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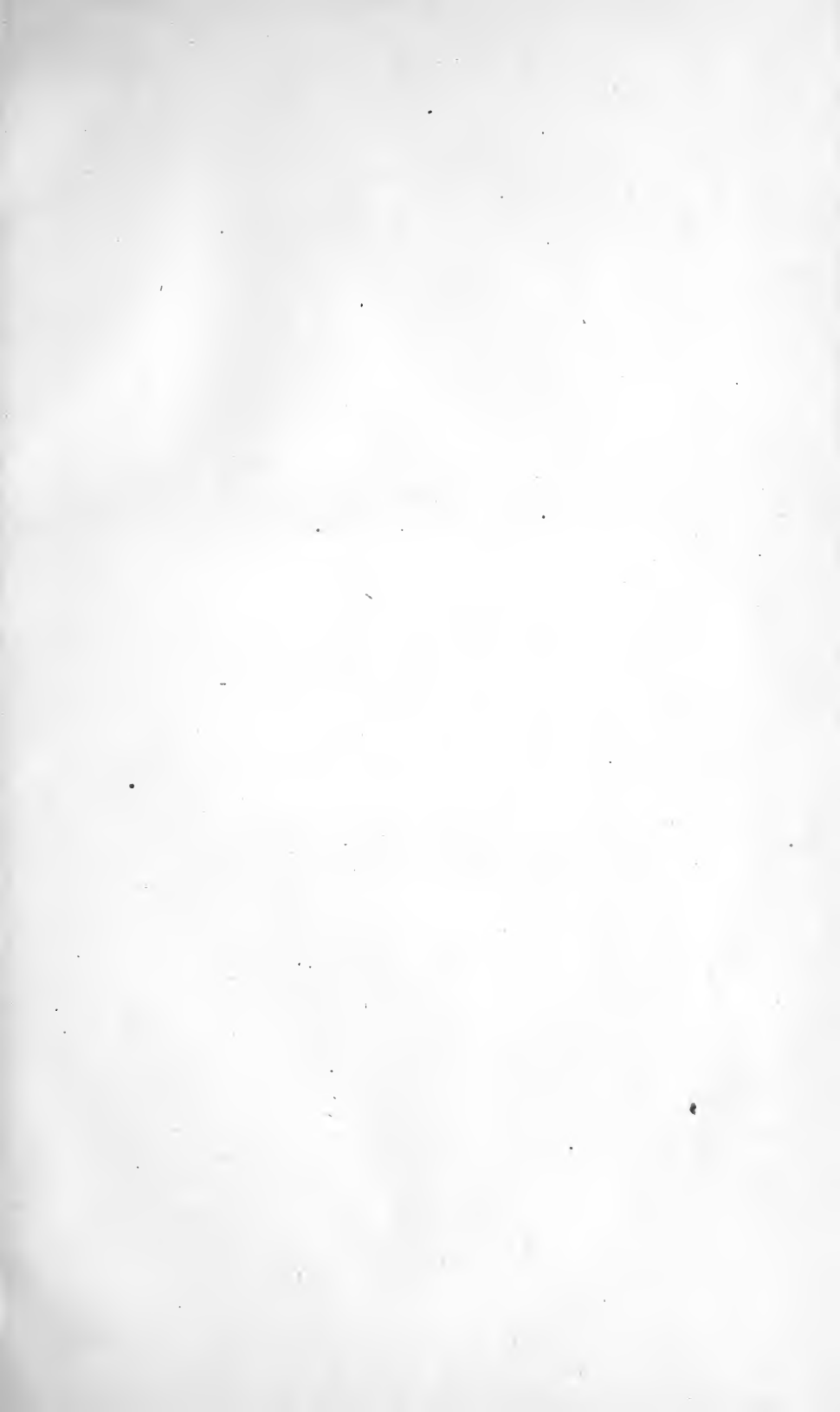
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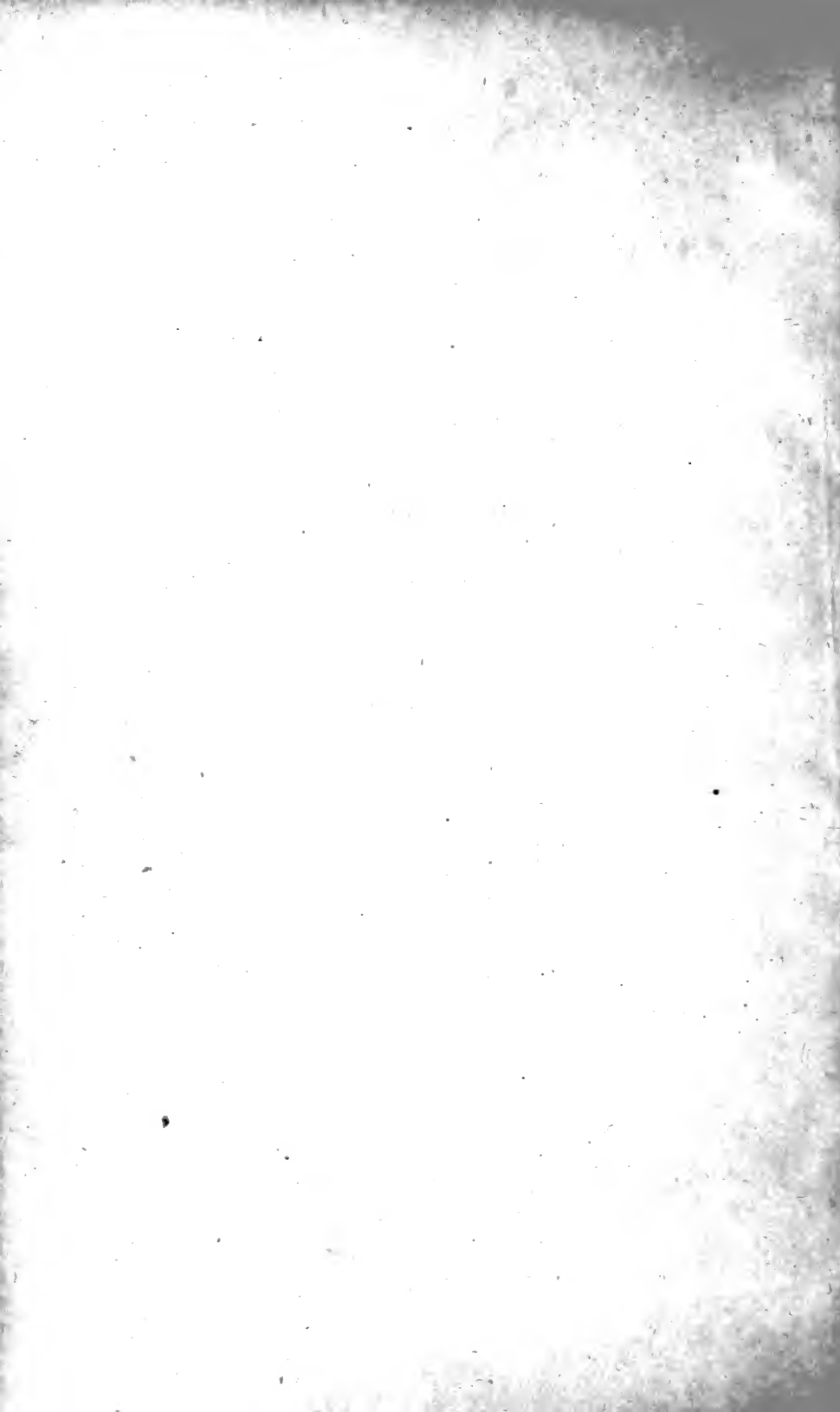
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









THE

OXFORD ESSAYS,

AND

BADEN POWELL ON MIRACLES.

BY

JOHN COTTON SMITH,

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION.



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WE have experienced a sensible feeling of relief after the reading of this volume of Essays. It was with some little apprehension, we confess, that we began its perusal. The flourish of trumpets with which its approach was heralded, and the acknowledged ability of its authors, led us to fear, not indeed that the advocates of the truth would be vanquished, but that some phase of error so original and portentous might arise, as to render necessary a thorough review of the Evidences of Christianity. But while we believe that this book will be the cause of great evil, and that its influence should in every way be counteracted, we confidently assert that there is nothing new in it which is at all important in its bearing on the great subject of which it treats. The views which it presents are perfectly familiar to those who are acquainted with the German philosophy and theology of the last thirty years, and have been advocated again and again in this

country with far more of learning and ability than this work displays.*

It is impossible for us to regard this work otherwise than as an assault upon Christianity; for if there is any thing definite and distinct in the Christian system, if that name carries with it any clear and positive idea to the popular mind, it is all either directly or by implication assailed in this book. It is not as if certain doctrines of the faith had been made the subject of assault; the attack is upon the very foundation upon which they all rest. The Revelation which contains them is reduced below the level of other books, for even its historical authority is denied, and we are at least left to the inference that any supernatural intervention in the affairs of men is incredible.

We have been very much struck with one feature in these "Essays." There is no sensibility manifested to the pain and sorrow which must be experienced by vast numbers of persons if the positions of these authors are well founded. Theirs is emphatically a work of destruction. They have nothing to offer in the place of that which they seek to destroy. They would sweep away our faith in a divine Revelation—then in miracles—then in the resurrection of Christ—then, necessarily, in the life and immortality which He brought to light—and leave us perhaps, though even of that we are not assured, some naked abstractions about "Intuition" and "Absolute Truth." Now a man may think it would be for our spiritual benefit to lose a dear and valued friend, but we may well expect some ex-

* The decline of Rationalism in Germany is well worthy of notice in connection with its late appearance in the Church of England. One evidence of this decline is found in the fact, that while there are in Germany three Lutheran and seven Evangelical organs, there is but one avowedly Rationalistic, the *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, published at Jena.

pression of sympathy when he comes to communicate our loss ; and it strikes us as evidence of no little insensibility, or else of but little expectation of success, when these essayists attempt to rob us of what is most precious to the soul, and offer us nothing in the way of compensation or comfort.

There is another remark which we wish to make upon the Essays as a whole, before we proceed to the consideration of the one which is the special subject of this article. What seems to us a very unfair imputation is cast upon those who receive what are generally regarded as the doctrines of Christianity. It is either directly asserted or covertly implied that they set themselves in opposition to well-established scientific facts, and even to the use of reason, in ascertaining or defending the Truth. On this point we are perfectly willing to join issue ; and we assert that there is no class of men more favorable to scientific inquiry, or who have done more for institutions of learning both in England and this country, none who have in a greater degree encouraged the consideration of Christianity on rational grounds, than those who hold the very principles which in this volume are so persistently assailed.*

Our special object in this article is to consider the Essay entitled "The Study of the Evidences of Christianity," by Baden Powell, M.A., F.R.S. This Essay is selected, since it seems to us to relate to certain princi-

* The view of intelligent, orthodox men on this point is well expressed by Bourdaloue : " La foi, je dis la foi Chrétienne, n'est point un pur acquiescement à croire, ni une simple soumission de l'esprit, mais un acquiescement et une soumission raisonnables ; et si cette soumission, si cette acquiescement, n'étaient pas raisonnables, ce ne serait plus une vertu. Mais comment sera-ce un acquiescement, une soumission raisonnables, si la raison n'y a point de part ?" *Œuvres de Bourdaloue*, tome iii. 336.

ples which must be settled before we can profitably engage in further inquiry.

The recent death of Prof. Powell admonishes us to deal charitably with his opinions, and places us, as it were, under an affecting and sacred obligation to the utmost fairness and candor in the consideration of his views. This obligation we wish to recognize; but unless we have wholly misunderstood the drift and significance of this and other writings of Prof. Powell, we can not but express our profound sorrow that abilities so great should have been so sadly perverted to the inculcation of the most dangerous error.

Before entering upon the subject proper of his Essay, Prof. Powell attempts to remove the objection which he supposes to be felt to the discussion of the Evidences of Christianity from his point of view. He says, we are sure, without any just foundation: "It is the common language of orthodox writings and discourses to advise the believer, when objections or difficulties arise, not to attempt to offer a precise answer or to argue the point, but rather to look at the whole subject as of a kind which ought to be exempt from critical scrutiny, and be regarded with a submission of judgment, in the spirit of humility."* We have already referred to the glaring injustice of such an imputation, and we now say, that any such assertion, in the face of the immense amount of research and critical inquiry which is constantly being made by the advocates of orthodox opinions, is utterly without warrant. Those persons certainly indicate the strongest confidence in the consistency and truth of every part of the Scriptures, and their willingness to subject them to the closest scrutiny, who are the most actively concerned in their universal

* Page 111.

diffusion ; and so far is it from being the case that there is any concealed or half-conscious suspicion of the truth of the Scriptures on the part of intelligent, orthodox men, that they are the very ones to promote, in every way, its widest circulation, to encourage every effort to ascertain its real meaning, and to furnish all the facilities from history and from science, that the inquiry may be conducted with success.

The implication here is, that orthodox men are not willing to hear and answer the objections urged against their views. This we must, without qualification, deny, and we need only to point to the interminable series of works in answer to such objections, as a sufficient refutation of the charge. But it would be strange indeed if orthodox men were not pained at the opposition which is waged against truths of the most vital importance. Are we expected to be indifferent in such a matter as this ? Shall we regard the denial of any and all truth with composure ? May the very principles of morality be assailed, and no objection urged against the assault by those to whom such principles are dear ? When such objections are urged, we are willing to refute them, but must at the same time be permitted to regret the necessity. And therefore, while we do not hesitate to consider the difficulties presented in this Essay of Prof. Powell, we must say that the suggestion of such difficulties, from such a quarter, is a just cause of the deepest shame and sorrow.

We do not wish to impute to this Essay any opinions which it does not clearly and unmistakably express. Unhappily, Prof. Powell has not expressed himself with perfect clearness ; or if his apparent is to be taken as his real meaning, then he has not expressed himself consistently, and his various statements become absolutely irreconcilable. The subject of the Essay is the

evidence in behalf of Christianity from miracles. Two points seem to be presented for discussion: one is the credibility of miracles; the other is the value of them as evidences of Christianity. Now as to the impression which the Essay will generally make as to the author's opinion on these points, we can have no doubt. Inevitably the conclusion will be, that the author considers miracles as of no value as evidences of Christianity, and for the reason that he considers them intrinsically incredible and impossible. This, we say, will inevitably be the general conclusion, and certainly with justice, unless we suppose what is said on this point to be grossly inconsistent, and without any meaning or significance whatever. In reference to the credibility and possibility of miracles, we find in this Essay the following language: "The enlarged critical and inductive study of the natural world can not but tend powerfully to evince the inconceivableness of imagined interruptions of natural order or supposed suspensions of the laws of matter."* "In nature and from nature, by science and by reason, we neither have nor can possibly have any evidence of a Deity working miracles; for that we must go out of nature and beyond reason."† We find also, it is true, passages which seem to imply that miracles are objects of faith, and as such to be believed. It is said: "Miraculous narratives become invested with the character of articles of faith."‡ "In the popular acceptance, it is clear the Gospel miracles are always objects, not evidences, of faith."§ Now if it is really meant to be asserted in this Essay that miracles are objects of faith, and that as such we are to believe that they really occurred, we can only say that it is utterly irreconcilable with the plain mean-

* Page 124.

† Page 160.

‡ Page 160.

§ Page 161.

ing of such passages as we have just before quoted. We are reminded, by this portion of the Essay, of the audacity of Hume, who, after a labored argument to prove that no amount of testimony could make a miracle credible, says: "Our most holy religion is founded on faith, not on reason."* If these statements of Prof. Powell mean any thing, it is an admission that without them the whole Essay would show itself to be an unqualified assault upon the very foundations of Christianity, or even of natural religion. That they do not mean to indicate the author's real conviction, that we are to believe, by faith, that miraculous events ever occurred, is evident from a comparison of two passages in this Essay; one of which is as follows, "The case of the alleged external attestations of revelation is one essentially involving considerations of *physical* evidence;"† and the other is this: "Matters of clear and positive fact, investigated on critical grounds, and supported by exact evidence, are properly matters of knowledge, not of faith."‡

One of these passages certainly declares that miracles essentially involve considerations of *physical* evidence, and the other, that matters of clear and positive fact (and such certainly are those which pertain to physical evidence) are properly matters of knowledge, not of faith.

If the question presented in this Essay concerns merely the relative value of miracles as evidences of Christianity, we do not care to argue it. But if the question is, whether we have any reasonable ground for believing that miraculous events ever occurred, then we have a subject presented of the most vital import-

* Hume's Works, vol. 4, p. 149.

† Page 149.

‡ Page 144.

ance, and are to meet objections which are fatal, not only to revealed, but also to natural religion.

The key-note to this Essay is the alleged "inconceivableness of interruptions of natural order, or suspensions of the laws of matter."*

We feel that we have a right to complain, at once, of the definition which is thus given of a miracle, and of the attempt which is thus made to prejudice scientific minds against miracles by implying their contrariety to the course of nature. Prof. Powell must certainly have known that the view of miracles and nature taken by the most celebrated Christian philosophers, from St. Augustine to the present time, makes them perfectly harmonious with each other, and is itself perfectly consistent with the universality of law and the principles of inductive philosophy.

We feel also that we have good reason to complain that Prof. Powell has endeavored to excite a prejudice against a belief in miracles by representing such a conviction as inconsistent with the progress of science. This is certainly contradicted by facts, and is an appeal rather to pride than to reason, for there is nothing which is more likely to induce men to change their opinions, however unreasonable such a change may be, than to represent those opinions as founded in ignorance. We say also that this charge is contradicted by facts, for it is certain that the progress of scientific inquiry has illustrated and confirmed the Christian view of this subject.

One can hardly repress a smile when Prof. Powell refers to the "palpable contradictions between the facts of astronomy and the letter of the Scriptures;"† for every body uses precisely the language of the Bible in

* Page 124.

† Page 145.

reference to this matter, and no one ever thinks of charging it with being inconsistent with the science of astronomy. And although the Copernican system is perfectly established, people will undoubtedly continue to speak to the end of time, just as the Bible does, of the "rising and setting sun," and of the "earth which can not be moved," although the sun does not move around the earth, and the earth does move around the sun. And to the end of time, men generally will no more question the veracity of the Bible for such language, than they would the veracity of each other, for the same reason.

When Prof. Powell implies that geology has disclosed contradictions between science and revelation, is he not bound to tell us that there is an interpretation of the account of the creation which the first geologist of this age has pronounced to be uncontradicted even in its minutest details by the results of geological inquiry;* and that this interpretation is in its essential features that which was well known and favorably regarded ages before Geology came to vindicate it and show its correctness? But Prof. Powell not only disregards these facts; he goes still further. He represents the science of the day as having rejected the idea of "creation" altogether.† He goes so far as to say: "A work has now appeared by a naturalist of the most acknowledged authority — Mr. Darwin's masterly volume on 'The Origin of Species,' by the law of 'natural selection,' which now substantiates on undeniable grounds the very principle so long denounced by the first naturalists — *the origination of new species by natural causes*; a work which must soon bring about an entire

* Testimony of the Rocks. Hugh Miller. Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

† Page 156.

revolution of opinion in favor of the grand principle of the self-evolving powers of nature.”* Now whether Mr. Darwin’s theory, supposing it to be true, confirms Prof. Powell’s views, we do not feel called upon to decide. We can understand that it might be perfectly consistent with an enlightened Theism; but it is an assertion utterly untrue that Mr. Darwin “substantiates on undeniable grounds the origination of new species by natural causes.” His theory, whether true or false, whether favorable or unfavorable to revealed truth, has not gained the recognition of the highest scientific authorities; but has, on scientific grounds, been explicitly condemned. Agassiz, in his 3d volume of *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, has subjected it to a most thorough and rigid examination, and emphatically rejected it. He says: “I consider the transmutation theory as a scientific mistake, untrue in its facts, unscientific in its method, and mischievous in its tendency.”†

Now it is certainly unwarrantable, in the face of such authority on the question of the origin of species, or the creation of the world, to claim that the present state of science on these subjects countenances the no-miracle theory, or renders the antecedent credibility of miracles, in any sense, less than it was before. The bearing of the great scientific discoveries of the present is, to our mind, exactly the reverse. If there is any one clear and indisputable result of these investigations, it is the universality of law; and the conclusion necessarily drawn from that fact, that the Creator of the world is an Infinite Intelligence. And since science has utterly failed to detect any ma-

* Page 157.

† Agassiz’s *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, vol. 3, p. 113.

terial bond which unites different phenomena together, but only indicates to us by the fact of a connection between them, according to some fixed and definite law, the presence of a supreme Intelligence, it has done away with the idea of blind and unintelligent causes, has exhibited the supremacy of an omnipotent *Will* in nature, and has thus laid the foundation for a belief in the *possibility* of miracles. Every discovery in science which brings to light some law of action—and especially when it brings this law, as all scientific investigation is doing, into harmony with some universal system of law—adds to the already overwhelming evidence of Intelligence and Will in nature. But the stronger the evidence of a supreme Intelligence and omnipotent Will in nature, the stronger is the evidence of the possibility of miracles. The wonderful discoveries which have been recently made, adding so vastly to our knowledge of the laws of nature, must make upon every philosophical mind the impression that it is looking through these laws upon the very workings of an infinite Will; that the choice of one method of operation rather than another, is founded upon considerations of the highest reason; and that therefore it is perfectly *conceivable* that for causes influencing the divine Mind, this general method of operation may be superseded by another and special method, and that thus a miracle may occur. The whole drift of modern science, in this respect, strengthens, therefore, the conclusion of the possibility of miracles, under circumstances which render such a change in the Divine method of operation desirable. We say, under such circumstances, because science is not only confirming the possibility of miracles, but is showing that many events rashly supposed to be miraculous, but for the supposed miraculous character of which no adequate cause could be assigned, are not

really supernatural. Thus science is at once deepening our impression of the possibility of miracles, and narrowing the circle of them to those great emergencies and necessities of our race, which are worthy of the special intervention of God.

But more than this, there is another respect in which modern science has reached results most favorable in their bearing for the advocates of miracles. The fact of the creation of new species of animal life—or to use another form of expression, the appearance of new forms of life, wholly disconnected from any preceding chain of causes and effects—presents *precisely the difficulty* which has led Professor Powell to pronounce a miracle inconceivable. Until recently, the fact of the appearance of entirely new species of animal life upon our globe, since the creation, was not known. But scientific discovery has brought this fact to light. The weight of authority, at the present time, is overwhelmingly in favor of the disconnection of these new species from any preceding ones, or from any preceding chain of causes and effects whatever. Not one single fact has ever been discovered to prove any such connection. There is nothing but the mere *theory* of the transmutation of species upon which any such alleged connection can rest. Now if new species have appeared upon our globe, entering into the system of causes and effects without previous connection with it, that event is a direct exercise of Divine power, breaking in upon a system of established laws, and is, in all the respects which make a miracle inconceivable in the view of Professor Powell, itself a *miracle*, and attested by the indisputable evidence of science. And if these new species should, after all, be shown to be causally connected with previous forms of life, still the advocates for miracles would have lost nothing which they pos-

sessed before these discoveries were made; and they would still have gained the confirmation which science has afforded to the conceivableness or possibility of miraculous intervention. And even then, the fact of the actual occurrence of miracles in nature is moved only one step further back, for we are compelled by the very laws of thought to choose between creation and the eternity of nature. But the eternity of nature is pantheism or atheism, and creation is MIRACLE.

There is a tendency, not in science, but in certain scientific men, to seek for a higher degree of certainty in scientific results, but only at the expense of degrading it to the narrowest limits. The great leader in this tendency was the late August Comte, who taught that science has to do only with the laws of phenomena, and is incompetent to inquire into their causes. Of the spirit of this philosophy Professor Powell seems to have partaken. This is indicated in what he has to say of the dissociation of the physical and spiritual—making the first only the object of knowledge, the latter the object merely of faith. He thus excludes all spiritual facts and truths from the domain of science and knowledge, and virtually limits all certainty to our knowledge of physical phenomena. According to this philosophy, we can indeed know nothing of any miraculous agency. We may be satisfied of the occurrence of certain extraordinary events, but we can not attribute them to any miraculous cause. No; nor to any cause whatever; for this philosophy shuts us out, not only from miraculous causes, but from all other causes also. It forbids us to refer phenomena to any cause. It knows of no causes in the universe, and is thus blind to the agency and even to the very existence of God. It is well that we should understand the exact position and tendency of this system of thought, and that it dis-

claims all knowledge of miraculous agency only at the expense of disclaiming all knowledge of any causes whatsoever in nature.

And in this connection it may be well to inquire what is meant by this school of writers who speak of knowledge on the one hand and faith on the other, confining the first to the physical and the latter to the spiritual world. Is it meant by objects of faith that they are realities, in the existence of which we are to believe? But on what grounds, we may inquire, is this belief to be exercised? A belief which does not rest upon evidence is worth little; and if it does rest upon evidence it is a conviction or conclusion of the mind, the logical result of a process of reasoning, and valid or otherwise according to the sufficiency of the evidence upon which it is based. If this evidence is valid, then the conclusion of the mind involves knowledge no less than faith. We must not suffer ourselves to be misled by any such distinction between knowledge and faith. The real question presented is whether we have reasonable grounds for believing that what are called miracles ever occurred; in other words, is there sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that the inauguration of Christianity into the world was accompanied by miraculous manifestations?

This is, in the first place, simply a question of fact, to be determined like any other question of fact. The whole question, at the outset of our inquiry, reduces itself to this: did any fact occur in connection with the establishment of Christianity, in reference to which a question could arise as to whether it was a miracle? Was there any fact apparently so out of the ordinary course of things, in itself so suggestive of the supernatural, as to give any countenance to the idea that it was miraculous? We can first examine this question,

and if we find that there is evidence that any such fact occurred, we can then inquire whether there is any good reason for referring it to miraculous agency.

In prosecuting this inquiry we shall confine our investigation to one fact, although we are really entitled to avail ourselves of the accumulation of difficulties thrown in the way of our opponents by the necessity of explaining how so large a number of miraculous events as we find in the New Testament came to be attributed to the Founder of our religion. And we shall waive also for the present all considerations of the antecedent probability of miracles, although such considerations would lead us to regard favorably any testimony in behalf of such events. We will inquire simply whether there is any such evidence, as should be considered satisfactory, to prove that any extraordinary event, not explicable by any known laws of nature, occurred in connection with the first promulgation of Christianity in the world. Now the resurrection of Christ, if it occurred, is manifestly an event of this kind, and furnishes a test by which the whole question of the actual occurrence of miracles may be tried. And this presents to us two problems to be solved, namely, did the fact of Christ's resurrection actually occur; and if it occurred, was it truly a miracle?

Now on all the principles of historical evidence, looking at the question without any prejudices for or against miracles, there is no fact in history which stands upon a firmer basis than the resurrection of Christ. It is to be observed here that while we are willing to consider this question simply as a matter of fact, on the ordinary principles of historical evidence, Prof. Powell is not so disposed, but prejudges the testimony on the ground of the intrinsic inconceivableness and impossibility of miracles. He thus places himself virtually

on the same ground with Hume, who asserts that no amount of testimony is sufficient to prove a miracle.

Now in considering this matter we do not assume that the resurrection of Christ, if it occurred, was a miracle. We only wish to inquire whether such an event did really occur. And we claim the right to treat this, as Prof. Powell complains that orthodox men are unwilling to treat it, simply as a question of fact, to be determined like any other fact, by testimony, and without any bias against the fact, arising from any supposed impossibility of miracles. If it turns out to be a fact, it is open to any one to deny that it was a miracle. That is not now the question. We are now concerned simply with the inquiry whether the alleged fact of Christ's resurrection rests upon unimpeachable testimony.

Nothing, it seems to us, can be added to the masterly treatment of this subject by Paley. It is easy to sneer at Paley, and much easier and cheaper than to attempt to answer his arguments. So far is his work on the *Evidences of Christianity* from becoming obsolete, as Prof. Powell asserts, that Archbishop Whately has only met a deep want of the age in editing it, and accompanying it with his admirable Annotations.* As the argument of this book is of the nature of demonstration, and is not likely to be improved upon, we need only to commend it to our readers as exhibiting a striking contrast in thoroughness of research and cogency of reasoning to the *Essays and Reviews*. It is only necessary for us to indicate the principal points in this argument, and the process by which each step is conclusively established may be examined in the work itself.

No historical fact, then, is more conclusively estab-

* Paley's *Evidences*. With Whately's Annotations. James Miller, New-York.

lished than that the assertion of Christ's resurrection was made by His Apostles and original disciples. And this certainty, it must be remembered, does not depend at all upon our belief in the divine authority of the Scriptures. It could be established even if the Four Gospels did not exist. This fact is fatal to the idea that the story of the resurrection was a gradual growth, like some of the supernatural accounts in heathen mythology. Such accounts require time for their development, and the absence of contemporary records, that they may not be immediately refuted. The original Christian story asserted the resurrection of Christ as a fact occurring not in a far distant past, but at that very time. It is also certain that many of those by whom the resurrection was asserted, declared that they themselves had seen Jesus alive after his death and burial. Of this, at least, there can be no doubt that we have now in our possession the testimony of those who claimed to have been eye-witnesses of that which they declare to be true. Now this testimony must be either true or false. These witnesses either saw Jesus alive after his death and burial, or they did not. If their testimony is true, then the fact of the resurrection actually occurred. If it is false, then one of two suppositions must be made. These witnesses were either impostors or else they were honestly deceived. If neither of these suppositions can be maintained, their testimony must be received as true.

Is it possible that they were impostors? But imposture necessarily implies some motive, either of pleasure, or honor, or gain. Now there is the most satisfactory evidence that no such motive could have influenced the original witnesses to the fact of Christ's resurrection. From the very circumstances of the case, they had no

thing to gain by this assertion supposing it to be false. More than this, they had every thing to lose. They every where proclaimed the fact of the resurrection, and every where suffered as a necessary consequence. Some of them even sealed their testimony with their blood. To suppose that they persistently exposed themselves to contempt, to persecution and to death, without the slightest counterbalancing advantage, in attestation of what they knew to be a lie, is a supposition unequalled in absurdity.

Were they honestly deceived? In considering this supposition, it must be remembered that they testify simply to a matter of fact. It is not testimony in behalf of opinions which we are now considering. It is a question of the evidence of the senses. It must be remembered, then, that it was not to one only, but to many that Jesus appeared—that he appeared not once merely, but again and again—that it was not of the nature of an apparition coming for an instant, and then vanishing away, but that he talked with His disciples, sat with them, eat with them, and gave them His final commands in reference to His spiritual kingdom. His actual presence was certified to them even by the sense of touch. And the conviction of the reality of the resurrection was thus forced upon them against all their preconceptions and in spite of all their doubts.

But there is one point which is perfectly conclusive in reference to this supposition. If they were honest men and yet the subjects of an illusion, then the body of Jesus must have been still in the sepulchre. Why did not the Jews produce it as a refutation of the story of the disciples, and to cure them of their enthusiasm? So far was this from being the case, that the Jews, not having possession of the body, charged the disciples

with stealing it away. If the body of Jesus was fraudulently removed, it must have been by His disciples; but in that case their story of His resurrection must have been a willful falsehood persisted in though there was nothing to gain and every thing, even life itself, to lose. If the disciples were honestly mistaken, the body of Jesus was still present, to correct at once any illusion of the senses. Still further, however, it is impossible that the disciples could have been mistaken, for they explicitly assert, not only that they saw Jesus alive, but that they visited and examined His tomb, and that His body was not there.

Some exceedingly curious results in reference to the credibility of testimony are presented by writers on Probability—a department of science founded by Pascal and Fermat about the middle of the seventeenth century. These results illustrate the subject of which we are treating. According to these calculations, supposing the probabilities against any event to be a million million to one, the testimony of thirteen witnesses whose veracity is rated at only nine tenths would suffice to render it probable that the event occurred.* On the supposition, then, that the moral wants of man remove in the degree of one half the antecedent improbability of the

* Let p represent the antecedent probability of the event, v the veracity of each witness, and x the number of witnesses required to make it probable that the event occurred.

$$\text{Let } p = \frac{1}{1,000,000,000,001} = \frac{1}{10^{12}} + 1, \text{ and let}$$

$$v = \frac{9}{10}, \text{ and } x = \text{number of witnesses.}$$

In order that the probability may equal $\frac{1}{2}$, we must have $(\frac{1-v}{v})^x \frac{1-p}{v} = 1$. Now, $\frac{1-v}{v} = \frac{1}{9}$ and $\frac{1-p}{v} = 10^{12}$ therefore $(\frac{1}{9})^x \times 10^{12} = 1$; whence $x \log \frac{1}{9} = \log \frac{1}{10^{12}}$, or $x \log 9 = 12$, and therefore $x = \frac{12}{\log 9} = 12.6$.

resurrection of Christ, and that the veracity of the witnesses, as in the case of the Apostles, is unimpeached—we have the probability of the event, mathematically considered, overwhelmingly established.

In short, to one capable of appreciating the force of moral evidence, no historical fact could be more conclusively established than that Jesus rose from the dead.

But if Jesus actually rose from the dead—if this fact is established, like any other historical fact, on testimony, and that, too, providentially, of the most conclusive character, then we ask, what better or more rational explanation can be given of it than that it was a miracle? To admit the fact, and yet to deny the cause, is an outrage upon common sense and all the convictions of reason. And this point, we insist, must be pressed to its logical consequences, which sweep away every vestige of arguments to prove that miracles are incomprehensible and impossible.

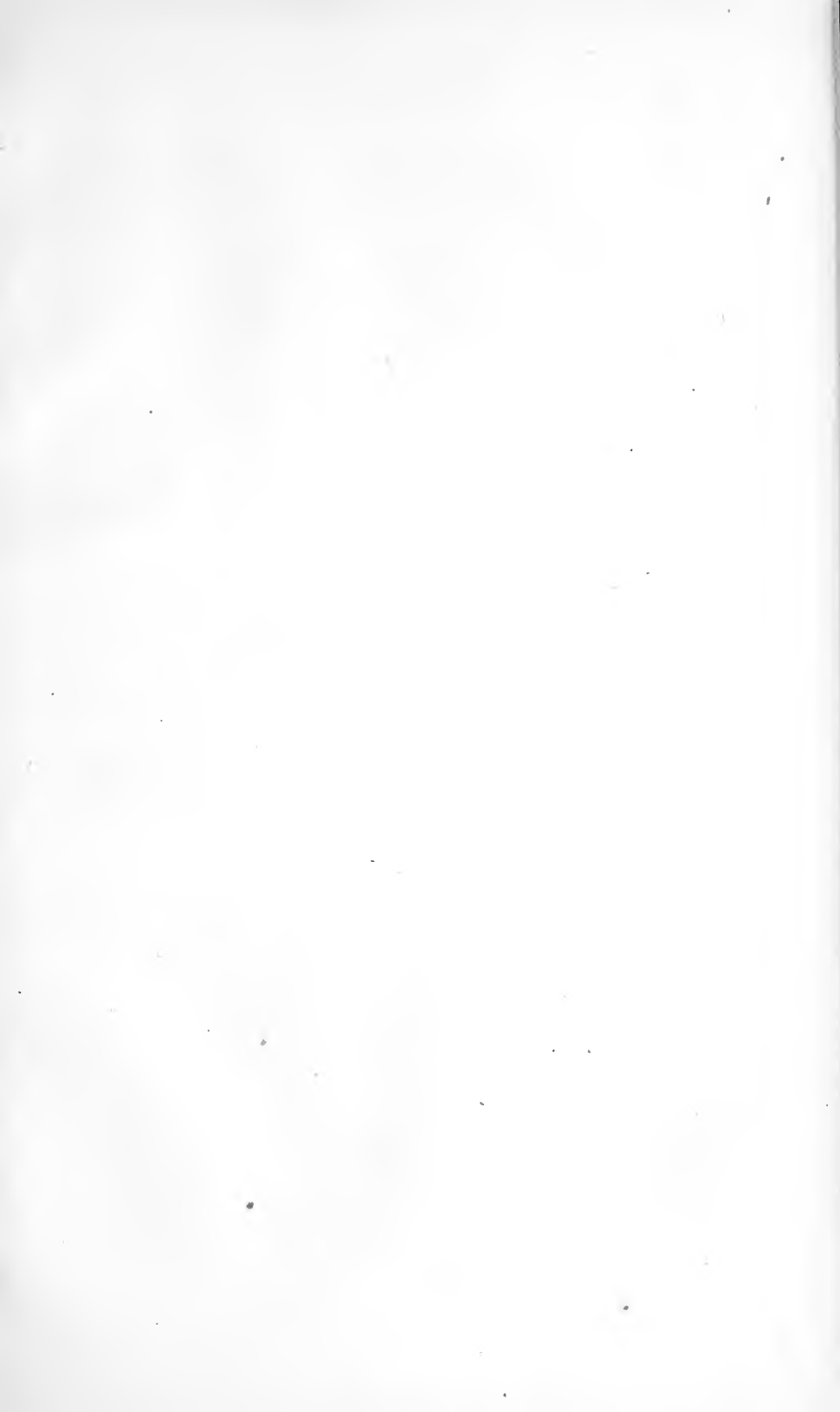
It will be noticed that we have not added to our argument those considerations of the antecedent probability of miracles arising from the moral condition of man, which greatly predispose us to receive suitable testimony in regard to them as true. We would only remark in reference to the value of this argument in removing what might otherwise be the incredibility of miracles, that there are facts constantly occurring in our experience, which would antecedently be deemed in the highest degree incredible, were it not for the moral ends which they subserve. A great moral end to be gained tends to remove, therefore, the antecedent incredibility of any event.

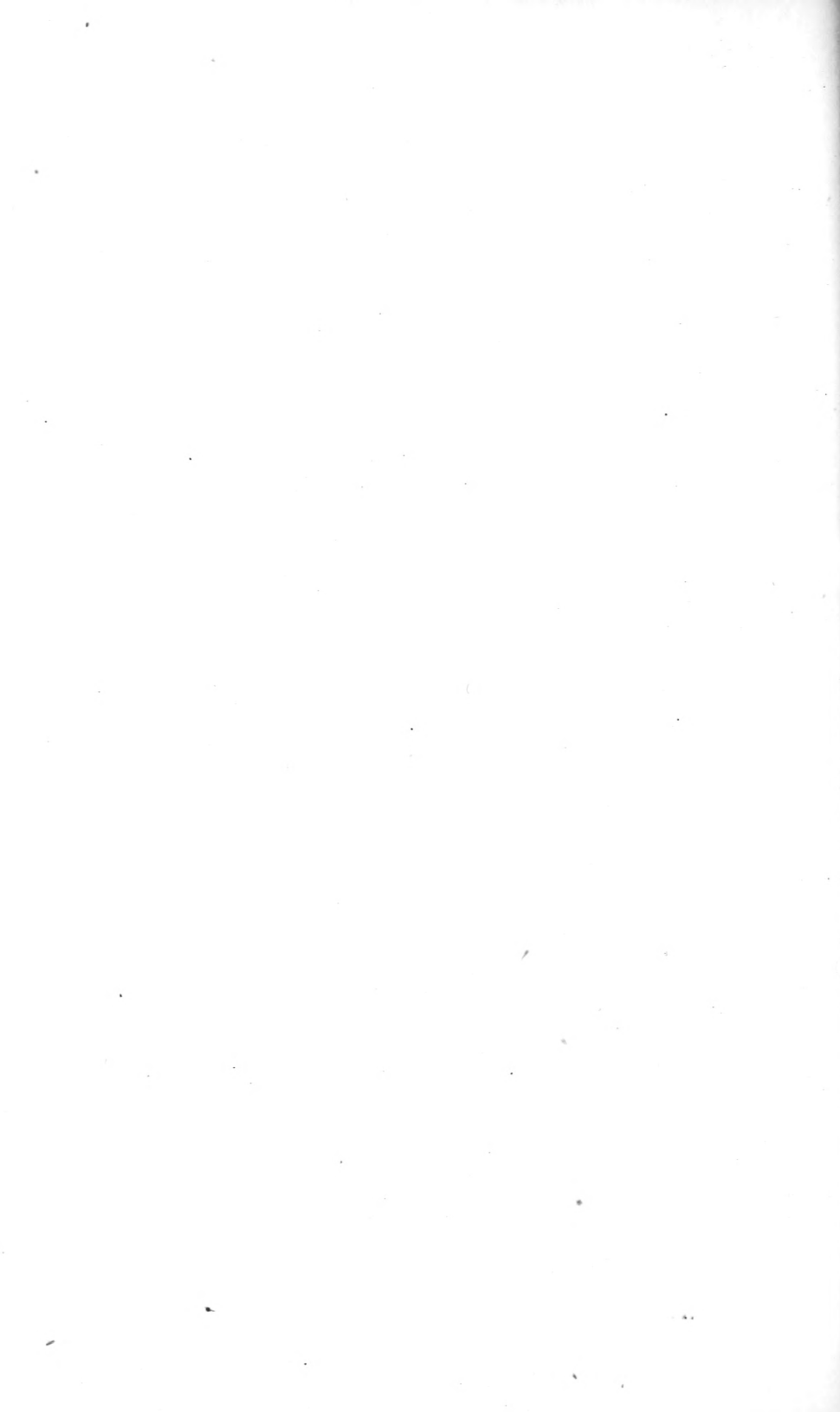
Finally, we would observe, that when Professor Powell speaks of the "inconceivableness of interruptions

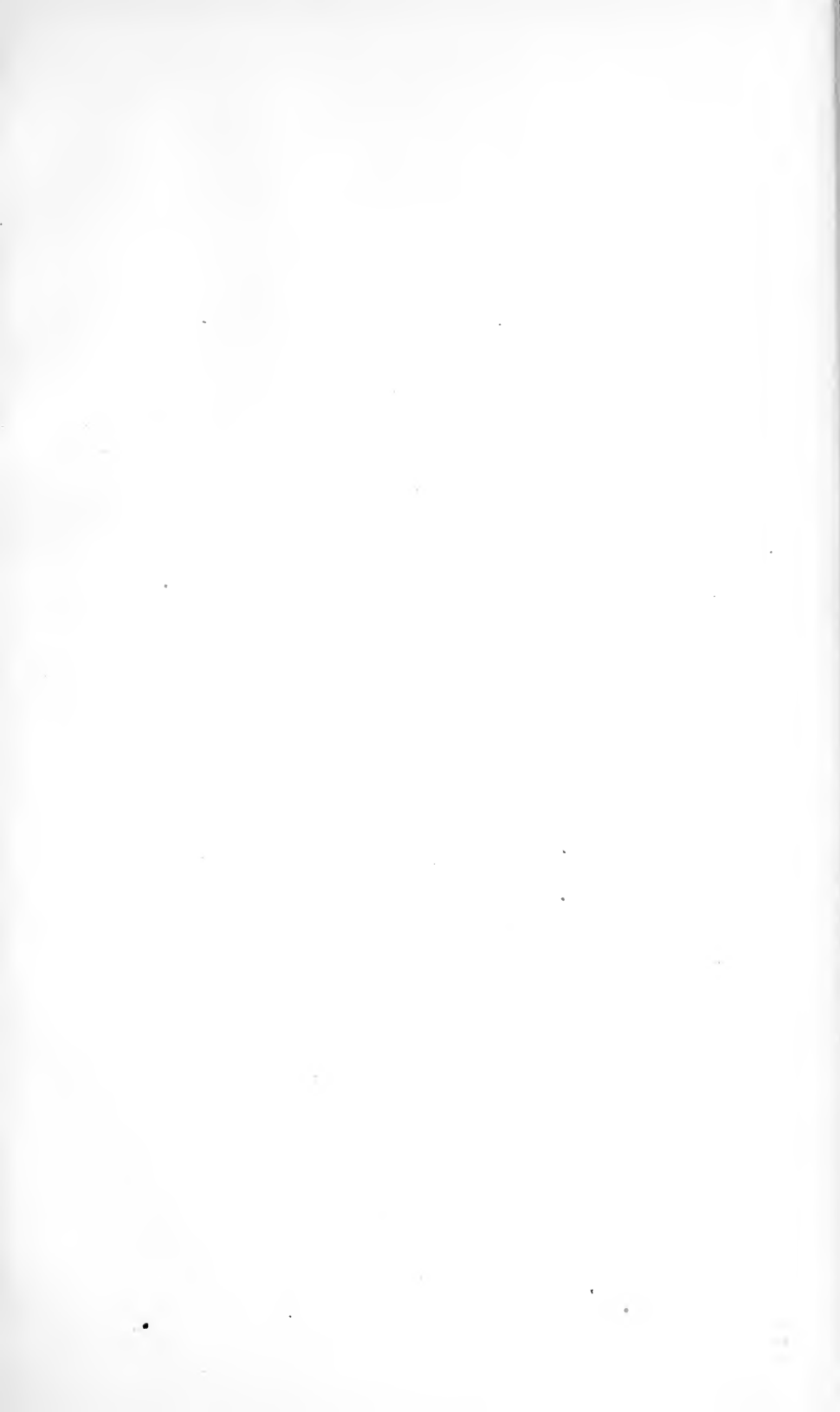
of natural order, or suspensions of the laws of matter," and makes this the basis of an argument against miracles, he seems to us to have fallen into some confusion of thought. It is not clear what he means by "natural order" and the "laws of matter." Does he mean that we have now a full knowledge of the laws of the system of nature, and that this knowledge may not be modified by future discovery? Does he mean that there can be nothing which, so far as science goes, will be an interruption of this order, or suspension of these laws? Then we have already attained the utmost limit of human science, and may rest confident that our ideas of nature are not henceforth to be disturbed, and that any thing not found in the system of causes and effects, as we now understand it, is impossible. Is it not a far truer idea of nature to consider it simply as a convenient term for that part of the universal system of things which comes under our observation? And is it not a far higher idea of law to regard it only as the method of the Divine operation, in the universal system of things? May not a miracle, therefore, though disconnected from the chain of causes and effects usually exhibited to us, fall in harmoniously with the great laws of the universe? Is not that the true philosophy, which, in determining the possibilities of things, takes into account the moral facts of our being? And is not a reason sufficiently strong for the establishment of higher laws, introducing even miracles into the system of nature, to be found in the sin and the redemption of man?

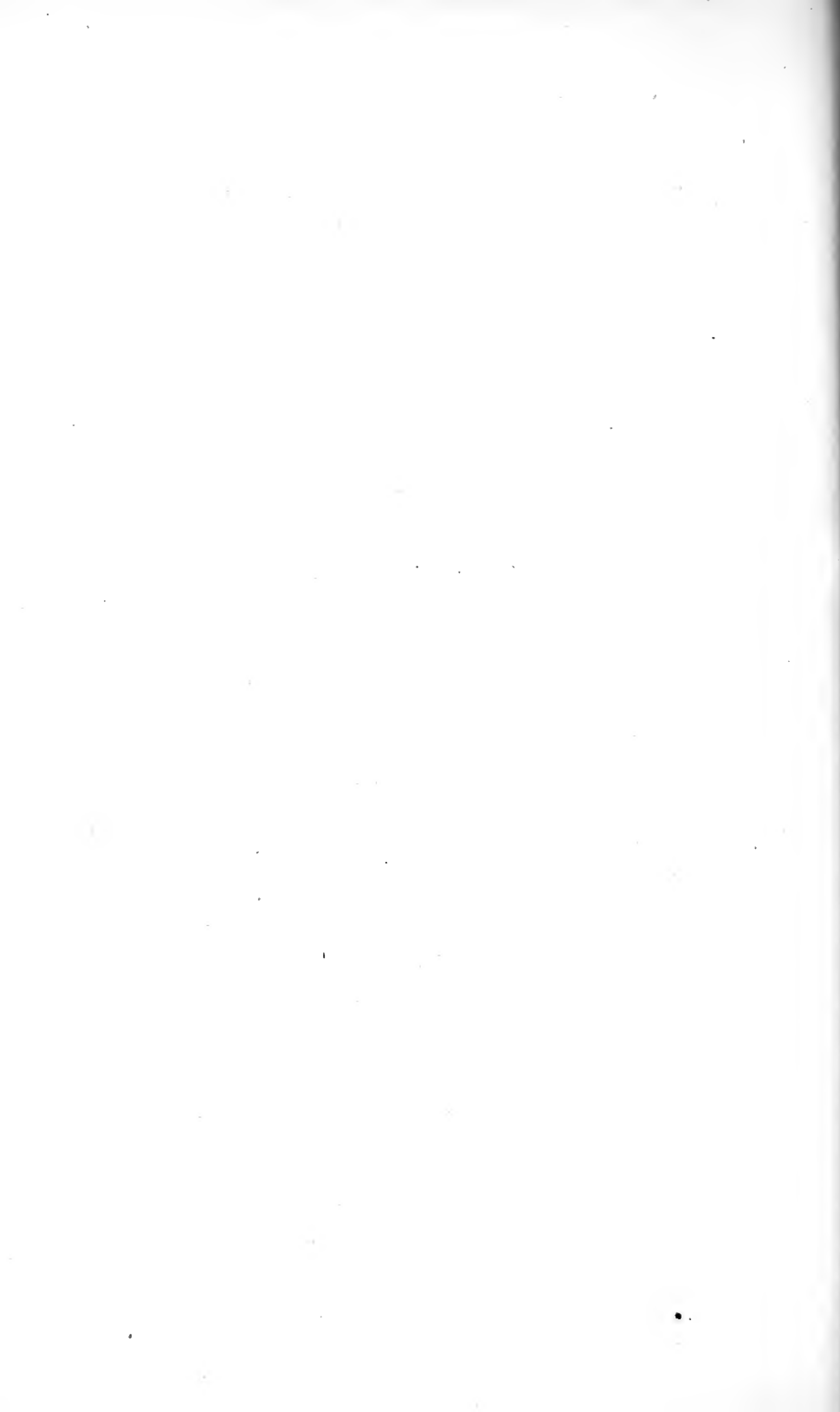
Those whose investigations are confined to mere physical phenomena and the laws which govern them, and whose survey is limited by the sphere of their own experience, will be likely to consider miracles as incon-

ceivable and incredible; but the question of miracles presents no difficulties to one who has a large and comprehensive view of nature; who has carefully studied the principles of historical criticism and the laws of evidence; who is deeply impressed with the moral and spiritual wants of man, and who believes in the being and government of God.

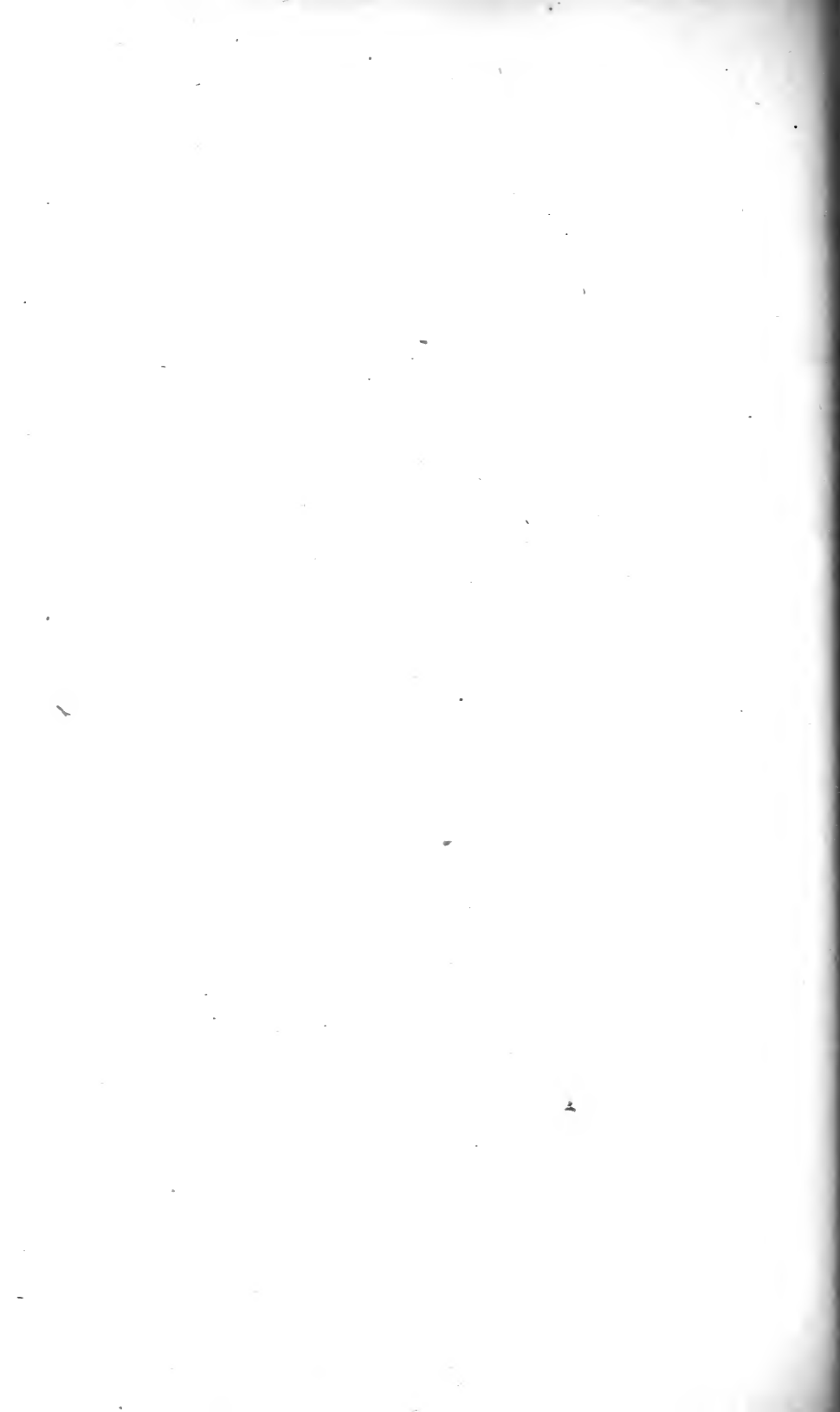


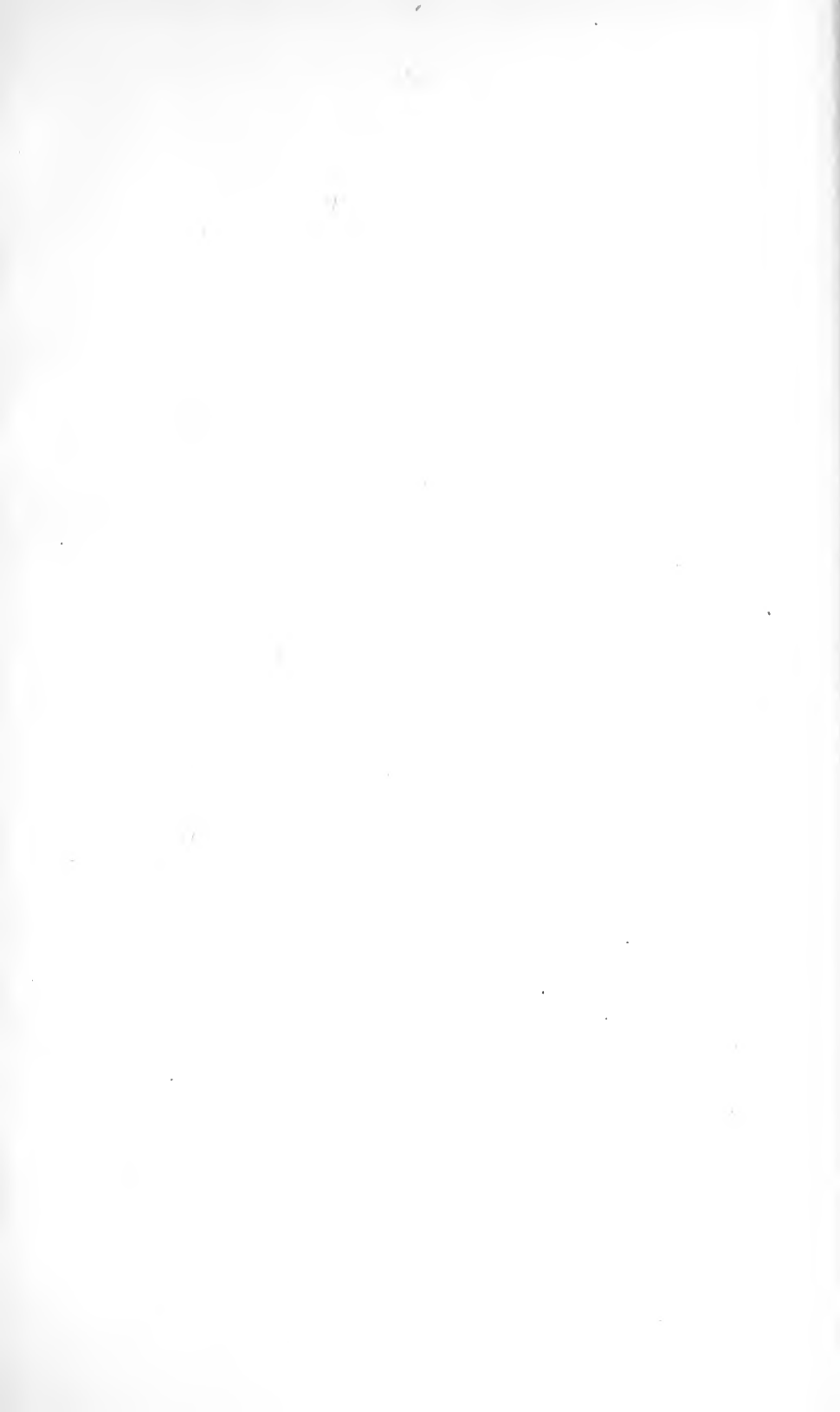


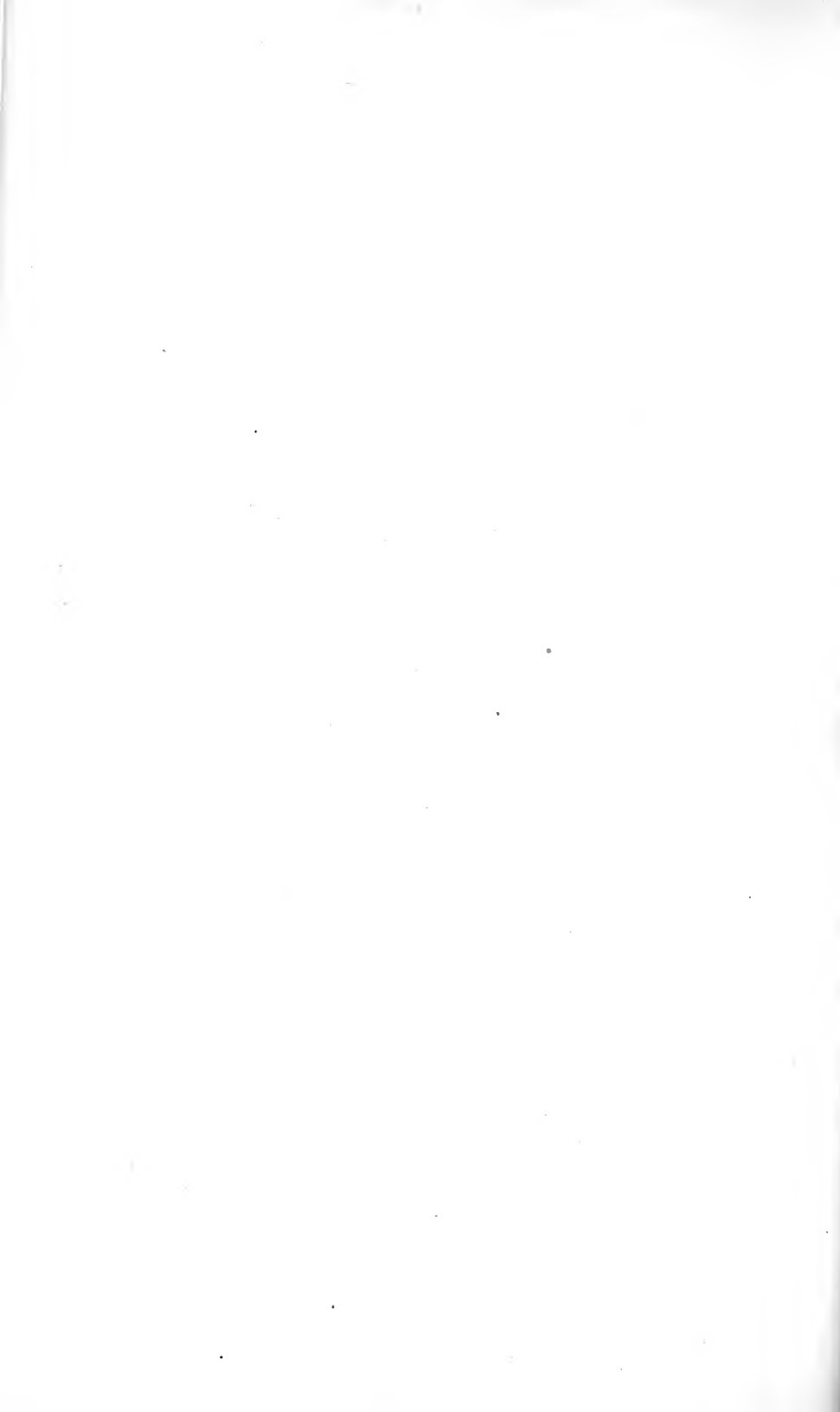


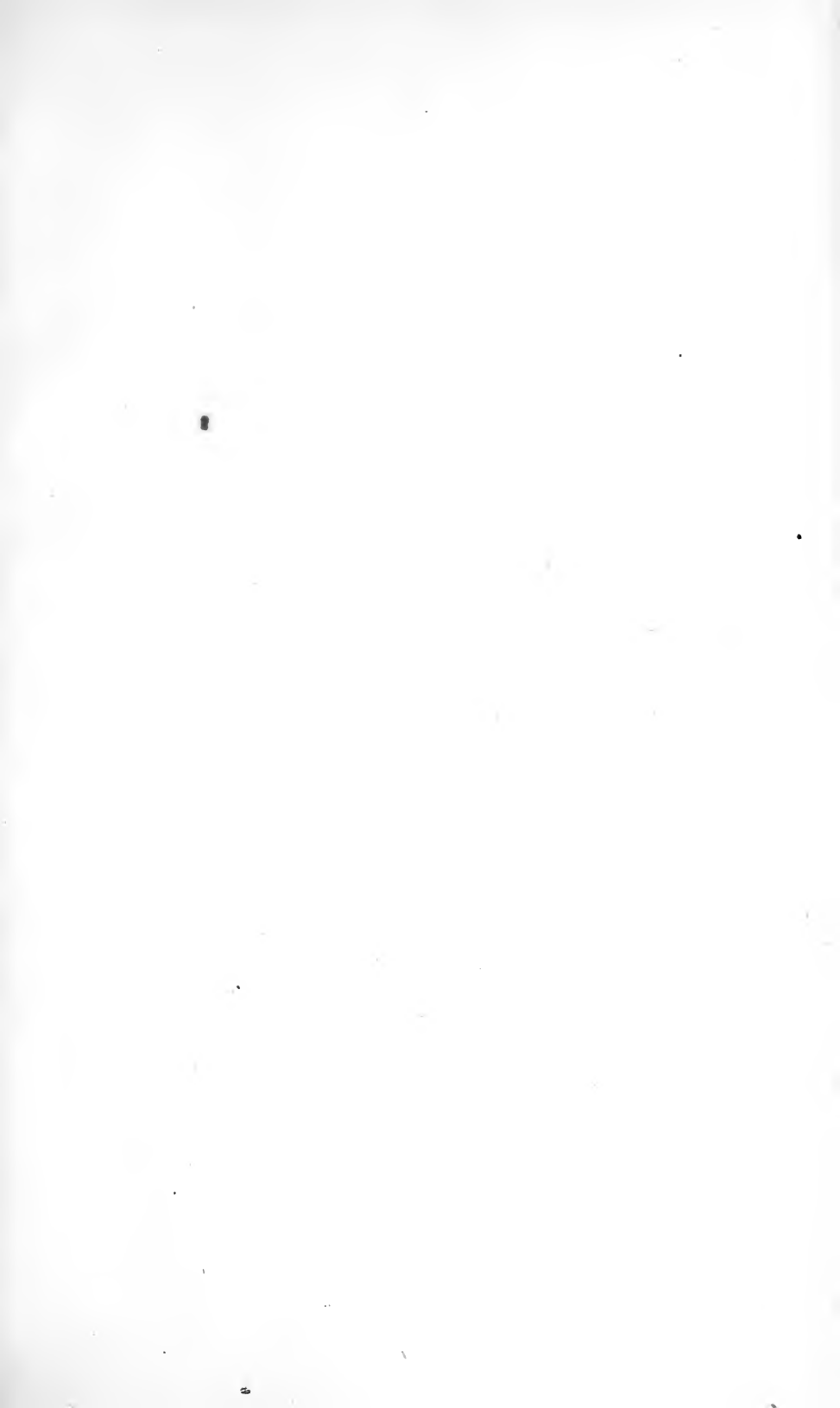












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