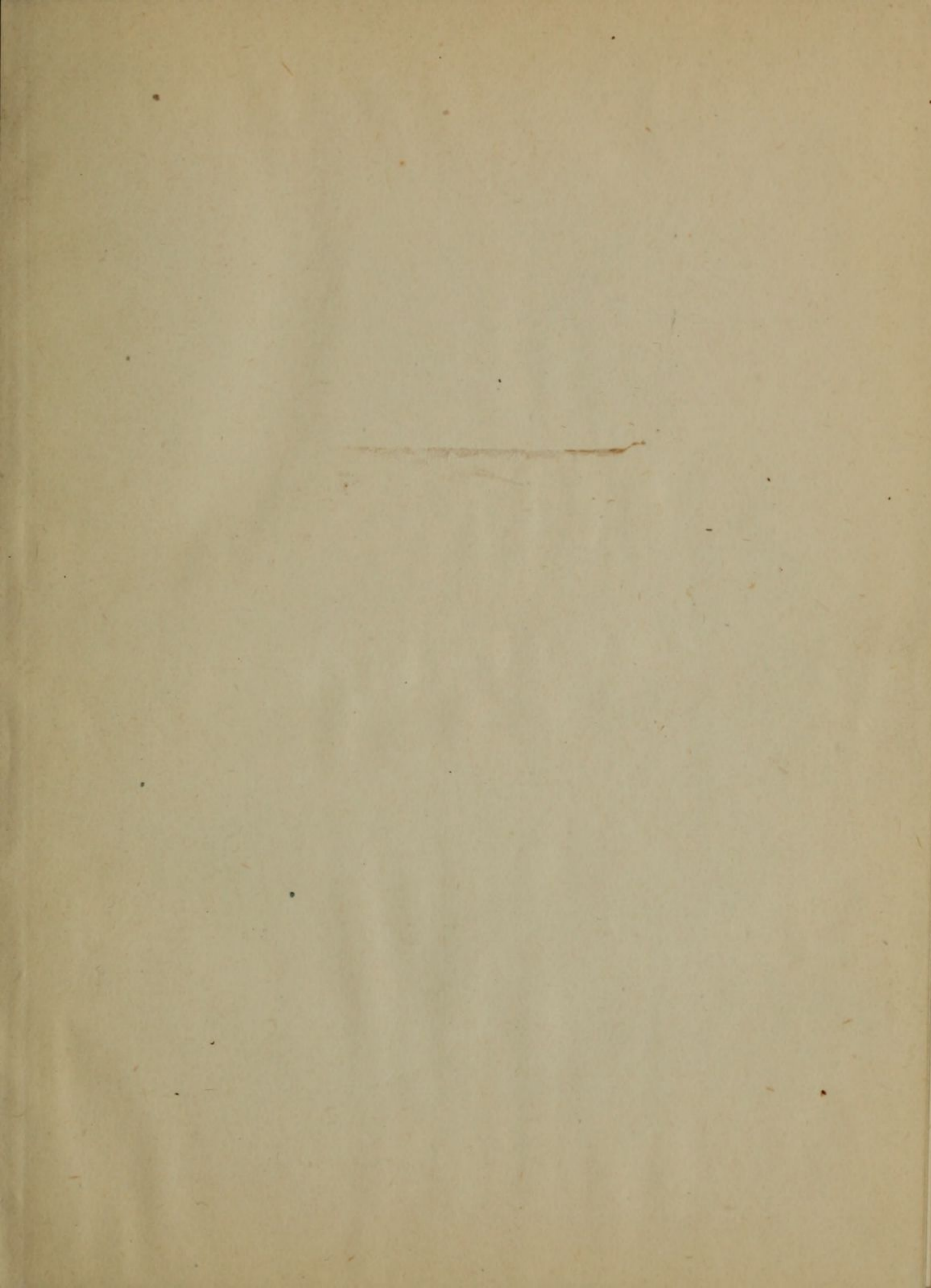
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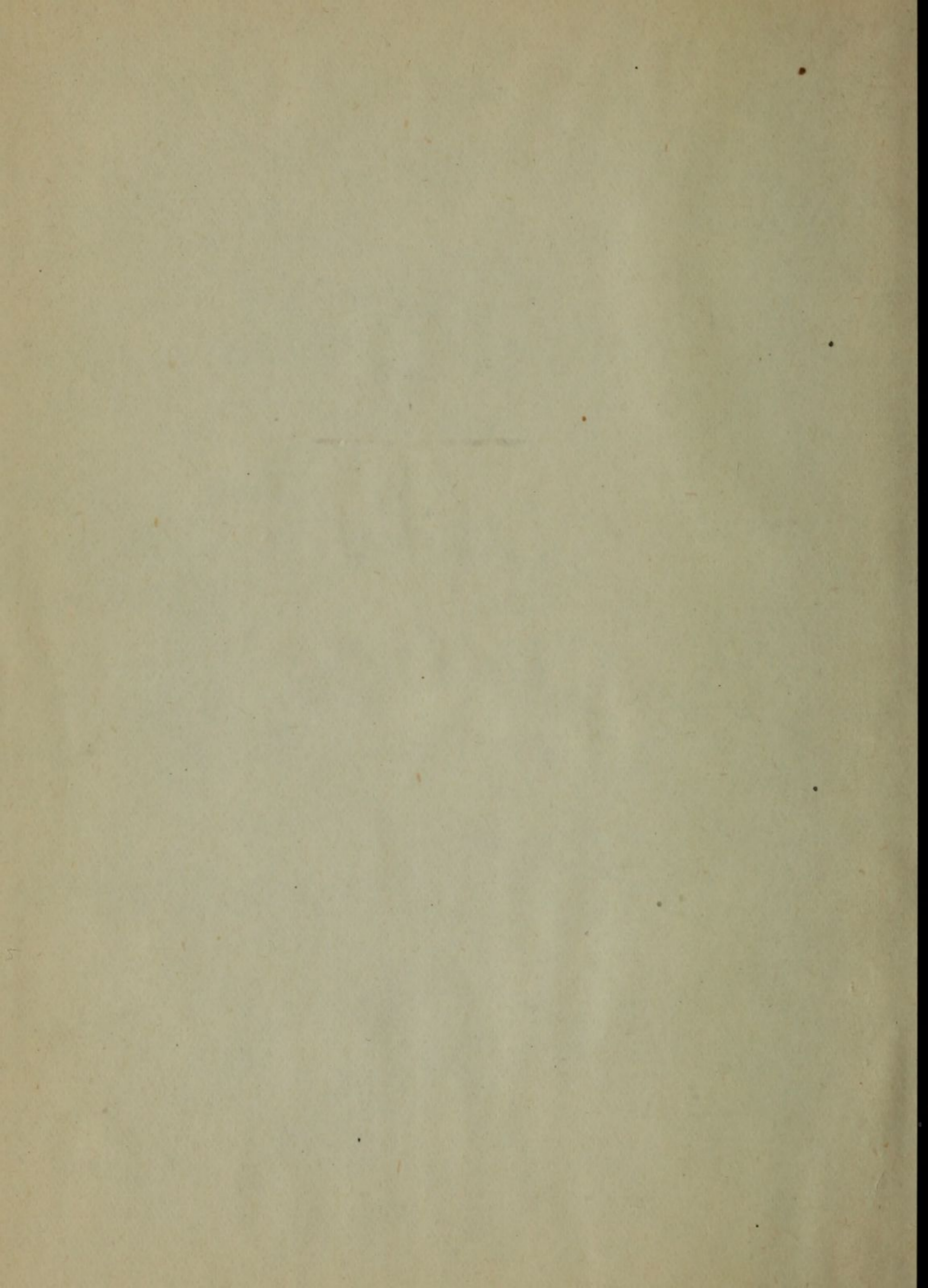
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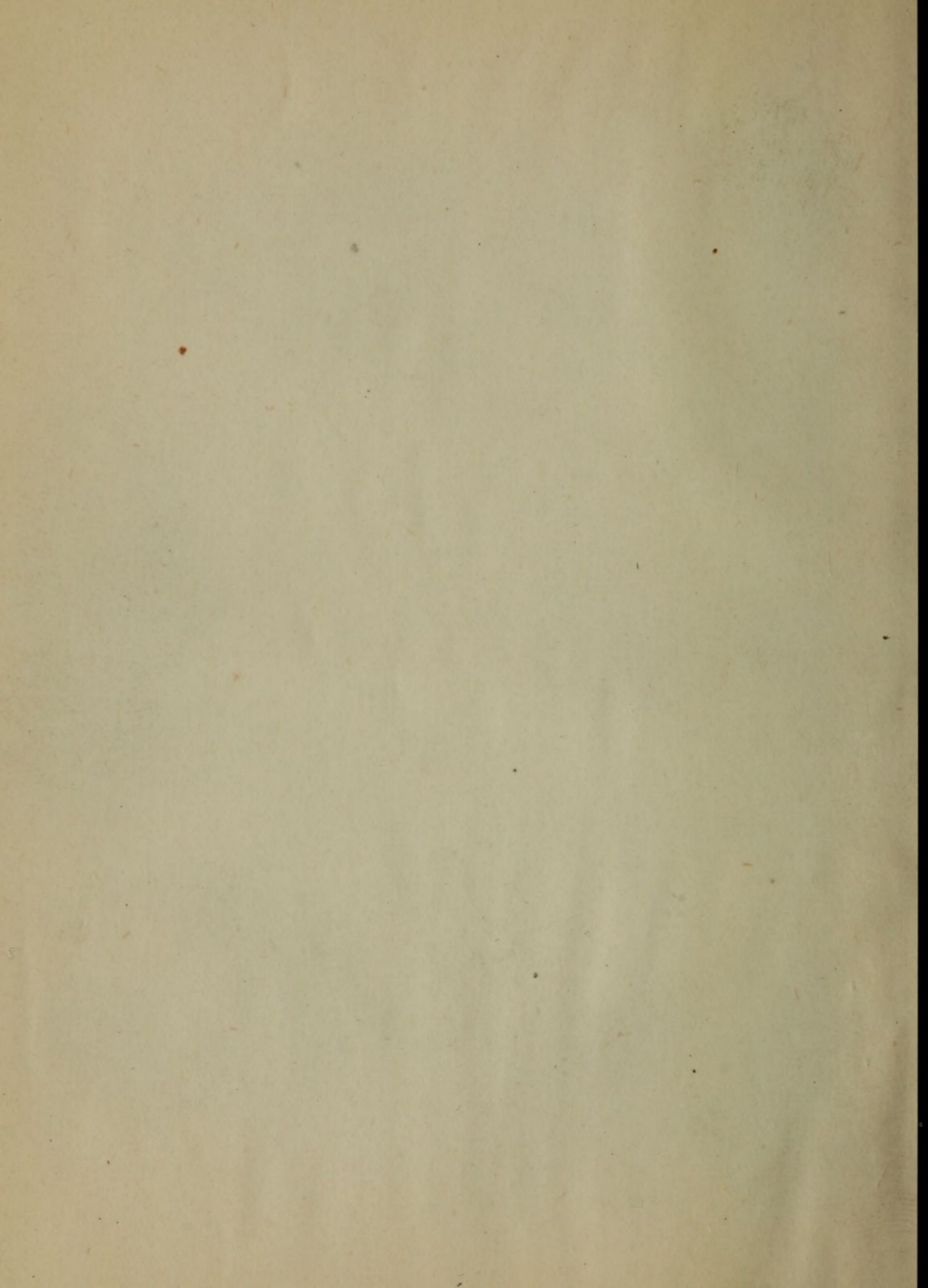
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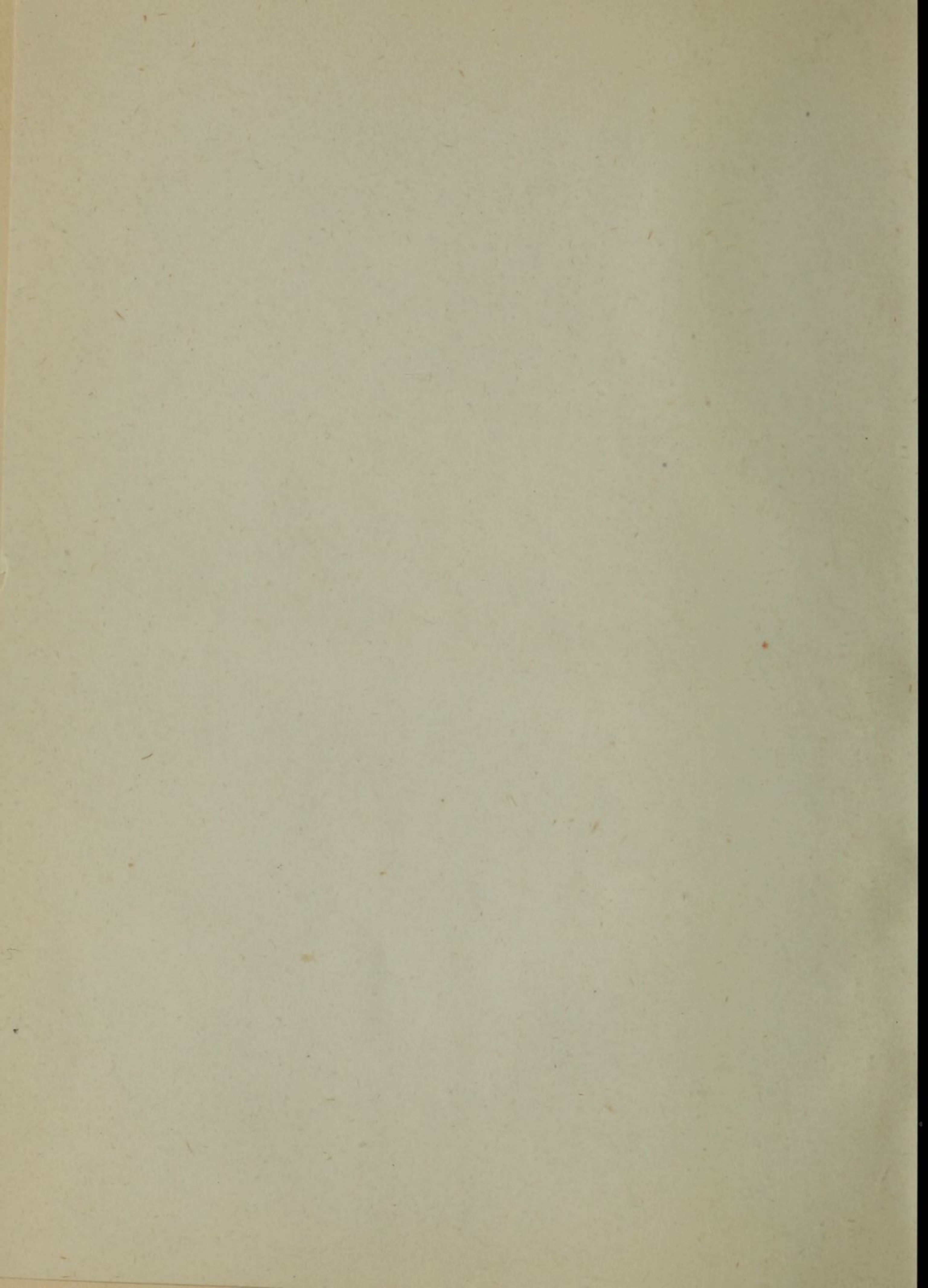
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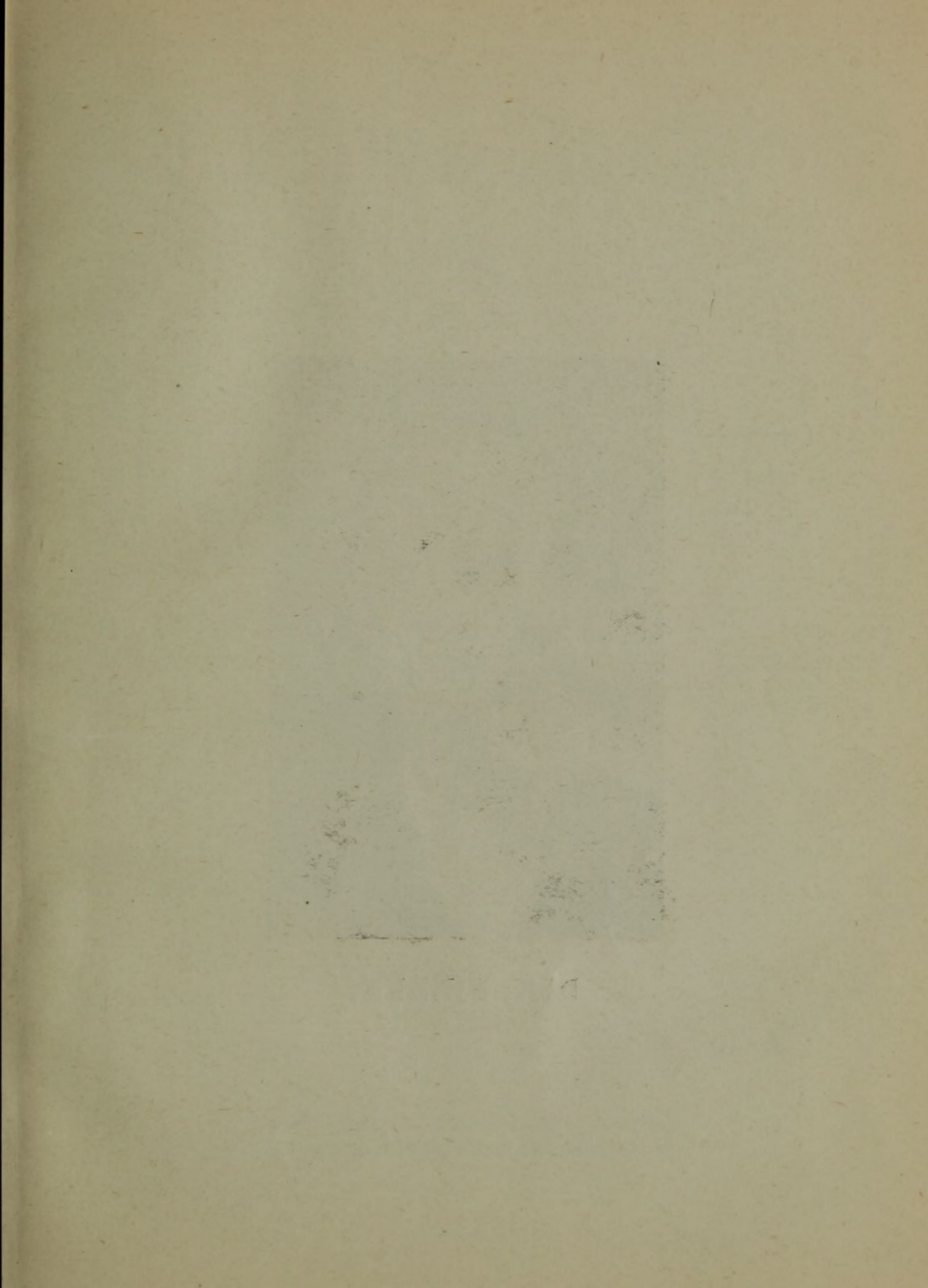
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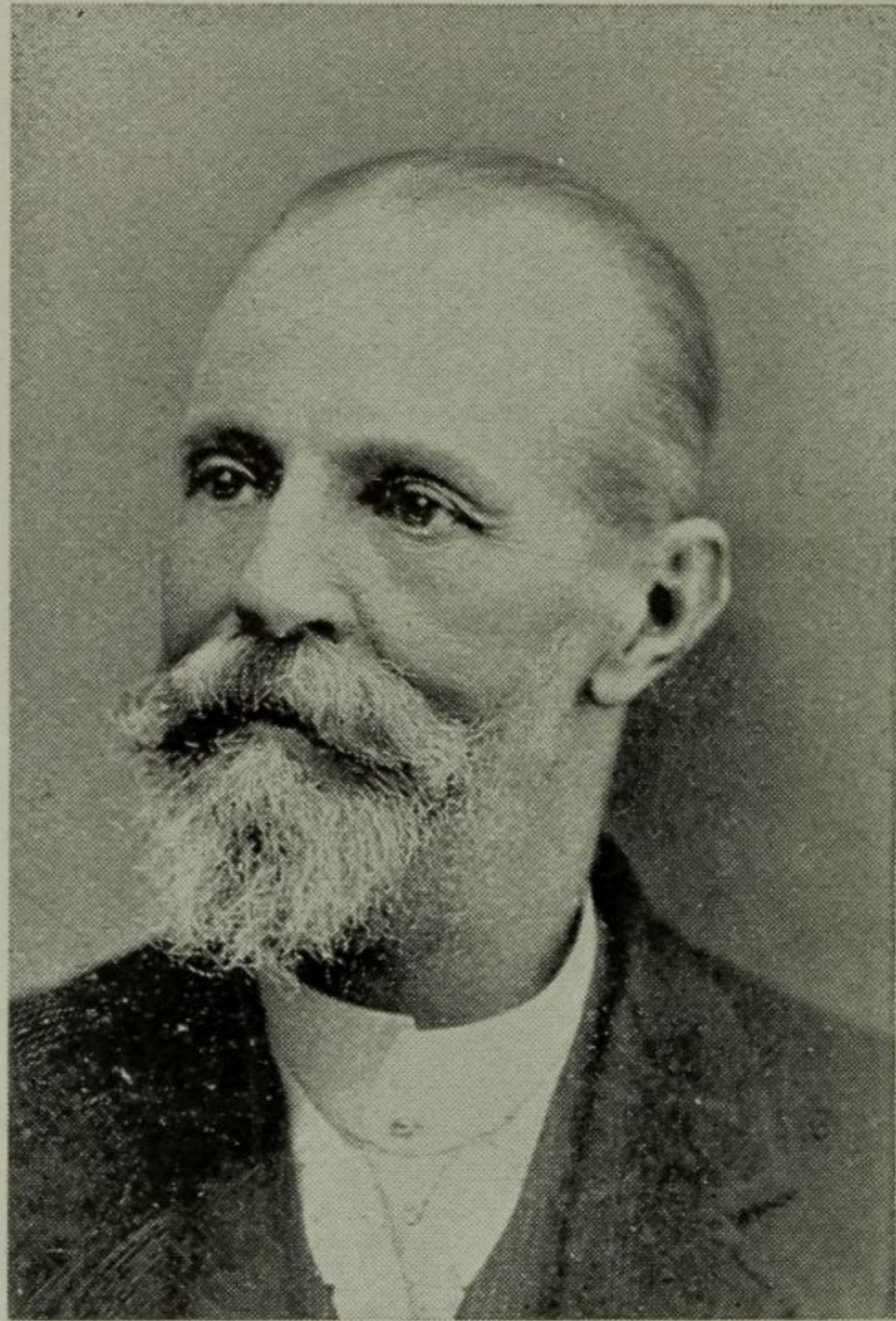












D. K. WINDER.

POSITIVE PROOFS

OF A

FUTURE LIFE,

A DISCOURSE

BY

Winder
D. K. WINDER,

1892.

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CITY OF WASHINGTON

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I.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE exists in the minds of multitudes of people, believers and unbelievers, a great desire to know whether there are any natural proofs of the reality of a future existence.

The present discourse has been prepared to meet this longing of the mind and heart; and presents positive proofs of a future life, which are natural and logical as well as scriptural; and of such a tangible character that they may be understood and enjoyed by all thoughtful persons, whether they have received a classical education or not.

The distinctive features of the mode which we have adopted in obtaining these proofs, will be understood from the following Laconic statement.

First, the self evident truth, that what the scriptures teach is only that which is learned from a correct interpretation of the meaning of the sacred writers.

Secondly, a fact which is susceptible of demonstration, that God himself interprets the meaning

of the scriptures to those who prayerfully seek a knowledge of the truth. He reveals natural truths to the natural mind through the laws and phenomena of material nature; and spiritual truths to the spirit or soul by the influence of his own Spirit, directly or by lessons found in tangible natural phenomena.

In presenting the natural proofs of a future life we are between two fires. Infidels are prejudiced against the bible to such an extent, that they will not tolerate any proof that is found on its pages. And in the same way, there are christians who are prejudiced against nature as a teacher of Divine truth, to such an extent that they will not tolerate any proof of the future life that is found in its laws or in its phenomena; although they know that the laws of nature are the work of God, and that they are just as truthful and trustworthy as the teaching of the bible itself; and not only so, but perfectly adapted to the requirements of persons whose spiritual capacities have not been developed by personal fellowship with God, to such a degree that they may comprehend spiritual things in their own experience.

This prejudice seems to originate in the incorrect idea that spirit life is unnatural; that is, that

while it is a life actuating the body in company with the body's own life, it is retained on sufferance until it takes its departure at death.

But the truth is, that the spirit and its life are parts of the organization of a human being—the parts which may continue and live after death, and forever in heavenly blessedness, if developed and pure. This happy issue of earthly existence may be enjoyed by us all, if we yield to the influences of the gospel of Jesus Christ; for the gospel is the “power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”

Christians should remember that this prejudice is dangerous. It is as dangerous now as it was in the days of the Saracenian wars. In A. D. 640, when Caliph Omar invaded and overthrew the city of Alexandria in Egypt, he found there that grand old library, containing more than six hundred thousand volumes—the only large library in the world at that time. When his generals asked him what they should do with it, he reasoned in the same way as some christian people do now concerning the bible. He said, “The Koran contains all truth. If there is truth in the books of the library, we don't need them—we have the Koran. If the library contains anything that is not in the Koran,

it is false." And he ordered the great library to be burned.

This discourse is the result of careful investigation, and a consciousness of having a special call to the work; that is, the work of presenting to the divided church, a more perfect view of the harmony between the teaching of the bible and the teaching of nature, and the positive character of natural and scriptural proofs of a future existence.

With reference to the reality of a future life, we sincerely believe that those who study these evidences, and who are willing to accept as positive proof, arguments against which no real logical, scriptural or scientific objections can be urged, must be thoroughly convinced.

The author of this discourse for many years has been a critical student of the natural sciences and of the bible, and the proofs which are presented give us a positive assurance of a future existence: and they have been carefully arranged, so that they may be useful to all persons who are inclined to doubt the ordinary evidences on which the belief in a future life is founded.

Christians will find in them a natural means of strengthening their faith and increasing their hope and comfort.

And these views of the great question are offered to sceptics in order to remove difficulties which may have kept them from believing in a future existence, and from accepting Christ and the enjoyment of a hope of heaven.

It is a source of pleasure to find that although this discourse contains so many things which are not in any of the commonly accepted views of the future life, there is nothing in the proofs or in the logical deductions that may be drawn from them that is opposed to evangelical and orthodox doctrines.

II.

IT is a fact which we cannot fail to notice, that christian people read the bible and ask the Lord to help them to understand it, and yet come to different conclusions as to what it teaches. And this is true concerning the resurrection of our bodies, the nature of our souls, and even concerning our eternal destiny.

The fault is not in the bible,—neither in what has been written or in the way it has been written. But the trouble is caused by the modes of interpretation which we ourselves adopt, in order to determine the meaning of the sacred writers.

The general belief with reference to the future life is, that after death the human spirit survives and lives forever. But there are churches who declare that there is not one passage in the bible in which such doctrine can be found. They interpret the scriptures which relate to the subject, as meaning that at death our life is extinguished, and that our bodies shall sleep in unconsciousness until a day of judgment.

Now it is very plain, that modes of interpreta-

tion which lead so many honest readers of the bible to different conclusions upon such great questions as these, must be erroneous; and if possible it is our duty to discover the errors and to correct them.

A belief is quite common, that concerning the future life there is no other source of information than the bible. This is an unfortunate mistake. And moreover, it is at variance with the teaching of the bible itself; for the bible tells us, that these invisible things may be understood by referring them to the realm of nature for explanation. Rom. i. 20 Paul says, "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made." In other words, the laws and phenomena of etherial and material nature are the golden keys that unlock the meaning of the scriptures, and reveal the invisible world that we may enjoy a view of its reality and its glory.

In the accomplishment of his purposes God always works by means that are adapted to the end. As he brings the light of day that we may work and the hush of night that we may rest, by means of a visible rising and setting sun, so the Holy Spirit reveals to us the meaning of the bible by reflecting upon it the light of nature.

An appeal to nature for the meaning of the sacred writers, will no doubt solve the problem of the true mode of interpretation.

There are four different methods for determining the meaning of the bible, that have been extensively used.

First, the explanations given by the Roman Catholic church, which is represented as being infallible. All Protestants reject this method.

Secondly, interpreting by the aid of the Holy Spirit received in answer to prayer. It is true that the Holy Spirit leads those who are guided by him into truth; but in our experience, this mode of determining the meaning of the scriptures is not satisfactory. For example, the Friends or Quakers who claim to be specially led by the Holy Spirit, say that the New Testament does not require the use of water in the administration of the ordinance of baptism. And the church of Plymouth Brethren who also claim to be specially guided by the Holy Spirit in their interpretation of the bible, say that water is required. This state of things in the belief of entire churches, leaves us to look for an authorized way of determining the meaning of the scriptures, further than the assertions of good men and women that they are guided by the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, the plan of collecting all that the bible says on any given subject, and from a review of the passages endeavoring to determine the meaning of the text under consideration. This plan fails in the investigation of the question of our future existence. There are churches who pursue this course and believe that immediately after death our souls will be present with the Lord in heaven; and there are churches who declare that there is not one passage in the bible that teaches such doctrine. And we notice that the sermons of preachers who entertain these opposite views, consist almost entirely of scripture statements relating to the subject.

• Fourthly, the plan of endeavoring to force the minds of those who humbly love and follow the Lord to assent to every word in King James' excellent translation of the bible, or in some other translation which the reader thinks is more authoritative—coercing the mind to acknowledge the truth of statements that are contrary to known facts, because improperly rendered or introduced from the ancient manuscripts without sufficient reason; and justifying the unintellectual procedure by the thought that perhaps some other part of the bible might remove the difficulties.

Those who adopt this thoughtless mode of

reading the precious word of God are loud in their denunciation of scholarship, learning and logic when applied to remove human errors from the bible. And they tell us, that if we use reason to eliminate from the scriptures errors which were put there by human authority and which by the same authority should be removed, we "transfer our faith from God to fallible mortals," Strange reasoning! For if we are to use other parts of the scriptures to remove the difficulties from a passage which we may have under consideration, we must use our reason and learning; and yet they are denounced when used as aids to the meaning of the bible.

While it is true that the word of God does not need any aid, it is also true that we who study it do need aid. This is clearly seen from the doctrines of opposite character which are found in the bible, and which have been made the foundation of christian churches and denominations.

Such denunciation of the use of our mental faculties, if carried outside of the bible would seek to destroy our schools and institutions of learning, and throw us back into the conditions which prevailed during the dark ages, and put out the intellectual and spiritual lights of our nature which assure us that we were created in the image of God.

When we accept the aid which is offered by the apostle Paul, fresh light breaks forth from the word of God, and we have an interpretation the correctness of which is guaranteed by the facts of both the material and spiritual realms of nature and by the sanction of the bible itself. And the results which follow the adoption of the apostolic rule of interpretation are very desirable.

In this way we are able to secure positive proofs of our future life,—proofs that are sure and satisfactory, and which give us a victory in every combat with doubt and scepticism. And moreover, it enables you to obey the apostolic command 1 Pet. iii. 15, which tells you to “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason for the hope that is in you;” that is, a reason which will be satisfactory to others as well as to yourself.

There are many christians who leave this for their preacher to attend to. But you will notice that the apostle exhorts you yourself to be ready to give a reason for your hope.

By pursuing this course in our study of the bible we meet with some things that differ from the views which we have entertained. But we should not on that account turn aside from the

avenues of research which lead to such desirable vistas of the future.

Concerning these questions every one does not require the same kind of proof. There are persons who require no other evidence than a bible promise and their own personal consciousness, to fully satisfy them of the reality of spiritual existence and of a future resurrection. But all do not have the spiritual experience on which to build their faith; and in the absence of this consciousness, such persons can be convinced of the reality of a future life only by the facts of nature, by correct reasoning and a natural interpretation of the scriptures.

To help those who may be dissatisfied with the ordinary way of determining the meaning of the bible, we humbly offer the following suggestions.

First, when a passage of scripture is so plain that but one reasonable interpretation is possible, always accept it—it is God's word. But when different interpretations are admissible, choose that which agrees with the established natural sciences—they are founded upon God's natural laws.

Secondly, in your efforts to interpret the bible, pay less attention to words, and more attention to the things which are spoken of by the sacred

writers; and you will find that when read in this way the events described in the bible will appear to you in plain language which is easily understood.

By reading the scriptures in this natural way, we must have a correct interpretation, because nature and the bible are works and words of the same divine author, and therefore, there can be no contradiction in their teaching. Even the wonders and miracles of the bible will be found to be in perfect accordance with the laws of the universe; and the natural character of much that once seemed to you to be unnatural will be revealed.

And on the other hand, we should remember that it is quite as unsafe to attempt to study the natural laws of the universe in their relation to spiritual questions unaided; and that in order rightly to understand the voice of God in nature, we ought to enter her grand temples with the bible in our hands and the love of that which is spiritual in our hearts.

Do not for a moment think that the natural mode of interpreting the bible will detract from the grandeur of the miracles which are recorded in it; for you will find that they will appear grander and more convincing because of their reasonableness and adaptation to the purposes for which they were wrought.

III.

AS an example of a natural view of the record of a miracle, let us notice the wonderful account of the supply of water which was provided for the Israelites after they crossed the sea at the time of their exodus from Egypt.

The common view of the transaction is, that there was on the ground a large boulder or granite rock. And that when Moses struck it with his staff, water flowed from a hole in the side of the rock, and supplied nearly a million of people. This is very unnatural and hard to believe.

But the description of the miracle as recorded in the bible, when correctly interpreted appears to us as an occurrence which was in perfect conformity with natural laws.

The rock was a cliff or ledge of stratified rocks which travelers find in that locality now. The Lord, by means of volcanic forces or by an earthquake shook up the rocks that Moses smote with his rod, and the waters which were confined there gushed forth without obstruction, in quantity sufficient not only to meet the requirements of the

camp of the Israelites, but also to form a brook which flowed along the way of their journey. And the act of Moses was conspicuous, in order that it might be a sign that by divine authority he occupied his position as leader of the people.

As thus interpreted, the transaction is not only reasonable and convincing, but it includes a grand miracle of God's power and goodness, which is seen not only in the bringing together at the same moment the volcanic activity and the act of Moses, but also in the deliverance of the people from their distress.

As another example of a natural view of the record of a miracle, let us notice a wonderful but true story, about which there has been so much talk—the account of Jonah and his adventure with a whale.

The vessel on which Jonah embarked encountered a storm. The sailors, thinking that Jonah was the cause of their peril threw him overboard, and he fell into the mouth of a great whale which happened to be feeding near the vessel. It was not a sperm whale nor a fin-back, but the one known to science as the *Balæna Mysticetus* or right whale.

This species of whale has a mouth about eight feet deep by nine feet wide, which is large enough

to hold half a dozen men the size of Jonah. The author of this discourse himself has been in a whale's mouth, and found room enough to stand erect, and space enough to walk about back of and within the hirsute whalebone plates that hang from the whale's upper jaw like a fairy curtain.

A whale comes to the surface of the water as often as once in every hour to blow; that is, to expel the impure air from its mouth and take in a supply of fresh air. The whale's throat is very small, which prevented it from swallowing Jonah. A whale feeds exclusively on small marine larva, and takes its meal by opening its mouth wide and running along the surface of the water: it then closes its mouth and forces out the water, but retains the food which is prevented from escaping by the row of whalebone in the front part of its mouth. The whale under consideration certainly had no desire to feed while Jonah was tormenting it; and he remained in the whale's mouth as in a living cave, punishing the whale as much as the whale punished him; and at the expiration of three days the whale cast him out into the breakers, from which he was rescued perhaps by fishermen who carried on a trade with the far off city of Nineveh. We would naturally suppose that Jonah told them the story of his

peril, and that he went on to Nineveh and warned the people of impending danger, telling the story of his marvelous deliverance from death as a proof of his divine mission. And when he was arrested, his friends the fishermen testified to the truth of his statements; and this resulted in his release, and finally in the repentance of the people and salvation of the city of Nineveh.

Such is a natural view of the story as it is recorded in the bible. And in the record thus interpreted, we find a really grand miracle of God's power and goodness, not only in the deliverance of Jonah from his peril, but in the bringing together at the proper times and places everything necessary for the conversion of the wicked city.

To the objector we would say, that the correctness of this interpretation is assured by the fact that Christ himself endorses the principal facts in the account of Jonah and the whale in language that fully corroborates the view we have given. Matt. xii. 40 he says "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Now it is very plain, that as the earth has no heart, the word must be understood as meaning the center of the earth; and as

Jesus was not buried in the fiery ocean that constitutes the center of the globe, but in the tomb of Joseph on the earth's surface, we must understand the allusion to the central part of the whale in the same sense; that is, as locations that just as effectually conceal from human sight as a burial at the center of the earth. Thus Jesus teaches us that Jonah was not imprisoned in the central digestive part of the whale's body, but in a part that corresponds to the location of his own tomb in the rocks on the surface of the earth; that is, that Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's mouth. And moreover, the original word which has been translated so as to imply the abdominal viscera of the whale, very often means a "cavity," without reference to its peculiar character.

And furthermore, Mr. Wilson the oriental traveler, during one of his voyages across the Mediterranean sea, saw a whale more than sixty feet long; which proves that whales of this species although they do not belong in the Mediterranean, sometimes appear there as transient visitors.

Traveling seems to be a habit of all the Cetacea or whale family. A few years ago, a whale left the ocean and went up the St. Lawrence river as far as Montreal, where it was harpooned and cap-

tured and placed in the museum; and ever since it has been exhibited as a curiosity, on account of its apparently unnatural venture up the river.

As another example of a natural view of the record of a miracle, let us notice the wonderful account of the flood which occurred in the days of Noah.

An account of this deluge is found not only in the bible and cuneiform records of the hieroglyphic age, but also in the literature of the oldest nations which now exist on the globe. As usually understood, it has always been a stone of stumbling to the sceptic. But when it is interpreted in the light of natural facts, it is a perfectly reasonable story, the miraculous nature of which exhibits divine grandeur.

There are several ways in which God could have brought the flood upon the earth by natural means. The following is the way indicated by the scriptures.

Naturally viewed, the wickedness of mankind and the penalties connected with it alarmed Noah, and in obedience to God's command he built the ark, into which he put his family and living creatures of every species which were brought to him by the persons sent out to search for them. Then by a mighty convulsion of the earth, an old conti-

ment called Atlantis or another one as large, sank beneath the waves; and at the same time the bottom of an old sea which is now part of the desert of Sahara was raised, and its waters flowed over all that inhabited part of the world. Gen. vii. 11 we are told that "The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up." Hills and valleys were covered for many days, during which rain and fog prevailed. In the confusion, high mountains were inaccessible by perishing humanity; but the dove that was sent out by Noah visited them, and seeking food it returned to the ark, carrying with it a leaf plucked from an olive tree. After a few weeks, the equilibrium of the earth's subsidence in one place and upheaval in another was complete; and the waters having fallen to their level, the lands were habitable again. In the misty atmosphere a rainbow was continually visible during the day, and added to Noah's fear that another flood would follow. But when the Lord explained the natural cause of the rainbow, it became to him a token of the world's safety; and taking courage, he released all the living creatures from their confinement and worshipped God.

In the record thus naturally interpreted, we find a grand miracle, not only in the bringing together

at the proper times and places everything necessary for the preservation of Noah and his family, but also in the removal of a vicious race of mankind, of whom Gen. vi. 5 it is said that "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"—a race, the continuance of which would have been a curse to the earth during the entire present cycle of its existence.

By interpreting in this way, we do not substitute our own ideas for the bible record, nor express a doubt as to the truth of the facts which are actually stated in the bible account; but we supply what was intentionally omitted by the sacred writers as being within reach of all thoughtful readers.

That this is God's plan is manifest in all of the historical portions of the sacred writings; and we may trust the inspired words of Solomon, when he says that if we search for understanding "as for hid treasures" we shall "find the knowledge of God." And the apostle John expresses this same view of the historical parts of the bible, when John xxi. 25 he says that "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"—speaking not of miracles but the teaching of Jesus.

A natural interpretation of the scriptures, and a spiritual understanding of that which is natural, meet the requirements of both the mind and the soul; and explain your experience when you are waiting until "the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts;" while you wishfully look up to your Father in heaven and say—

I would be nearer to thee, Lord,
A pilgrim here below;
My faith casts anchor in thy word,
But oh that I could know.

I would be nearer to thee, Lord,
That all my doubts may go;
Thy ways all nature's laws record,
Thyself my soul would know.

Thy call I hear—I come, dear Lord,
Thy word I doubt no more;
And now my faith the skies reward,
With light unseen before.

Yes, I am nearer to thee now,
And take thy guiding hand;
As will and doubt to reason bow,
I view the promised land.

But I am nearer to thee still,
In Christ who lives for me;
And yielding fully heart and will,
My home in heaven I see.

III.

THE statements with reference to our future life which are found in the scriptures, should be interpreted in accordance with the established laws of the natural universe. By reading them in this natural way fresh light breaks forth from the bible, and we not only remove sceptical objections, but we secure a positive proof of the reality of our future existence, in the fact that the bible can be so interpreted correctly, and that it then agrees with nature in all that it says about it.

David tells us that "the heavens declare the glory of God," and Paul says that the "invisible things" are "understood by the things that are made." He condemns those who change the natural use of things "into that which is against nature;" and he uses a lesson from the stars in teaching the future life, telling us that as one star differeth from another star in glory, "so also is the resurrection of the dead;" and he refers to mechanics and builders, when speaking of Christ as the foundation of the church, and says that if any man build upon this foundation precious stones or wood, that "fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

And we have the great example of Christ himself, who taught spiritual truths from natural laws and natural phenomena—from barren trees, from seeds, farmers, housekeepers, bakers, coins, laborers, weddings, dealers in pearls, the wind, a red sky and blooming flowers.

The future life which is revealed in nature and which is promised in the bible, includes both a resurrection of your body and the continued life of your spirit after death. Jesus makes this distinction, in his discourse concerning our future existence Luke xx. 35. He speaks of those which “Shall be accounted worthy of that world and the resurrection from the dead.”

Some persons object to the doctrine of a resurrection, because the materials of which our bodies are composed, when they return to the earth sometimes enter into the constitution of other living bodies, and therefore cannot be restored to us in a universal resurrection of living beings. But the objection has no foundation, for the reason that nature does not promise a resurrection of that kind. It teaches that your recreated body will be composed entirely of other matter, which in the resurrection will be organized into your own individual

form that will possess as your present body does, all of your own peculiarities of character.

That our bodies will be raised again from the dead, is proved by the one great fact that the laws of nature are absolutely unchangeable. We are perfectly sure that whatever occurs under any peculiar conditions, must occur again whenever exactly the same conditions return. And therefore, when the same conditions that brought into existence your present body and individuality shall return, you must be brought into existence again.

And that such like conditions will return to every living being, is a fact which may be learned from a trustworthy source; that is, from the history of the earth itself. For the time will come, when the earth shall return to its original gaseous state and be recreated; and in the repeated existence of the world, all former living bodies including ourselves must appear again, by the operation of the unalterable laws of nature. And the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked is a fallacy, for both nature and the bible teach us that the individual personality of every human being shall be continuously repeated and so exist forever.

Matter itself is eternal—it has always existed. It may be changed as to its form, and it may be

variously combined, but it cannot be destroyed. The coal that we burn in our stoves and furnaces is not destroyed but changed by the process of combustion. It all still is in existence in the form of ashes, smoke and gases.

In the beginning of the organization of the earth, its elements existed in an immense cloud of heated gases. This world of fiery clouds gradually cooled; a solid crust formed over the surface of the globe, and aqueous vapor filled the oceans. Then the world became peopled with living beings. The earth is still becoming colder, and the reduction of temperature will go on, until at last the elements shall reach a molecular condition that will result in a sudden disintegration and conflagration. By this process all of the elements will be returned to their original gaseous state. And then the process of a recreation of the world will begin, and as the recreation proceeds it will repeat the earth's entire present physical history; and all former living bodies including ourselves must appear again, by the operation of the unalterable laws which brought us into our present existence.

The absolute repetition of the earth's history, does not necessarily include the voluntary acts of living beings.

Your body was brought into being through one of a definite number of atoms of living individuality which have always existed—each one reproducing in a cycle of the earth's existence a spirit and body—a body which will not require your birth again from parents of exactly the same appearance and character as those who were instrumental in bringing your body into the present world. For while it is true that they would be necessary for the reproduction of many of the less important peculiarities of your present appearance and disposition, the same parents will not be essential to the recreation of your own individual body. This we learn from nature. We know that a seed planted in one field or in another field produces the very same individual plant, although its appearance will show the influence of the peculiar soil in which it grows.

The fact that we cannot see an individuality when it is not clothed with its material body, is no argument against its existence, because of the limitation of our senses. We cannot see a molecule in any of the elements that enter into a chemical compound, and yet we know that they exist, and we are able to tell the exact number of each kind that are present in a chemical combination.

Your own individuality has always existed and will always exist; and like the individuality hid in a seed, can be seen only when clothed with a material growth, and when its material organization is destroyed disappears from our view, not to appear again until the future recreation of the world.

This is the true theory of the earth's history; and yet the cycles of its repeated existence are much shorter, because the surface of the earth reaches a final condition of molecular disintegration before the interior, owing to the heat still retained at the center. Then, in case of a concussion from the fall of a meteorite, the surface elements to a depth of a few miles only will explode and burn, and return to their original gaseous state; and recreation will proceed around and upon the remaining solid part of the globe. And so all these great cosmical changes will occur without displacing the matter of which the earth is composed, and without interfering with the position or the movements of the sun and planets in the solar system.

Even in the present state of our knowledge of chemistry, there are many terrestrial substances which can be brought into such a molecular condition that upon a slight disturbance they suddenly change to a gaseous state. Dynamite, gun cotton,

fulminating silver, and sulphur and chlorate of potash are examples of this peculiar chemical condition—a condition in which a slight concussion will cause them to explode and change from a solid to a gaseous form.

And we should also remember that it is possible for the surface of the earth to be greatly changed in the very near future, by a similar disintegration of the elements in the earth's satellite. There can be no reasonable doubt with reference to the fact that at the present time, the moon, from its aged condition is in a molecular state approximating that which will bring about its own final catastrophe and return to a gaseous beginning for its own recreation. And from its nearness to us, the earth certainly will be involved in the moon's fiery transition.

With reference to all these things the scriptures agree with nature. 1 Pet. iii. 10 we are told that "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," and that we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth." And Eccl. i. 9 we read, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." And

concerning the recreation of our natural bodies, Acts xxiv. 15 the apostle Paul says that "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." And Rev. xx. 5 the language of the apostle John agrees with the teaching of nature, as to the fact that the resurrection of the bodies of the dead will occur at the expiration of a thousand years after the close of the first resurrection, which is the present resurrection of the spirits of God's people, one by one as they exchange their earth-life for life in heaven.

The recreating process which shall result in the resurrection of earthly bodies will begin at this time—the time when Jesus will come again "In the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;" when "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And 2 Pet. iii. 8 we are told that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day;" which justifies our interpretation of the quotation from the twentieth chapter of Revelation, as referring to the long period of time occupied in the recreation of the world, and the consecutive recreation of the bodies of all mankind.

The belief is quite common, that in the resurrection our bodies will actually be changed from flesh

into spirit. This is like the doctrine of the ancient alchemists, who thought that they could change brass into gold. But this ecclesiastical alchemy cannot be found in the teaching of nature or in the bible.

Nature does not change one of her elements into another. And 1 Cor. xv. 50 Paul tells us that "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." And John iii. 3 Jesus says you "Must be born again;" that is, you must be born out of your body, and enter upon an independent existence of your spirit, before you can "see the kingdom of God."

When the apostle Paul tells us that we "shall be changed," he means that the mode of our lives shall be changed from living in an earthly body, to living an independent spirit life in heaven. At the death of your body you will "put on immortality" by living its characteristic life, just as we now "put on Christ" by living like Christ, or in the likeness of his character.

The "lake of fire" spoken of in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, evidently is the burning world. And there will be plenty of "brimstone" in that great terrestrial fire.

Some persons may object to this interpretation

because the language of Jesus Mark ix. 44 represents this lake as being a place where the "worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." But a more careful consideration shows that these statements are in perfect harmony with the natural interpretation which we have given. The "worm" spoken of is the emblem of death and the grave; both of which will continue to the end, and surely will be found also in the recreated earth. And the statement that the "fire is not quenched," refers to the overwhelming character of the conflagration, and to the fact that the fire at the center of the earth is never extinguished. Matt. xxv. 41 we read of the lake of fire "Prepared for the devil and his angels;" which means that everything sinful and all those who continue to be servants of sin must end there.

In the present life we all suffer much in consequence of our own sins, and on account of the sins of others. But the death of our bodies is not a result of sin—it is natural. All living creatures die—christians, atheists, princes, paupers, elephants, animalcules, trees and diminutive mosses. Natural death occurs according to natural laws. While the supplies that are appropriated by your system are sufficient life continues; and when a waste of tis-

suces is greater than the reparation, death follows.

The consequence of sin is spiritual death—not natural death. This we learn from both nature and the scriptures. In the account of the evils that our first parents suffered in consequence of their sins, natural death is not mentioned—expulsion from paradise, sorrow and hard work are the results spoken of.

When God gave instructions to Adam and Eve concerning the forbidden fruit, and said to them Gen. iii. 3 “Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die,” he meant spiritual death. After their disobedience, we are told Gen. iii. 24 that by means of “Cherubim and a flaming sword,” God prevented their approach to the tree of life, lest they should eat and live forever.

No greater calamity could possibly befall a human being, than eternal spiritual existence defiled by sin and unfitted for heaven; and no greater blessing could be bestowed, than eternal life when the soul is pure and enjoys communion with God.

Natural death is the worst enemy impure human beings could have, because it robs them of their earthly life—the only life they can live; but to the godly-soul it is a deliverer that gives a victorious

entrance to an endless life of spiritual happiness and usefulness in heaven.

1 Cor. xv. 21 when Paul says "For since by man (Adam) came death, by man (Christ) came also the resurrection of the dead," he means the resurrection of lost souls to life in heaven—the work that Jesus came into the world to accomplish.

Paul informs us that the spirit of Jesus, which after his resurrection appeared forty days on earth, was "Christ the first fruits." And the spirits spoken of by the apostle, when he says "Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming," are the spirits he is daily taking home to be with him where he is; and includes the spirits of all his people who will die until the final earthly catastrophe, at the time of his coming in power. Then the recreation of the earth will begin, and during its progress the successive resurrection or recreation of the bodies of mankind will occur.

The resurrection of all the animal creation in common with man, is taught by the bible as well as by nature. This is clear from the language of Paul Rom. viii. 19 where we are told that "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;" that is, for a resurrection of their bodies that will be similar in every

respect to the natural resurrection which mankind shall experience. And in the 22nd verse he tells us that "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, . . . waiting for the redemption of our body."

We have often heard glowing descriptions of the goodness of nature,—of the richness of her blessings in rain and sun shine, and in fruits and flowers; but we should also learn a lesson from the neglected theme of natural danger and punishment—things that preachers seldom speak about.

In order that we may understand these things, we should remember that the world of living beings to a certain extent is controlled by human minds. That which we should earnestly seek to control, is a natural tendency to degenerate, which is seen in all improved varieties of living creatures. This is known to science as "reverting to type;" that is, improved varieties of living beings left to themselves, lose the improvement and revert to their former condition. Turkeys are an example of a tendency to such reversion. They are naturally wild and often domesticated; but afterward if they are not carefully attended to, by an innate tendency they revert to their natural condition and prefer the tops of trees to the comforts of a barn yard.

It is by the exercise of the mind that its power is developed, just as the arm of the blacksmith is strengthened by use. Without work there could be no increase of our physical strength; and without the effort which is necessary to the attainment of a knowledge of truth, there could be no mental development. And for this reason the bible was so written as to require the diligent use of our mental faculties and our learning, in order to understand the meaning of the sacred writers.

And it is by the development of mind, that we are enabled to obey the command given to our first parents, who were told to subdue the world and "have dominion over it."

There is a prevailing idea that thorns and thistles were not included in the six days work of creation, and that they were brought into existence after Adam and Eve sinned against God, and for the purpose of punishing mankind for wickedness.

But it is evident that thorns and thistles were made in the beginning when the earth brought forth every plant that grew. And Gen. i. 31 we read, that upon reviewing his work, "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold it was very good"—not part good and part bad but all "very good."

Some one may inquire, "are thorns and thistles good? We reply, that depends upon who it is that answers the question. The thistle itself, from its natural love of life would say yes; and the birds that feed upon thistle seeds would say yes they are good. The needles on the thistle leaves are good because they protect the plant. Thorns are good—they defend the tree from destructive intruders; and the poisonous fangs of rattlesnakes are good as a means of defense against their enemies.

The evil which was brought upon mankind was not the creation of thorns and thistles, but the removal of our first parents from the beautiful garden where it would have been very easy to control them—removal to the unprotected fields of the world where thistles grow in profusion, and where it requires hard work to destroy them.

It is true that thistles torment the agriculturalist; and it is also true that our bodies and our minds are developed by the exercise of our ingenuity and by work. The extermination of thistles requires hard work; and the lazier we are the more trouble we have with weeds. Thistle seeds are food for the beautiful thistle birds. The birds sing, and with their bright plumage make the world cheerful: boys shoot the birds and let the thistles grow;

and then wonder why God makes so many thistles.

We know that our troubles may be increased and the death of our bodies may be hastened, by a neglect of our duties and by disobedience to the laws of our being. But whether we die in infancy or at the age of threescore years and ten, our bodies will be born again in the recreated world.

By our recreation in the new earth, each one of us will introduce into the universe an additional spirit—a spirit which will be another member of the family of our own personal individuality. This fact explains the eternal existence of your personal individuality, and the doctrine of the immortality of species which has long been accepted.

And this also shows the fallacy of the doctrine that the souls of the wicked will finally be annihilated. For nature and the bible teach us that although both the body and the soul may die, the personal individuality of every human being, body and spirit shall continuously reappear in each successive recreation of the world, and so exist forever.

Each spiritual individuality is an atom or element of living existence; that is, they are the elements which organize spiritual bodies; just as each peculiar material substance is an element in the constitution of the material universe.

This is something which perhaps you have not found before in any of your researches. You will notice that during these explorations in the domain of nature, we have found evidence which proves that in heaven you will meet with other spirits each one of whom will be a fac-simile of yourself—possessing your own peculiarities, capacities and tastes. In heaven you will be very happy in the companionship of souls who possess so many of the characteristic qualities peculiar to your own individuality, and who were born into the world of spirits—each one from a recreation of the earth in past ages.

And there are many other surprising revelations awaiting us in the future spirit life, although we may not be able to discover them now. 1 Cor. ii. 9 we are told that “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

This passage of scripture is frequently quoted, but all do not understand its meaning. The word “it” which is generally added is not in the verse. We are not taught that these things are entirely beyond our comprehension, but that they are beyond the comprehension of the natural mind. The

words "neither have" mean that neither the eye or the ear can convey to our understanding an idea of our mode of living in the future life—realities that are spiritually discerned; that is, they may be discerned by the senses of your spirit, and not by your natural senses.

There is positive proof that the world will be recreated; and the evidences are of such a character that we can depend upon them.

The statements we have made concerning the history of the earth's existence and destiny, are consistent with the teaching of all text books on the science of astronomy which are used in our schools and colleges. And we find a full confirmation of these views in the well known present cold and desolate condition of the moon; and also in the established laws of chemistry.

Chemical laws are founded upon observations of phenomena resulting from various conditions under which elements are placed. But in the sun and in other heavenly bodies, there are conditions which we have never been able to produce in our experiments, and hence there are laws which we have yet to learn. The recognized chemical law is correct, that when oxygen and hydrogen gases are mixed and a lighted match applied, an explosion must

follow from the sudden union of the gases and the formation of water. But oxygen and hydrogen are found in an uncombined incandescent or intensely heated state in the fiery photosphere of the sun; which shows the possibility of a great change of molecular character, by conditions that are at present unknown to us.

The fact that the earth is gradually approaching a cold condition, just the opposite of that which we find increases the permanence of molecular combinations of the elements in the sun, is proof that the theory of the earth's final disintegration by the influence of condensation and cold is correct.

But a still more complete confirmation of the correctness of this view of the earth's history and destiny is found in the fact that more than thirty temporary stars have appeared in the heavens at different times—blazing out in splendor a few weeks, and then gradually fading from sight. The new star which recently appeared in the constellation Auriga was one of these temporary stars; and it too, after exhibiting a number of changes in its appearance, rapidly faded away. And in every case when these temporary stars have been examined by the spectroscope, it revealed the wonderful fact that they were burning worlds.

Thus we find in the unchangeable character of the laws that govern nature, in the fact that the earth will be recreated, and in corresponding statements of the bible, positive proofs that a day will come when our bodies shall live again.

The principal purpose of a recreation of the world evidently is to bring into existence multitudes of living spiritual human beings; and the doctrine of evolution or a tendency which exists in nature to an elevation of character in the various types of living beings, also teaches that in the resurrection life we shall experience an increase of our mental powers and in the capacities of our senses, which will fit us for greater enjoyment and higher spheres of usefulness, and thus leads us to see the same reason for a recreation of the world.

And we notice that many of the facts and arguments which have been presented, are of such a character that the atheist as well as the christian may feel their force; for if it was true as atheists suppose, that they came into the world by chance; then, if blind chance made this world and brought them into it, blind chance may make another world and bring them into that.

IV.

TO know that our bodies shall live again in a coming resurrection is a source of encouragement. But we all experience a deeper interest in that which relates to the life of our souls after the death of our bodies, and in the certainty of the proofs upon which our hope of heaven depends.

We are glad to know that nature teaches the existence of the soul, and reveals its destiny; and that we need not go far away to find evidence and instruction.

In the constitution of your own being, if you should go no further, you will find a positive and irresistible proof, not only of the existence of your soul, but also that it may live and enjoy a conscious and independent life in the world of spirits.

Nature, however, does not teach the immortality of the soul as it is generally understood. We do not learn from nature that your soul must live forever, but we learn that it may live forever. Nature teaches us that there is in your constitution your body that lives and exercises mental powers, and also a spiritual body that is a fac-simile of your

material individuality, but of etherial character; that is, composed of atoms of ether: and that it is free from present adaptations to the necessities of earth life, and free from all the scars and marks which accidents and disease have made in your earthly body.

The dividing lines that separate the different kingdoms of nature are never sharply defined. As in the lower orders of vegetable and animal life, there are species which in their habits and appearance are so much alike that it is difficult to determine whether they are vegetables or animals, so it is with reference to the line that divides your mental from your spiritual faculties. It is not at all times clearly defined in the phenomena which they exhibit; and we should be careful lest we attribute to our mental faculties that which really appertains to our spiritual nature. We know that the relation which your body sustains to your spirit is very intimate—so intimate that being of a pervading etherial character, your spirit occupies the same space with your material body; and does so without violating the law of impenetrability.

That your spirit has a very perfect organization, is not a visionary theory, but a fact that nature clearly reveals. Everywhere in the vegetable king-

dom, and everywhere in the animal kingdom, life is found only in organized bodies. And the bodies correspond to the character of the life displayed. In some species the organization is so simple that it consists of a cell and vibrating cilia only. The more intellectual manifestations of life are always clothed with more highly organized bodies.

It is certain that the organization of your spiritual body is more complex and perfect than that of your natural body, because your spiritual life manifests intelligence of a higher order than that of your natural mind.

Nature furnishes no examples of a manifestation of intellectual life separate from organized bodies; and therefore, when we have proved the reality of the spirit's existence and its life, we have also proved the existence of an organized spiritual body for every human soul.

And this grand truth is clearly revealed also in the scriptures. 2 Cor. v. 2, 3 the apostle Paul says "We groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked;" that is, our individuality clothed in an organized spiritual body.

With regard to the question of the origin or

birth of your soul, it is plain that it is an ethereal incarnation; that is, an organized spirit dwelling in your earthly body. This must be so, because the spirit is an entity distinct from the body both in its life and in its organization.

The entire domain of nature so far as our senses and instruments enable us to penetrate its depths, is found to consist of the two entities, matter and an all pervading ether; both of which may be identified by their peculiar properties and the phenomena that they exhibit. And while it is true that ether associated with matter manifests the activities which we call light, electricity, mental powers and other forces, its grander displays of pure intellectual power and everlasting vitality, are manifested in bodies which are organized from its own elements; that is, in our spiritual bodies.

Just as certain motions of matter are recognized as sound, certain motions of the ethereal substance are recognized as light. And just as organized combinations of the atoms of matter are recognized as bodies, so organized combinations of the atoms of ether are recognized as spirits; that is, ethereal bodies. But as there is light in the heavens that can be seen only by preparing the eye by rest before using the telescope; so there is spiritual light

which undeveloped spiritual perception cannot discern.

Throughout all nature, we find that wherever there is a habitation suitable for any kind of living beings, atoms of living individuality which we call life find their way to it, and there organize bodies that are adapted to the conditions. The drops of dew, though they glitter but an hour in the morning sun shine, all have their tiny inhabitants. And just so, our heavenly Father through the etherial realm of nature sends into every new born human earthly body an organizing spirit life, to form an indwelling spiritual body.

Some persons refuse to believe in the existence of the human spirit, because under certain diseased conditions of the brain and mind, the spirit fails to exhibit a knowledge of the actions of the body. But the objection has no foundation, because if the spirit did so, it would be contrary to the analogies of nature. A logical student of nature does not expect to find the human mind familiar with the experience of the spirit, or the spirit to know to a great extent the transactions of the mind.

Magnetism, which is of etherial nature, passes through glass which is of material nature, without showing any recognition of the presence of the

glass; but we do not therefore deny the existence and presence of the glass.

During your earthly life, your spirit and your body are united in one person, but they are distinct entities. And this is not an unusual arrangement in the ways of nature.

There are three distinct entities in a ray of sunlight. There is light, heat and actinism or chemical power. **The** thermometer that measures heat, gives no indications of light in the ray; but we do not on that account deny the existence of the light. A collodion film which measures actinic power, does not indicate the presence of heat; but we do not for that reason deny the existence of heat. And as the human spirit and the sun-beam, much as they differ, are both organizations of the etherial element of nature, we should not expect the phenomena of spiritual existence to make any very tangible direct impressions upon the natural senses of the body.

However, from the intimate relation which exists between the body and the soul, we know that there must be in our experience reciprocal impressions resulting in consciousness of our own soul's existence. This, consciousness becomes perfectly tangible, whenever your mind continuously seeks to ascend to spiritual conceptions; for your spiritual body and

its mind are as real as your earthly body and mind; and therefore their existence must be tangible to your natural senses.

Thus you may be conscious of your own spiritual faculties of perception, and that they are independent of the senses of your natural body. And from this consciousness you may derive a full assurance that they will remain with all their vitality, when your body dies and removes all that now interferes with the full enjoyment of your higher nature.

Spirits are not earthly bodies, but they are entirely of etherial character.

Our heavenly Father himself is "a Spirit:" and his etherial nature is so grand that it will be our pleasing study through all the ages of eternity. Psalms xxv. 14 we are told that "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." That is true: but while it is our happy privilege to enjoy fully the presence of his Spirit in our souls; with our natural minds we may behold only the "sea of glass" and the "sapphire pavement" that is around his throne.

The terms "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit," which are so often found in the bible, are names of God, and of the divine influence that proceeds from his presence; and they often mean capacities

which the Lord bestows upon his people. But all of the terms, "Holy Ghost," "the Comforter," "the Spirit" and "Holy Spirit," are more frequently used in another sense, which seems to have escaped the notice even of critical students of the bible; that is, a spiritual being, either on earth or in heaven.

In some passages, the meaning is the soul or spirit of a godly person. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17 Paul says "The spirit of God (the soul) dwelleth in you:" and "If any man defile the temple, (the body) him (the soul) shall God destroy." This corresponds to the teaching Eccl. xii. 7, where we are told that the spirit shall return "Unto God who gave it." Your spirit is called the spirit of God because God gave it.

And very often these terms mean a spiritual being or angel who is the companion of a godly person in the present life. Jesus uses the words "Spirit" and "Comforter" in this sense John xiv. 16 when he says the Father shall "Give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you." And again, "If I depart, I will send him unto you:" and he will be a true spirit companion, and will encourage you and aid you in the development of the capacities of your spiritual nature.

The correctness of this view is seen by reference

to language in the first chapter of Revelation. We are told that God gave a revelation to Jesus, who sent it to John by an angel; that is, by a spirit. In the second chapter we read that John sent it to the churches saying to them, "Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The spirit here spoken of is generally understood to mean the third person in the Trinity; but it evidently alludes to the spirit or angel by whom Jesus sent the message to John. Heb. i. 7 Paul speaks of God and the messengers whom he sends to the earth, on this wise, "He maketh his angels spirits;" that is, God sends spiritual beings as messengers to his people. And Psalms xxxiv. 7 we are told that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him."

This is evidently the teaching of the scriptures; and it is pleasing to find that none of these views are opposed to the generally received doctrine that God manifests himself to us in a threefold character as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the independent existence of the human spirit is not only natural but it is scriptural. Eccl. xii. 7 we read "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit unto God who gave it." And 1 Corinthians 15th chapter, the relation of your spirit to your body is clearly stated.

In the 44th verse Paul tells us that "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body;" and in the 46th verse he says "Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual." And John xi. 25 Jesus says "I am the resurrection and the life." In this language he refers to the resurrection of spirits, and not to the resurrection of our natural bodies.

We often speak of the preciousness of souls. The preciousness is seen in the soul's capacity for the enjoyment of spiritual things, and in its capacity for everlasting life and usefulness in heaven.

Concerning the destiny of the soul, there are three theories each of which has found many advocates. The following are the principal ideas.

1. That every human soul will live forever—the righteous in happiness and the wicked in misery. In this theory the purpose of endless torment and its consistency with divine wisdom and goodness are not explained.

2. That the souls of the wicked, after death will gradually loose their guilty character, and be restored to the everlasting life of the righteous.

3. That our present life is our only opportunity for probation, and that an acceptance of Christ secures the blessedness of heaven, and a rejection of

Christ leaves the soul to suffer endless torment in consequence of its sins.

In each of these theories no doubt there is both truth and error.

The bible and nature teach us that the soul lives through being nurtured by spiritual food—provisions which God supplies by his own communion with the soul, through the Holy Spirit perceived and felt in our experience, and through Christ who came to “seek and to save that which was lost;” that is, to save souls that are dead or separated from God. And he came to feed our souls with the bread of life.

In this grand work the Father and Christ are one; and Christ and his people are one, for Paul tells us that we who in our poor way are working in the Lord’s vineyard or feeding his sheep are “laborers together with God.” God is the great fountain and source of eternal life—Jesus is the “river of water of life”—the Holy Spirit is the channel through which God’s blessings flow—his people are the little rivulets of divine grace. And these divine instrumentalities working together open up the way of life to all who enter that way in humility, faith and obedience.

Nature teaches that the soul requires food and

care, in order that it may live and increase in spiritual stature.

As the new born earthly body looks to its parents for protection and nourishment, so the new born spirit looks to them for support. But alas! often the parents themselves have no spirituality and cannot support the new born soul. When there is parental spiritual care, the spirit is nurtured and grows; and for want of such care it perishes. 'But nature teaches that in the changes which constantly are occurring nothing is destroyed; and therefore, the etherial elements of the disorganized spirit are not annihilated. A soul thus lost may be raised from the dead, according to natural law controlled by divine power which provides other means of support—may be "born again," and restored to its earthly temple in the present life.

V.

TO meet your doubting disposition, nature furnishes many evidences of your soul's existence, as an entity distinct from your body and natural mind.

For proofs that these statements concerning the distinction between your body and your spirit are correct, we appeal not only to the scriptures but to the facts of physiology and psychology; all of which show that your body and your spirit are distinct and independent entities in your present existence.

We know that the body is nourished by the food we use, and that the mind is fed by learning and thought. But your hungry spiritual nature cannot be fed and satisfied by mental achievements, though all the range of natural knowledge were offered. The requirement of your spirit is satisfied only by knowledge of divine realities—realities which like your spirit are spiritual, etherial, unfettered to earth and far above all the desires of the natural mind. And we know that these things have no power to excite our natural emotion; which is influ-

enced by things of an earthly character. These distinct requirements of your nature reveal clearly the distinction of being—your natural body and its mind, and your spirit and its mind; and moreover, it clearly distinguishes mankind from lower orders of the animal kingdom.

An active and developed mind makes its impress on the features; and thus intelligence becomes visible in the countenance, and proves the existence of the mind, and of the physical organization that produces it. And thus spiritual activity imparts a character to the human countenance, which by persons of spiritual education and experience may be distinguished from that which is caused by the passions and activities of the natural mind. Look over the photographs of the spiritual leaders of the religious world and see that this is true. Spiritual life is visible in the countenance; and the fact of this recognition is proof of the existence of the human spirit and its mind, just as the recognition of a color is a proof of its presence, and of the existence of the pigment that produces it; or the recognition of a musical sound proves that it comes from an organ or piano as the case may be.

And we notice that this luminous or shining character of our spiritual nature, is frequently spo-

ken of in the bible. Moses was many days on the mountain in communion with God, and we are told that when he came down, the skin of his face was shining, and that he put a veil over his face so that the people could speak to him. Jesus was present with God, and with the spirits of Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration; and when he came down his face was shining like the sun. All of God's people may have a similar experience; for when he was speaking of our future life Matt. xiii. 43 Jesus said "Then shall the righteous shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

As the food upon which the spirit lives indicates that it is a distinct entity, so the spirit's aspirations and utterances distinguish it from the natural mind.

Sometimes it is impossible to discover any indications of a desire for that which is spiritual, heavenly or divine, in persons who have enjoyed the privileges of culture, and who are naturally emotional—all efforts having failed to raise their desires up to divine things, and to the enjoyment of a life of spirituality.

This fact is positive proof that the natural mind and the spirit are distinct entities; and that in all such cases the spirit is either dead or inactive.

The natural mind craves for the use of the body vegetables and meats, and for itself knowledge of natural things; but the spirit longs for that which is spiritual, etherial and divine. The natural mind wants gratification of the natural senses—beauty for the natural eye, melody for the ear, sweet perfumes, and the pleasure of solving the problems of the natural universe. But the spirit soars far above all these into the realm of the spiritual; and its experience with that which is divine, imparts the most real, ecstatic and overwhelming impressions that are made upon our conscious organization. These facts reveal your spirit not only as a distinct entity, but also as the very center around which cluster all other elements of your being.

You often realize that there is a combat going on between the wishes of your mind and the wishes of your spirit—a combat that clearly reveals the distinguishing characters of both, and therefore cannot be attributed to the natural mind alone.

With reference to the future life, the natural mind says "I have enough to do to look after the present, which has been given me to enjoy." The soul, looking beyond this present life, says "Striving for purity and fitness for heaven is no burden to me; but it enables me to bear the toil and to re-

joice in the trials of the present life." The natural mind says "I will deal honestly with all men, enjoy the present, and let the future life take care of itself." The soul replies "My spiritual life is my best life—a precious life that claims my special care and love."

This combat clearly reveals a distinction in the nature of the objects upon which the affections of the natural mind are placed, and those in which the soul delights. And we notice their opposite character, and that they correspond to the character of the supplies by which the natural mind and the soul are nourished—natural knowledge for the natural mind, and supplies of spiritual perception and experience for the soul. If there were no other evidences, these facts alone are sufficient to prove that your natural mind and spritual mind are distinct and independent.

These natural proofs cannot be attributed to imagination. It is true, that to a certain extent we are indebted to the imaginative faculty of the human mind for all of our discoveries in science. To this extent only does imagination enter into the consideration of the natural proofs of a future life. Imagination sometimes builds its faith on misinterpretation of phenomena, and accepts as real that

which is unnatural. But we have found natural proofs of a future life for both the soul and the body.

It cannot truthfully be said that our religious experience is derived from impressions of things that do not exist, but which are brought into unreal being by our own imagination. It is well known that imagination cannot possibly excite emotion or draw a tear from your eye, unless its pictures are imaginations of things that are real; that is, of beings or things that really exist—other imaginations have no power to develop emotion. With this question in view, if you will look over any emotional novel, you will discover that the writer of the novel was well acquainted with this psychological fact. And the same is just as true concerning our enjoyment of spiritual communion with God and the heavenly world.

That the soul is an entity distinct from the body may also be learned from the bible. Turning from the natural evidences to the scriptures, we read 2 Cor. iv. 16 "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." This language of the apostle Paul clearly teaches the duality of our existence. And we find that the apostle Paul understood well the distinction between

his natural mind and the mind of his spirit. Rom. vii. 19 he says "The good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

And in the language that follows this statement, he recognizes the fact that to a limited extent your natural mind looking upward, may blend its activity with the mind of your spirit; and that the mind of your spirit reaching downward, may to a limited extent enter the domain of the natural. And furthermore, from both natural evidences and the scriptures we learn that this is true not only during natural life but also after death.

It is in this way that spiritual living persons are enabled to receive impressions from departed friends, and to hold spiritual communion with them, across the river that separates earthly life from the life and home of departed spirits.

And let us not forget that this is a pleasure which we and our friends in the spirit life can enjoy, only when our own souls are in a state like heaven; that is, entirely free from unkindness and impurity, and developed to perception of spiritual realities. By making it heavenly around us, we make it possible for our heavenly visitors to come and manifest their spiritual presence.

The fact that your body and your spirit are dis-

tinct and independent entities, is positive proof that your spirit may exist and live after the death of your body.

It is true that a human spirit may die. It may die while the body is yet living; it may die when the body dies, or after the death of the body. But the death of your spirit is a catastrophe which need not occur at all. And in your own case, you know that your spirit is living and conscious, as long as you experience a desire for spirituality and the heavenly life. The entire absence of such desires and of spiritual perception, is a token of the death or inactivity of the soul, and reveals the guilt of a fatal neglect. This is the "Sin unto death" spoken of 1 John v. 16, from which there is no resurrection, excepting through the exercise of divine recreating power, which God exercises in cases of spiritual restoration of human beings made in his own image. The Holy Spirit, speaking to such persons, issues a call Eph. v. 14, saying, "Awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;" thus revealing the grand fact of the possibility of a resurrection of dead souls in the present life. We are told that God gave not the Holy Spirit "by measure" to Jesus, who suffered for us on the cross; and that

“in him was life”—that life was “the light of men.” Your natural body, if neglected would starve to death; and your spirit, if left without nourishment will perish. And these sad results occur according to both natural and etherial laws.

All these lessons concerning the life and death of the soul, which have been obtained from nature, are likewise taught by the scriptures. Matt. x. 28 Jesus says “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body.” And Rom. vi. 23 Paul tells us that “The wages of sin is death; (that is, spiritual death) but the gift of God is eternal life (spiritual life) through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

And the teaching of Jesus is very plain as to how the life of your spirit is maintained, and how its stature and strength are increased. John vi. 27 he says “Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” We notice that he does not say that the meat is to make something else endure, but that the meat itself endures; that is, the meat being spiritual, when it is appropriated by your spirit becomes part of your spiritual body, and so endures forever.

The fact of an increase in spiritual capacities by the appropriation of spiritual perception and experience, proves that your soul grows and increases in stature—grows through the influence of life of a higher character than that which supports your natural body. In all the kingdoms of nature, we notice this law, that transition from a lower order to a higher one, is accomplished through the activity of the life of the order next above it.

A divinely implanted love of that which is spiritual nourishes your soul, controls your life and secures your entrance into the heavenly world, where no spiritual want can ever place your eternal life in peril again. John vi. 58 Jesus says “He that eateth of this bread (supplies that nourish the soul) shall live forever.”

Jesus is the bread of life to God’s people at every period in the world’s history—the mediator between God and man in every age. John speaks of Christ as the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” And Rev. xiii. 8 the apostle speaks of our Saviour as a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”—seen in Jewish types, in the previous promises, and intuitively by all those of whom Paul says (Rom. ii. 14) that they “Having not the law, are a law unto themselves.”

VI.

BOTH nature and the bible teach us that when our probation in the present life ends, it is over forever.

The danger is past for all pure and godly souls who reach the heavenly world; whether they enter upon the enjoyment of the place of departed spirits for more perfect development, or being already prepared, they enter at once the higher spheres of duty and happiness. Rev. xx. 6 we read "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: (the resurrection of spirits) on such the second death hath no power." The second death here referred to, evidently is the destruction of the earthly bodies of all living, in the burning world; and also the death of wicked souls, who for a little while live after the death of their earthly bodies. And in the 14th verse we are told that "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." The greek word hades here translated "hell," is evidently the unseen world or place of departed spirits.

The need of a place of departed spirits for the development of such persons as need development

and special care in the future, may be learned from the process required for our natural education. We know that the perfecting of the natural mind requires this same experience—first, the enjoyment of schools and colleges, and afterward the active duties and responsibilities of life.

From the fact that the place of departed spirits is to be destroyed in the burning world, we learn that it is connected with the earth or the earth's atmosphere.

The expression "place of departed spirits" which is frequently used, should be understood as meaning a state or condition of incapacity, as well as a particular locality where souls are retained. And it is in one department of the place of departed spirits, that the souls of the lost who may continue to live after the death of their bodies, will suffer the final dissolution of their spiritual organization.

And while they remain there, they are separated from the spirits of "just men" which are being "made perfect." In the 16th chapter of Luke you find the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. And in the 26th verse, the lost soul of the ungodly dead rich man testifies concerning his place and condition. He tells us that he was separated from those who are in heaven. He says "Between us and you

there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”

And we also learn from the teaching of Jesus in the 8th chapter of Matthew, that the souls of the lost are sometimes visible, and that they wander from place to place and take possession of living wicked people and control them.

On one occasion our Saviour cast out of a lunatic a “Legion;” that is, a great number of such spirits; and according to their request sent them amongst a herd of swine—not into the swine as some people suppose, but among them; and the spirits so frightened the swine that the entire herd rushed down a “steep place” into the sea and perished.

The wicked spirits then continued their efforts to take possession of other depraved human beings, with whom they could finish their own fast failing existence. The Saviour tells us that such a spirit is a devil. Eph. iv. 27 Paul tells us not to “Give place to the devil.” And James iv. 7 you are told to “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” That such dying souls are in that part of the place of departed spirits which appertains to the lost, and that it is not far away, we learn from Eph. ii. 2, where the apostle Paul tells us, that when such a

spirit takes possession of a wicked person, it rules as a prince rules. He says that such a spirit is a "Prince of the power of the air;" and that often such spirits "work in the children of disobedience."

In the scriptures the rebellious disposition of the ungodly world is sometimes personified, and called the devil and Satan. Job i. 7 we read that the Lord said to Satan "Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth." The same also is seen in the account of the miracle wrought upon the woman that was "bowed down" so that she could not straighten herself up. Luke xiii. 16 Jesus speaks of her as one "Whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years." And in the record of the miraculous cure of the "impotent man," recorded in the 5th chapter of John, we read that Jesus said to him "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." From these two passages we learn that sin was the Satan that bound the crooked form of the woman upon whom he had wrought the miracle.

Mark v. 7 we are told that a devil addressed our Saviour as "Jesus thou son of the most high God." This shows that a demon retains former human intelligence, knows the truth and sometimes speaks it. And these living spirits practice the same kind of

deception in our day. Transforming themselves into angels "of light," they sometimes come to christians when they are not expecting such temptation, and touch their experience pretending to be the Holy Spirit, and so teach them lies that lead them astray.

Wisdom also is sometimes personified. Prov. i. 20 we are told that "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets."

Owing to a misunderstanding of such passages, the belief is quite common that the bible teaches the existence of one huge personal devil or being, who exists somewhere in the universe, and successfully opposes God and his purposes concerning mankind.

The bible does not teach the existence of one great devil; but it teaches the existence of legions of devils. These devils are demons; that is, they are the disembodied spirits of certain wicked people—spirits who are dying or wasting away, and whose spiritual organizations will finally perish. As in their earthly life some of them were princes and others were less distinguished, so in their depraved and malicious spirit existence as they are passing away to the darkness of eternal death, they occupy the same positions among their evil associates that they did before the death of their bodies.

Rev. xvi. 14 we read of "Spirits of demons working miracles." As demons have no spirits, we may omit the preposition "of," and the meaning of this obscure passage is perfectly plain. It tells us that spirit demons work miracles; that is, demons are the spirits of depraved dead persons, yet alive and still exercising their diabolical power amongst mankind.

In the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, the tempter may have been the lost spirit of Herod, the ungodly king who tried to kill Jesus when he was an infant. Understanding well the political condition of the world and the controlling power of ambition, he endeavored to control and destroy Christ by inducing him to choose the honor of being the deliverer of the Jews and their king who would lead them to universal empire; instead of redeeming the world through suffering and death according to the scriptures. Herod was a notoriously wicked monarch. Besides all his other diabolical deeds, he murdered Marianna and her two sons; for which he afterward suffered terrible remorse. He was so wicked that Augustus said he "Would rather be Herod's swine than his son." Matt. ii. 16 we are told that he "Sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the

coasts thereof;" and he died in less than a year after that diabolical deed.

Matt. iv. 10-11 we are told that Jesus said to him "Get thee hence, Satan," and that "then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him; that is, angelic ministering spirits who are the companions of all godly persons, were present to encourage him, and to rejoice with him in his triumph over the prince demon. And Heb. iv. 15 we read that Jesus "Was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin."

Matt. xvi. 23 we read that Jesus said to Peter "Get thee hence Satan." If the bible meaning of the name Satan is one great being, it is logically necessary to understand this passage as meaning that Peter was that being. But such is not the teaching of Jesus. He meant that at that time Peter was under the influence of a demon.

This agrees perfectly with the teaching of the scriptures concerning Judas. John vi. 70 Jesus says "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." He certainly does not mean that Judas was the personal devil of the common belief, but he means that Judas was possessed of a demon. This is plain from John xiii. 27 where we are told that after Jesus had given the sop to Judas, Satan

entered into him." His body did not become the devil; but a devil or demon entered into him, and controlled his will and his actions.

Connected with this subject there is another error which is generally received. It is commonly believed that angels or spirits may fall from the security, happiness and purity of heaven.

This uncomfortable belief is founded entirely upon 2 Peter ii. 4 where we are told that "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell." The two similar passages, one of which is found in the 6th verse of Jude, and the other in the later apocryphal book of Enoch, evidently are quotations from this language of the apostle Peter.

By carefully reading the epistle of Jude, it will be seen that the "angels" or messengers spoken of are Moses and Aaron; and that the "habitation" which they ceased to seek for was Canaan. They left the ways of their "first" obedience and failed to reach the land of promise.

Their bodies died; and angels and devils disputed over the destiny of the earthly remains of these distinguished but imperfect servants of God. Their liberated souls continued to live and enjoy the presence of God in heaven, but their bodies

were bound "in chains under darkness;" that is, natural death. And Jude exhorts proud rebels to take warning from the fact that even the great messengers sent by God himself to lead the children of Israel, could not escape this consequence of their own rebellious ways; and tells them that death will also overtake them with all their pride. And he exhorted his brethren to preach to them the "faith which was once delivered to the saints," that they might find salvation through the Son God by whom only they could secure the eternal life of their souls.

Heaven itself gives assurance of the life, security and happiness of those who are there.

It may be said that if there is a spiritual existence after death, and if the relation between earthly life and the spirit life is so intimate, we should sometimes have tokens of the fact that our godly departed friends are still living. This certainly is a just conclusion. And that such manifestations do occur, is established by the testimony of persons whose word on any other subject would not be doubted; and by men and women who occupy positions of authority not only in society but in our churches. John Wesley says that he himself was permitted to enjoy the experience of such tokens. In his journal he wrote as follows: "On Friday July

3rd, I was sitting at dinner, when I heard some one coming along the passage. I looked around, and saw my aunt Margaret Scott of Newcastle standing behind me. On Saturday I had a letter informing me that she died that day." And Dr. Adam Clarke also, in his commentary says "I believe that spirits may have intercourse with this world and become visible to mortals. Surely we cannot believe that John Wesley and Dr. Adam Clarke were demented when they wrote these things. Indeed there are many spiritual people in our own day, who in their happy experience enjoy seasons of communion with heavenly spirits.

When we approach the narrow stream that separates the earthly life from the heavenly, it is reasonable that we should feel the land breezes of the hereafter, as we feel the land breezes of the ocean although the verdure clad hills may be too far away to be seen.

Let us not even for a moment feel that our faith in a future existence rests upon an imaginary foundation. In this one discourse, we have found four positive proofs of its reality. In the unchangeable character of the laws of the natural universe—in the fact that your body and spirit are distinct and independent entities—in the fact that your percep-

tion and enjoyment of spiritual life are enlarged through spiritual nutrition—and in the perfect agreement between the bible and nature in all of their teaching with reference to the subject.

And we may also add, that evidences of the reality of our future life, are of such a character that they are within reach of all mankind. This is clearly proven by the universality of the belief in a future existence, which is found in all nations—barbarous and civilized, ancient and modern; excepting a few of the most depraved tribes of undeveloped human beings, who consequently have not the faculty of spiritual perception.

VII.

THERE are many christian people who believe in the future life, but they are not fully satisfied as to its reality. They believe, but they are wishing for more convincing proofs. It is to help such persons that these natural evidences are offered. We have seen that the principal purpose for which the world exists, is to bring into being multitudes of human spirits to inhabit and enjoy heaven. We have found that after death the bodies of all mankind will be recreated and live again; and that this occurs according to the laws of nature. From the phenomena of our lives we have learned that our souls really exist, and that they live as distinct and independent entities; and that beyond death the continued life of every human soul is possible but not obligatory: and that although souls may be lost during earthly life, they may be recreated through the divine power of Christ. And we have seen that the teaching of nature corresponds with the teaching of the bible concerning all the grand facts which are connected with human existence on earth and in the future life.

As we carefully conducted you over this new field of thought, we endeavored to call your attention to every thing that is intimately connected with it; in order that you might feel more at home, enjoy with confidence the views, and trust more fully the proofs presented.

It may be said that if this is the correct mode of interpreting the scriptures, it would be seen and proclaimed by other ministers of the gospel. We reply, that the bible and the laws and phenomena of nature tell us that it certainly is the correct mode of interpretation; and it would be enjoyed by all churches, if it was not obscured and opposed by theological and denominational creeds; for it is quite common to find the bible used to establish creeds, rather than to study it only for the purpose of ascertaining its import, and the enjoyment of the light it reveals.

And this is the reason why so much of this discourse on the positive proofs of a future life is of a negative character—endeavoring to remove obstructions, in order that both the light of the bible and the light of nature may be seen.

The course we have pursued, in its character and in its purpose, is entirely different from the course pursued by infidels and atheists. They find that

the natural and scriptural bridge over the stream that separates the earthly from the heavenly life, has been rendered apparently dangerous to the faith and comfort of pilgrims crossing; and that in order to meet their extravagant views, religious creeds have pulled aside planks and spiked them fast—leaving what seem to be holes which alarm the passing traveler. And assuming that the bridge is a dangerous one, unkindly they endeavor to kick it from under our feet. But the bridge is sound and safe; and we have endeavored to repair the sectarian openings, and to make comfortable for all believers, their passage over the river that separates this world from the world which is to come.

And we sincerely hope that every one who prayerfully studies the proofs of a future life, as they are presented in this discourse, may receive light from both God's word and his works; and realize that fullness of assurance which alone can satisfy the longing of the human heart

VIII.

WE must not close this discourse without a few words, also, with reference to the mode of that life which we shall live in the world of spirits. Heaven is not far away from those who have spiritual experience. And even far off regions are near; for in the heavenly life it will require no more time to travel a million of miles, than it does now for our thoughts to cross the ocean, or for an electric signal to flash around the world—such is the rapidity of many of the ethereal movements. And with reference to this, the scriptures agree with the teaching of nature. In 1 Corinthians, fifteenth chapter, the apostle Paul, speaking of the wonderful rapidity of spiritual changes and movements, describes them as occurring in “A moment in the twinkling of an eye.”

We may gain much information concerning the nature of spirit life, from the study of the resurrection of the spirit and body of Jesus. Rev. i. 5 we are told that Jesus is “The first begotten of the dead;” that is, the first begotten to eternal life under the christian dispensation. The resurrection of

the natural body of Jesus was a miracle. God did not violate natural laws, but hastened the operation of those that govern resurrection. That this is possible, is seen in the fact that a gardener hastens the laws of vegetation, and succeeds in bringing for our use lettuce and radishes long before their natural season. In the present life perhaps we may not know how the resurrection of Jesus was accomplished, for with reference to many things we "see through a glass darkly." Human faculties are limited—limited as to the extent of their powers. There are sounds which we cannot hear, light that we cannot see, and there are natural and ethereal laws that our finite minds cannot fully comprehend. Some persons can hear better than others, and some persons can see things which are invisible to others. And so it is with regard to our spiritual capacities. Some persons can realize God's existence only as a constructing power; but there are others who through a development of their powers of spiritual discernment recognize his personality, and others who recognize his presence as a loving Father.

It is no argument against the positive character of these proofs, for scoffers at the reality of spiritual existence to say that they cannot see these

things. They should not expect to see them. They deny the existence of their own souls, and consequently must be without spiritual education or experience, and enjoy only to a limited extent the faculty of spiritual perception.

Rom. iv. 25 we are told that Jesus was "Raised again for our justification;" that is, for the justification of our faith in him as our Saviour, and for the justification of our faith in the future life, because we learn so many things regarding that life, from the phenomena connected with his appearances after his resurrection—facts which enable us to understand the nature of our own future existence and to believe in its reality.

In the history of the risen Lord, we find that on certain occasions he was not recognized by his most intimate friends; and, that afterwards they recognized him. He passed through doors that were locked and appeared suddenly in the midst of his disciples. He ascended and a cloud received him out of their sight. And after his ascension he was seen by Stephen and by Paul—men whose vision for a moment was exalted that they might enjoy the spiritual view.

That such an increase of vision is within the limits of natural law we learn from Num. xxii. 23-31,

where we are told, that the dumb animal on which Balaam was riding saw an "Angel of the Lord standing in the way," and that afterward "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel."

In the spirit life our distance from each other will not be measured by our positions in space, but by our agreement in our spiritual tastes and purposes. In all these things they who dwell in heaven are one to such an extent that perfect peace and joy prevails. And no doubt this is one great reason why Jesus prayed so earnestly for his people that "They may be one"—a prayer which is recorded John xvii. 11. And it is because humility is essential to such unity and happiness, that Matt. xviii. 3 he says "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"—heaven, where our spiritual work will never weary us, and where differences will never trouble us.

Perhaps the most useful lesson we have learned from our investigation is, that without nourishment our spirits will perish. Many souls do die. There are men and women concerning whom we may truthfully say that they are living natural bodies only.

Whether we are young, middle aged or old, we

all need a spiritual shepherd's care—one who will give us "our daily bread." The heavenly Shepherd is here. He cares for all of his fold, and supplies our spiritual nature with heavenly manna—angels' food—supplies of spiritual instruction, perception and experience. John vi. 63 Jesus says "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

The life, teaching, example, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ explain the mysteries of your life, your death and your resurrection. And thus Jesus is with us and will be with us, and be our support and our guide, when we shall be called to pass through the "valley and shadow of death.

Those who are living spiritual lives, may indeed rejoice that they are able to say in the words of the familiar lines—

There is no such thing as death;
'Tis but the blossom spray,
Dropping before the coming fruit
That seeks the summer's ray.
'Tis but the bud displaced
Before the perfect flower.
'Tis only faith exchanged for sight,
And weariness for power.

It is evident that your earthly body is represented in the organization of your spirit; and also,

that you will possess and use all of your present senses, but only as they are now possessed and used by your spirit—in enjoyment and work of spiritual character.

During earthly life, the bodies and minds of all human beings are modified and bear the impress of their own sexual character. But in heaven these distinctions are unknown, except in the happy recollection of earth's most sacred relations.

The fact that you will retain your identity and individual peculiarities is not incredible, if we remember that every few years during your present life, the matter of which your body is composed all is exchanged for other earthly materials, and yet you remain the same person.

As now with your natural hand you grasp an object, or with your mind you grasp a thought, so your spirit will hold the realities of spirit life; and enjoy them in the companionship of those you love.

We will converse with our friends, unencumbered by earthly organs of speech—using our own language, by impression in spiritual ways.

Professor Lodge, president of the mathematical section of the British Association for the advancement of science, says he is fully convinced that even in the present life, the mind of one person

can speak to the mind of another by other means than those usually recognized; in other words, that mind reading is an established fact.

In heaven, neither electricity or heat will have power to harm us. In the third chapter of Daniel, we are told that Shedrach Meshach, Abed-nego and an angel were seen walking in the fiery furnace. The bodies of the three Hebrew children which were seen in the furnace, evidently were their spiritual bodies. Their earthly bodies were consumed; and the bodies seen were of the same nature as the body of the angel that was present with them. This is a reasonable view of the miracle, because in the scriptures there are records of other cases in which angels appeared as natural men, and executed their work as naturally as these three Hebrew children did after their victory over the flames, when they were elevated to important positions in the administration of the government.

Nicola Tesla, the distinguished scientist, by a wonderful experiment which he recently made, has proved that a deadly current of electricity, when it is increased to thirty or forty thousand volts with three to five thousand interruptions per second, is changed in its character and becomes harmless to the human body. He himself, on several

occasions received such a current of electricity, without experiencing any uncomfortable sensations.

In the spirit life, age is not recognized and decay is unknown; but passing days and hours are precious because of the opportunities for work and enjoyment that they bring.

When the bodies of our friends are dying, their spirits have reason to wonder at our apparent spiritual indifference and want of faith and understanding, as we remain at a distance from them, while they are trying to draw us nearer to the bright cloud which they are entering that we may see the spiritual scenes that are breaking upon their view. But they lose sight of our imperfections, and we may rest assured that when they enter the heavenly world they will leave the "gates ajar," and place a "light in the window" as a token of love and solicitude for our welfare—frequently coming near us to comfort us, and to hold communion with us—indicating their presence by impressions which they make upon our spiritual nature. And we should remember that this is possible only when our own souls are in a state like heaven—developed, free from unkindness and free from impurity.

Heb. i. 14 we read of the heavenly "Ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be

heirs of salvation"—spirits who endeavor to raise our affections above transitory things, that they may be placed upon things in heaven.

Many facts relating to heaven, may be learned from the sermons of talented christian ministers.

Scepticism has its men of talent—Hegel, Strauss, Bauer, Renan, Weisse and Shenkel; but it does not include in its ranks the most brilliant minds nor the highest scientific authorities. The roll call of christianity reveals the names of the great astronomers Kepler, Copernicus and Newton—the geologists Agassiz and Lyell; and statesmen, explorers, botanists, Music composers and poets are represented by Gladstone, Washington, Columbus, Stanley, Linnæus, Gray, Hayden, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Milton and Longfellow. And the list of religious teachers, even in our own country, includes Talmage, Shipman, Hamilton, Crosby, Inglis, Hall and Simpson. And from the pulpits that are filled by these preachers, who are men of the highest culture, honesty and logical training, you may learn many things about the future life. They agree in their teaching.

Heaven is not so far away as we may think. It lies all about us; and when we go hence we shall not go far. Christians may rejoice in the assurance

that as they go along life's dusty highway and climb its hills, they are not alone—unseen friends are in our company, lending us strength and helping our footsteps as we move towards heaven.

The partition between this world and heaven is far thinner than we think. If our view was not obscured by noise and smoke of earth's machinery, perhaps we might see the heavenly world. Sometimes, to the dying, that partition is so thin that they are able to see and hear through it.

The scriptures tell us that the veil has been taken away. An angel rescued Peter from prison. In Gethsemane an angel appeared to strengthen Jesus, and an angel rolled the stone from the door of his sepulchre.

To those who are living spiritual lives, the invisible is not dark but glorious. Bishop Simpson says, that in his experience, sometimes the veil becomes so thin that he is conscious of the presence of spiritual forms.

Your dear ones that have been taken away—your beloved child, your godly father, your christian mother, your faithful wife—if they have gone on before you, are not far away—only beyond the line of the invisible. There is music around us, although we may not hear it. There are forms

about us, though in the busy scenes of life we recognize them not. 1 Cor. xiii. 12 Paul says "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; that is, when we shall go to be forever "present with the Lord."

The veil of the future will soon be lifted for all the "pure in heart" and the invisible will appear. We shall behold the reality and beauty of the heavenly land, where at last we may enter into that perfect rest which is unknown in this lower world. How often we ask the questions and hear the answers which are expressed in the familiar poetical lines—

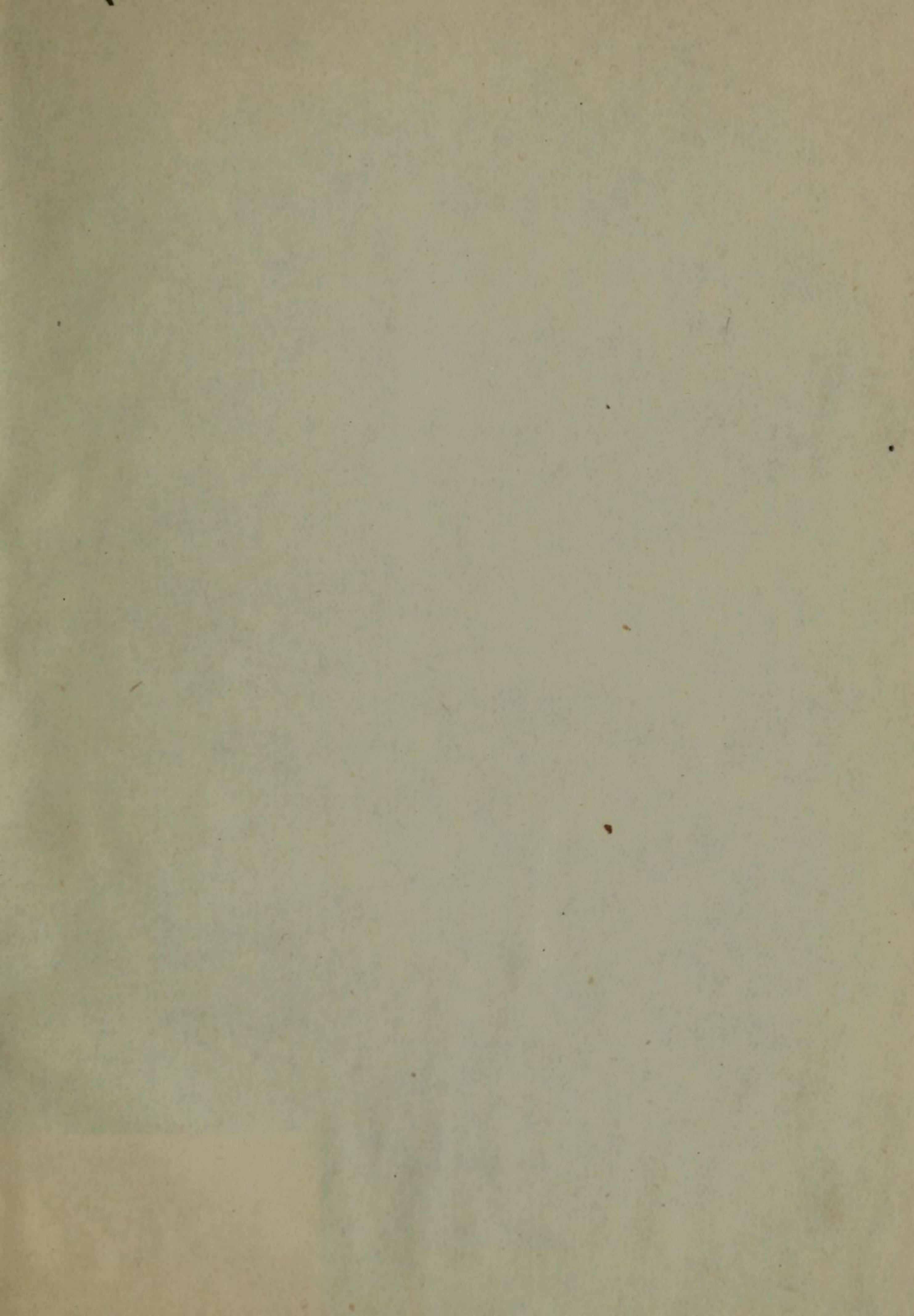
Tell me thou mighty deep
 Whose billows round me play,
 Know'st thou some favored spot,
 Some island far away,
 Where weary man may find
 The bliss for which he sighs—
 Where sorrows never come
 And pleasure never dies?
 The loud waves ceased their turbid flow,
 And sighed the plaintive, no!

Tell me my secret soul,
 Oh! tell me hope and faith,
 Is there no resting place
 From sorrow, sin and death?

Is there no happy spot
Where grief may find a balm
And weariness a rest?
Faith, hope and love,
Best boons to mortals given,
Waved their bright wings,
And answered, yes, in heaven.

We should esteem it as our highest privilege and duty to cultivate a love for that which is pure and spiritual; that we may have no fear of the future, but feel as Paul did when he wrote those words of confidence, 2 Cor. v. 8—"Willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord." And thus rejoicing, we may journey onward and upward toward the heavenly mansions. And by and by our faith and hope will be lost in the realities of spiritual life; and all the trials of this world will be forgotten in the perfect happiness of our home in heaven.





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