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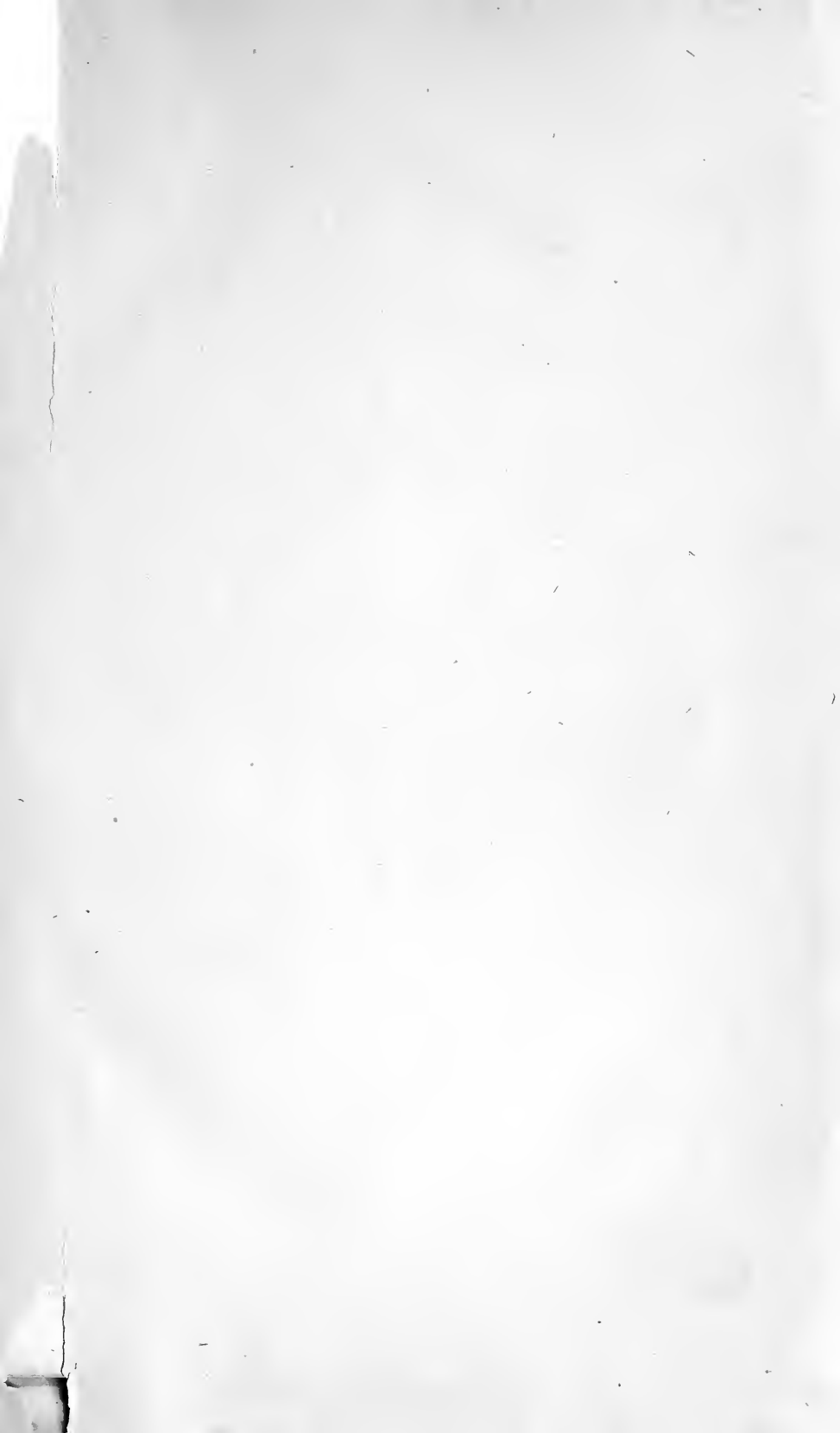
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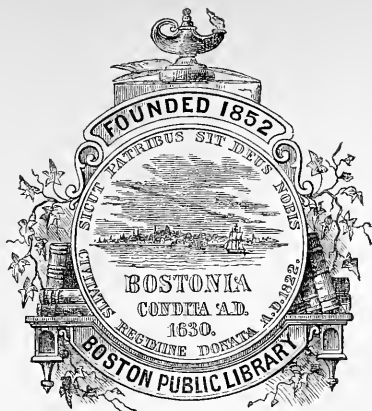
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PAMPHLETS.

Jas. F. Clarke

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THE CATHOLIC WORLD.

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STEPS OF BELIEF.*

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, a grandson, through his mother, of the first avowed Unitarian minister in the United States, is, if not the most learned and gifted, at least among the most earnest, industrious, energetic, and influential of contemporary Unitarian ministers. He has a mind of singular comprehensiveness, and as open to the reception of error as to the reception of truth. He is an eclectic, or, rather, a syncretist, and holds it his duty to accept all opinions, whether true or false, as equally respectable. As a Unitarian, he comprehends both wings of the denomination, accepts both extremes, without troubling himself about the middle term that unites them. He is rarely impressed with the importance of logical consistency, and feels no difficulty in maintaining that, of two contradictory propositions, both are true, or both are false.

* *Steps of Belief; or, Rational Christianity, maintained against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism.* By James Freeman Clarke. Boston: The American Unitarian Association. 1870. 16mo, pp. 311.

The work before us is a fair expression of the author's mind, alike of its qualities and its defects. It is an excellent summary of his intellectual life and experience. We see in it what the author has thought and endeavored to work out. It also, besides his own active life, expresses the views and sentiments of the better class of Unitarians, without rejecting the principles and utterances of those he denounces as radicals, and from whom he differs only at the expense of his logic. He has a more conservative air, but no more conservative thought than he had when he founded the Church of the Disciples in Boston on the principle of the union of incompatibles, or, like Anglicanism, on the principle of comprehensiveness. We cannot discover that, though professing a progressive religion—a religion which is not only progressive itself, but the promoter of progress in its adherents—he has made any progress himself, either forward or backward, since as a young man he edited the *Western Messenger*, at Louisville, Ken-

tucky. He has in his views remained stationary. Yet his insensibility to his own defects, to his own ignorance of philosophy, and of theology as a science, his lack of depth, his blissful confidence in himself, and indifference to logical consistency, coupled with an easy-flowing and not ungraceful style, have rendered him popular with his denomination, and secured him a high reputation among even the Protestants of more orthodox pretensions. In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed is king.

As the world goes, in this age of shallowness, of *frivolezza*, as the Italians say, Dr. Clarke is no doubt, both as a preacher and writer, above the average; and, if he had started with a larger stock of truth than his rational or Unitarian Christianity could supply, he would have been one of the most eminent men of New England. Nature has not been niggard to him in her gifts, nor has he failed in giving them a high degree of culture; but he has had the misfortune to be bred in a bad school—a school that opens only a low and narrow vista to the mind, represses free thought, and dwarfs the intellect. He has never been able to cast off its shackles, or to think and act as a free man. It is easy to see, while reading his *Steps of Belief*, that he has lacked room to expand; that he feels, with all his comprehensiveness, that his system of thought is too strait for him; that his better nature is restrained, and the nobler aspirations of his soul repressed, by the hide-bound rationalism in which he is compelled to gyrate. One sees that he feels that he is “cabin’d, cribb’d, confin’d,” that he has no room to move or to breathe, and that he now and then struggles to break his prison-bars.

It is not easy to conceive the sense of freedom and relief one experiences

in passing from rationalism or any other form of Protestantism to Catholicity. The convert to the church is the prisoner liberated from the Bastile, a weight is thrown from his shoulders, the manacles fall from his hands, and the fetters from his feet; he feels as light and as free as the air, and he would chirp and sing as the bird. This world changes its hue to his eyes; and he runs and leaps under the blue sky of a boundless universe. His thought, his mind, his very soul, is lighted up, and revels in the freedom of universal truth. He feels that he has something whereon to stand, that he has no longer to bear up the church, but that the church can bear up him. He is conscious of an unfailing support, and no longer fears that he is in danger every step he takes of having his footing give way and of falling through. His heart bounds with a sense of unlimited freedom, and with a joy unspeakable. He experiences in his soul and through all his frame the truth of our Lord's words to the Jews: “If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Of the joy of this freedom, our friend, whom we knew and loved in his young years, knows nothing. He craves it, but finds it not. At every move he beats his head against the walls of his dark and damp dungeon, and is forced to call it freedom. His system holds him in its bonds, and compels him in spite of his aspirations to grind forever in his prison-house.

The only portions of Dr. Clarke's book that show freedom and strength are those in which he attacks materialism and atheism, and of course those in which he has tradition and the church to back him, and can use Catholic arguments, and follow out the logic of common sense. But the moment he attempts to bring in his

rationalism, or Christianity rationally explained, he becomes confused and weak, illogical, self-contradictory, and absurd. His thought is no longer free, his mind no longer unclouded, or his reasoning conclusive. He dares not carry out his logic to its legitimate conclusion, but is forced to stop midway, and say two and two, or two and two make three, or make five, for his whole system would be ruined if he should have the audacity to say two and two make four. He is deprived by the tyranny of his system of his natural good sense and intellectual activity, and becomes untruthful and unjust, as in his step from "Romanism to Protestantism."

Dr. Clarke discusses four steps of belief: 1. The step from atheism to theism; 2. The step from theism to Christianity; 3. The step from Romanism to Protestantism; and 4. The step from the letter to the spirit. His aim is to maintain the spirit, or an indefinite something or nothing which he calls Rational Christianity, against atheism, free religion, and "Romanism," or Catholicity. If any one is curious to know what the author means by the spirit, or rational Christianity, this book will hardly give him the desired information. Perhaps the book tells us what it is not, but it by no means tells us what it is. It is not any objective truth or doctrine that can be intelligibly stated in words, for "the letter killeth," and the moment you embody a truth or a doctrine in a form of words you kill it. "Religion," he says, page 287, "wherever you find it, as far as it goes, is always one and the same thing. It is always reverence, faith, obedience, gratitude, hope, love." Brave words, but mean they anything but certain subjective or inward acts, states, or affections of the soul? Reverence, of what or

of whom? Faith, in whom or in what? Obedience, to whom or to what? Gratitude, to whom or for what? Love, of whom or of what? The learned author has no answer to these questions, and he would not be free to answer them, even if he could; for the answers to them pertain to theology, and he expressly separates theology, or the science of divine things, from religion, and discards it as unnecessary and the cause of all religious dissensions. His rational Christianity is purely subjective, and consequently is resolved into a vague sentiment, as true and as worthy when felt by a Buddhist, or when manifested toward a graven image, a stock, or a stone, a serpent, a calf, a crocodile, or a tortoise, as when manifested toward the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, or his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, King of kings, and Lord of lords. He himself says as much on the very page we have cited. What, then, is the distinction between religion and superstition, or between the worship of God and idolatry? and wherein is Dr. Clarke's "rational Christianity" any better than the free religion of Frothingham, Higginson, Abbot, Johnson, and others, which he wars against and demolishes with weapons borrowed from the armory of the church? To our thinking, it is not so good, because less honest and outspoken, and equally foreign from the Christianity of Christ.

But passing over this for the present, we must remark that the author begins at the wrong end, and writes as if he held that unbelief preceded belief, and that the human race began in the lowest form of atheism, and has gradually proceeded step by step to what he considers the highest and most advanced form of Christian belief. This is neither historically

nor philosophically correct. Truth is older than error, and belief always precedes unbelief, or the denial of belief. Men believed in God before they denied him, and in the principles of Christianity before they doubted or questioned them. Hence the burden of proof is on the unbeliever, not on the believer. Men were theists before they were atheists, and therefore it is for the atheist to defend his atheism, not for the theist to prove his theism. Theism, or belief in God, being normal and prior to atheism, is in possession; all the presumptions are in its favor, and the atheist must overcome these presumptions, turn them in his favor, and show valid reasons why the belief in God should be ousted from its possession, before the theist can be called upon to plead. So of revelation. It is older than rationalism, as the supernatural is logically and historically prior to naturalism. Catholicity, again, is both logically and chronologically prior to Protestantism, and Protestantism would be unintelligible without it; in the controversy, therefore, the Protestant is the plaintiff, and must make out his case. We are ready to defend the church when the Protestant shows some good and valid reasons against her for his Protestantism, but until then the laboring oar is in his hands, and we are under no obligation to produce her titles.

Not taking note of this fact, but arguing as if unbelief were normal and prior to belief, and mistaking both the facts and the law of the case, the author's arguments for immaterialism and the existence of God, though conclusive as refutations of the objections of the materialist and the atheist, are yet insufficient to originate and establish the belief either in the existence of God or the immateriality of the soul, when the

presumption is against such belief. The author gives the materialist and the atheist an advantage to which neither is entitled, and assumes a burden which no believer is bound to shoulder. The law and the facts of the case are not met by a work on "The Steps of Belief," and could be met only by a work on "The Steps of Unbelief." Man began on the plane of belief, and the steps are always downward, or away from it. The author is misled by his theory of progress, which all philosophy and the whole history of the race disprove. The perfect always precedes, in reality as in thought or conception, the imperfect. The history of the race abandoned to its own guidance is the history of a constant though a more or less rapid deterioration. Adam was the most perfect of his race; the oldest of the sacred books of the Hindus are the most perfect, the purest in doctrine, and the freest from superstition. The earliest monuments of art which time has spared are the most perfect, and the higher one ascends the stream of antiquity, the wiser, truer, and juster are its maxims. The progress of the race in all the nations that apostatized from the primitive or patriarchal religion, and in all the nations that have followed their example and apostatized from the church founded by our Lord on Peter, has been a progress in losing or in rejecting things previously believed. Progress is effected only under and by the aid of the supernatural order.

If, as Dr. Clarke, at least in his argument, assumes, the human race began in materialism and atheism, and had no supernatural instruction, they never would and never could have risen to belief either in God or in an immaterial soul. The existence of God and the immateriality of the soul can assuredly be

proved with certainty by natural reason, and hence no man is excusable for denying either; but proof does not originate the proposition proved, and no reasoning could ever originate the idea of God, because, without the idea as the first principle of reason, no reasoning would be possible. Yet from the beginning the race has believed in God and the immateriality and immortality of the soul. How came this belief? It came not from instinct, from intuition, or logical deduction or induction, but must have come from the Creator himself, who taught it to the first man, or infused it into his mind along with language. The belief is normal, though supernatural in its origin, as is man himself, and, when once the idea is presented to the mind, reason suffices to prove it against whoever denies it, and with certainty.

The arguments the author uses against materialism and atheism are such as are usually urged by theologians and philosophers, although sometimes evidently without his understanding their full reason or force. His learning is frequently at fault. Thus, he makes the universal, or nearly universal, belief in ghosts, or in the possibility of ghosts, a proof that the race has always and everywhere believed in the soul or spirit as distinct from the body. But the ghost with the ancient classic nations was not the disembodied spirit, which it was held was reabsorbed in God from whom it emanated, but the *umbra*, or shade, a pale reflex of the body, composed of thin air, and therefore material. He says Leibnitz and Spinoza, as well as Descartes and others, approved of St. Anselm's argument in his *Proslogium* for the existence of God from the idea of the most perfect being in our minds. Spinoza was a decided and unmitigated pantheist, and Leibnitz approved the

argument only on condition that it be first proved that God is possible. Leibnitz held that the *posse* precedes the *esse*, and seems never to have reflected that there is no possible without the real; for the possible is only the creative ability of the real. God is real, actual, most pure act, as say the schoolmen, and without him, or save in his creative power, nothing is possible, there is and can be no possibility of anything. It is absurd to suppose that a possible God is provable without God as actual, since it is God *in actu* that makes anything possible. Hegel only followed and developed Leibnitz when he placed his *das reine Seyn*, or purely possible being, before his *das Ideen* and *das Wesen*, the possible before the actual, thus making God and the universe spring out of nothing, or the infinite void of the Gnostics and Buddhists; for the possible as abstracted from the actual is simply a nullity—simply nothing.

Dr. Clarke, furthermore, though he uses the ordinary arguments of the theologians to prove that God is, does not seem to understand what it is that the theist is required to prove against the atheist. We have not, indeed, intuition of God, but we have intuition of that which really is God. What is called necessary or absolute ideas, the necessary, the universal, the unchangeable, the eternal, etc., are affirmed to us intuitively, and we could not be intelligent or rational existences if they were not. But these ideas are not abstractions; for abstractions are nullities, and no objects of intuition or of intelligence. These ideas, since they are intelligible, are intuitive, real, and are and must be necessary being—*ens necessarium et reale*. Real and necessary, universal, eternal, and immutable being is intuitively affirmed in every act of our intelligence, as its basis and necessary con-

dition. But what is not intuitively affirmed, and what needs to be proved or demonstrated against the atheist, is that being, *ens necessarium et reale*, is God, the creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, visible and invisible. What needs to be proved is only a single point, and a point so easily proved that he may well be called a fool who says in his heart, God is not, *non est Deus*.

Then, again, Dr. Clarke does not in reality, as he supposes, take his first step of belief, and rise from atheism to theism. The arguments he adduces from the theologians are conclusive as used by the theologians themselves, but he vitiates them by his misapprehension of the divine creative act. He admits only one substance in which spirit and matter are identical, and makes the God he recognizes the substance, therefore the reality, of the universe. This is pantheism, not theism, and pantheism is not, as he contends, imperfect theism, but the more refined and dangerous form of atheism. The essence of pantheism is the assertion of one only substance, or the denial that God creates substances capable of acting from their own centre as second causes. He is misled by the philosophy of Cousin, and unwittingly sinks the universe in God, which is to deny him, as really as to sink him in the universe, since either alike identifies God and the universe, and admits no distinction between them. He says, "God is the immanent, not the transient, cause of the universe." This is not true in his or Spinoza's sense. God as creator is, no doubt, immanent in all his works, but as the cause creating and sustaining them, not as the subject acting in their acts. He is immanent by his creative act as the *causa causarum*. He is not the transient or, rather, transitory cause, in the sense of producing and then

passing on, or leaving the production or effect to itself; for that would leave the effect to expire as soon as produced. The creative act and the conservative act are, on the part of God, one and the same identical act; that is, the act of creation is a continuous or an ever-present act, and the preservation of the universe is its continuous creation; for the suspension of the creative act producing it from nothing would be its instant annihilation. So explained, it may be said that God is the immanent, not the transient or transitory, cause of the universe. But in Dr. Clarke's sense, which is that of Spinoza, or that God remains in it as its substance and the subject of its acts, he is not immanent, for this would assert the identity of God and the universe, and exclude second causes, as they do who say God is the author of sin.

No doubt Dr. Clarke talks of creation, and proves conclusively against the developmentists that the germ which is developed must be created; but he holds not that God creates from nothing, but from himself, from his own substance or fulness, as was maintained by Cousin and the better Boston school some thirty or forty years ago. The Boston school, whose chiefs were Dr. Walker, George Ripley, George Bancroft, and O. A. Brownson, intended to escape pantheism, and thought they did, but unhappily they could not see that creation must be creation by the power of God from nothing, or be no real creation at all, and hence they maintained that God made the world out of his own fulness, or, so* to speak, out of his own stuff, as the *causa materialis*. This assumed that the substance of the universe is identically the substance of God, which was really to assert, not to escape, pantheism. That Dr. Clarke says much in his book that is incompatible with

pantheism, we willingly admit ; but he is not always consistent with himself, and has the happy faculty of accepting, when necessary or convenient, both sides of a question, or doctrines that mutually contradict one another.

The author, assuming that he has really taken the step from atheism to theism, proceeds to take the step from theism to Christianity. He tells us Christianity is an advance on theism or deism, as theism itself is an advance on atheism ; but wherein Christianity, as he sets it forth, is an advance on deism, or simple natural belief in God and the immateriality of the soul, he does not anywhere show or enable us to discover. His Christianity is, of course, what he calls "rational Christianity," and contains nothing and requires nothing, as far as we can discover, that exceeds the normal powers of human nature. He calls himself, we admit, a supernaturalist, but, at the same time, he would seem to contend that he holds no views which rise above simple naturalism. He defends what he calls the "historic Christ" against the mythists and free-religionists, and professes to accept the principal events recorded in the Gospels as historical facts ; but he sees in our Lord only a man conceived and born like other men, and in his character only the normal perfections of our human nature. He says :

"In regard to Jesus Christ himself, we find two distinct and seemingly opposite views prevailing at the present time. The first is the traditional and general opinion that he was not like other men in his person, his endowments, his work, or his character ; that his person was superhuman, his endowments supernatural, his work miraculous, and his character intellectually infallible and morally impeccable ; that he was a miraculous creation, that he was divinely inspired and sent, that he did not sin, did not err, will never be superseded, and is the Master, Lord, King, of the human race for ever. Hence

it is assumed that he was not a man only and purely, but something more.

"The other view is that which has been becoming more and more popular since the days of Theodore Parker, not only in this country, but also in England, France, and Germany. It is, that Jesus was a man like all other men, born like other men, formed by circumstances as other men are formed, partaking of the errors of his age, not supernatural, but wholly natural ; working no miracles, not infallible, but falling into errors ; not perfect morally ; capable of being superseded and outgrown ; and, in short, purely a man, like other men.

"It will be observed that these two theories, so utterly opposite, nevertheless agree in one assumption. Both assume that perfection is unnatural to man ; that man is necessarily imperfect, mentally and morally ; that to be sinless is unnatural ; that to see truth so clearly as to be certain of it and not liable to be mistaken, is unnatural : in other words, that it is not natural for man to be good, and that a perfectly good man is necessarily a supernatural, or (what is thought the same thing) an unnatural being.

"The one class of thinkers say, 'Jesus was sinless and infallible, and worked miracles, therefore he was superhuman.' The others say, 'He was human, and therefore he could not work miracles or be perfect.' The first class, wishing to believe in the superiority of Jesus, think it necessary to believe him superhuman ; the other class, not wishing to believe him superhuman, think it necessary to deny his superiority. Both classes agree that any such inward superiority as is ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament implies a superhuman element. That is, again, both classes assume the essential poverty of human nature." (Pp. 118-120.)

The Catholic reader will not fail to perceive that Dr. Clarke by no means gives a fair or adequate statement of what he is pleased to term the traditional and general opinion of our Lord, but only what was the general opinion of Arians and the earlier Unitarians. Our reading is not very extensive, and our knowledge of the views and reasonings of others is very limited, but we doubt

if any Christian or professed Christian has ever been found who says, "Jesus was sinless and infallible, and worked miracles, therefore he was superhuman." No one, as far as we know, ever appealed to the miracles of our Lord as proofs of his superhuman nature or superhuman character. The miracles of our Lord do not of themselves prove him superhuman, any more than the miracles of St. Vincent Ferrer prove him to have been superhuman; but they prove that God was with him, for only God can work a miracle. "Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, unless God was with him" (St. John iii. 2). The miracles are the divine credentials or divine endorsement of the teacher. They attest the presence and assistance of God, and are God's own vouchers for the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the teacher, and therefore of whatever he teaches in the name of God. If our Lord taught that he was himself perfect God as well as perfect man, then he was so; for God can no more vouch for a lie than he can himself lie. Dr. Clarke, also, does injustice to Christians when he represents them as holding that perfection is *unnatural*. There is no class of men who call themselves Christians, not even Calvinists, that so hold. Christianity teaches us that God is our origin and end; and since God is necessarily supernatural, therefore that our beginning and our end are supernatural. The natural cannot rise above itself, and hence the fulfilment or perfection of our nature is and must be impossible without supernatural aid or assistance. But this supernatural aid or assistance is not against nature, does not repress or supersede it, but carries it on and completes, fulfils, or perfects it. But

here follows a passage which proves that the author's supernatural does not rise above the natural. He has presented the views of the two parties which we have just quoted, and adds:

"But why may we not suppose that man's nature is higher than either party believes? What if man was made to be all Jesus was; what if human nature is not necessarily sinful, but otherwise; what if sin and error are unnatural, not natural?—then it may follow that Jesus did all that he is claimed to have done in the Gospels; that he is all that he is described to have been, and yet, instead of being at all unnatural, is a truer and more perfectly natural man than any other has been. Perhaps the greatness of Jesus may have been just here—that he was the man of men, the truest man, fulfilling the type of humanity. Perhaps the great lesson of his life is, that human nature is not essentially evil, but good. Perhaps his mission was to show us one perfect specimen of the human race; one ideal pattern; one such as all are hereafter to become." (P. 120.)

He may well conclude :

"If this view be correct, then it may reconcile the war between the naturalists and supernaturalists.

"The naturalists can then accept the leading facts in the life of Jesus, and yet believe in him as a purely human being. The supernaturalists can believe in his perfect holiness, wisdom, and power, and yet not deny his simple humanity. I propose, therefore, to adduce some facts which show that there is nothing claimed in the Gospels for Christ which is inconsistent with the assumption of his being made in all respects like his brethren." (P. 120.)

It is evident from this that Dr. Clarke sees nothing really supernatural in Christianity. He resolves the supernatural into a higher form of the natural, and sees no necessity of the supernatural to perfect the natural, or to place man on the plane of his destiny, and to enable him to attain it. He rejects the miraculous

conception of our Lord as legendary and unproved; and regards him as simply the son of Joseph and Mary, conceived and born as other men, with a simple human nature and a human personality like Peter or John. He cannot pretend that there is more in Christianity than there is in Christ, and since he sees in Christ only a man, he can see in Christianity nothing superhuman. He says Christianity is not a doctrine, not something to be believed, but the life of Christ to be lived. As Jesus Christ was simply a man like other men, only a truer and a more perfect man than his brethren, it is evident that in living his life we live only a simple, natural, human life. Such being the case, we would thank him to tell us wherein Christianity, as he understands it, is a step in advance of theism or deism. His Christianity at best is only the law of nature, and affords us nothing beyond our natural strength to help us, that is, no aid beyond that which deism itself affords.

The author's third step in the progress of belief is "from Romanism to Protestantism." There is evidently here a break in the continuity of the progress the author assumes. To be consistent with himself, he should either identify Romanism with Christianity, and then give, as his third step, the step from Christianity to Protestantism; or distinguish "Romanism" from Christianity, and then his third step would be from Christianity to "Romanism," which on his theory of progress would imply that "Romanism" is a step in advance of Christianity. As it is, "Romanism" comes in abruptly, without any preparation of the reader for it. Its relation to Christianity, or to anything that has gone before it, as well as its origin, is left wholly unexplained. Evidently, "Romanism" is a puzzle to the author, an anomaly

in the theory or progress he would maintain, and he is unable to account for it. However, he stumbles at no difficulties. He says, in his opening chapter on "Romanism:"

"We now begin a new series of questions. We have compared atheism with theism, and find ourselves theists. This was our first step upward. We have next compared theism outside of Christianity with Christian theism, and find the last an advance on the other; so that, in the interest of human progress, we have accepted Christian theism as an advance on deism. But now we see before us two forms of Christianity. One is called Romanism, the other Protestantism. The first places supreme authority in the church, in the outward organization; the other, in the human soul. Which of these is an advance on the other?" (P. 197.)

The learned and philosophical author evidently holds that, as a form of Christianity, Protestantism, though not the final step, is in advance of what it pleases him to call "Romanism," meaning thereby the Catholic religion held by the immense majority of all those who, since the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, have borne the Christian name. Of course, we do not accept his statement that Catholicity places supreme authority in the *outward* organization alone, and he himself, before he gets through, corrects the statement, and owns that Catholics assert the internal as well as the external—the spirit as well as the letter. Catholics hold that the authority of the church is derived from God, and is that of the Holy Ghost who dwells in her, and without his dwelling and operating in the outward organization she would have no more authority than a Protestant sect.

But waive this for the moment and let us see wherein Protestantism is an advance on Catholicism

ty. Say the Catholic idea or rule of faith is the authority of the church as an external visible body, and the Protestant idea or rule of faith is the authority of "the human soul." Protestantism, then, has at best only a human authority, rests solely on the human soul, and its Christianity is purely human. This, instead of being a step in advance of "Romanism," is a step even below theism or deism; for there is no form of theism that does not assert an authority superior to that of the "human soul," namely, the authority of God. At the very lowest, the authority of the church is as high as the authority of the human soul, and Protestantism is no advance on the church at most; and Catholics have human souls as well as Protestants, and the human soul is no more in a Protestant than in a Catholic. We are men as well as Protestants, and man to man are their equals. Have they reason? So have we. Have they the Bible? So have we. Can they read? So can we, and as well as they. Suppose, then, that the church has no authority from God, that she has only a human authority, she has as much and as high authority as the author even claims for Protestantism. How, then, can Protestantism be a step in advance of "Romanism"?

It would be difficult to conceive a more untenable position than this, that Protestantism is a step in advance of the Catholic Church. Progress is in gaining, not in losing, truth; and what single truth can it be pretended even that Protestantism teaches that the church does not also teach, and with at least equal distinctness and emphasis? What means of justification, virtue, holiness, perfection, has the Protestant that the Catholic has not in his soul or in his church? What the Protestant holds of religion in common with the Catholic belongs,

of course, to the church, for she held and taught it fifteen hundred years before Protestantism was conceived in the morbid brain of the apostate monk of Wittenberg; and the advance from Catholicity can be only in what Protestantism has that the church or the Catholic has not, therefore in what is peculiar to Protestantism and distinguishes it from the church and her teachings. What truth has Protestantism in any or all of its multitudinous forms that the church has not always taught? Analyze Protestantism, and you will find that it has nothing peculiar, nothing that distinguishes it, nothing that it can call its own, but its negations or its denials of what the church affirms. It differs from the church only in what of the church it denies, and therefore is and can be no progress on Catholicity.

Take Dr. Clarke's own definition of Protestantism, "the supreme authority of the human soul:" it is only the denial of the supreme authority of God asserted by the church, for the soul has no more real authority under Protestantism than under Catholicity. It denies a truth the church teaches, and affirms only a falsehood in its place. To place the supreme authority in the human soul is to assert the very error the author so earnestly combats in his arguments against atheism and free religion. It is the denial of God, and therefore is really atheism; for, if God the creator is, he is supreme, the sovereign Lord and proprietor of all things, and no creature has or can have any authority in his own right. In trying to prove Protestantism an advance on Catholicity, the author only succeeds in proving, if he rightly defines it, that it is not an advance even on atheism. It is absurd to place the supreme authority in the human soul, for that would suppose

either that the human soul is God, or that God is the human soul.

But take Protestantism according to another statement of the author (p. 198), namely, Protestantism places the supreme authority "in the Bible." This, again, makes Protestantism consist in the denial of Catholic doctrine, that is, the supreme authority of the church and unwritten tradition; for the church actually holds the Bible to be even more authoritative than does the Protestant. The Reformers asserted justification by faith alone. Here, again, the distinctive Protestantism is the denial of the necessity of good works, or the concurrence of the will in regeneration and justification, for the church always taught that a man is justified by faith, though a faith perfected by charity, or in which man is active and lovingly co-operates. The church teaches that Christ has instituted sacraments, and that the Holy Ghost uses the outward visible sacraments as media of his operation in regeneration and sanctification. Protestants deny the sacraments, and all visible media of the union of the soul with Christ, the whole mediatorial system, and leave the soul as naked, as destitute, as helpless as it is under pure deism, as has already been frequently shown in this magazine. We might go on through all the doctrines of Protestantism and arrive at the same result. What is affirmative in them is Catholic, and only what is negative in them is Protestant. So true is this that Protestantism would have no meaning, be absolutely unintelligible, were it not for the Catholic doctrines it arraigns, distorts, or denies.

Our learned friend has been able to make out a seeming case against the church in a few instances, but only by mistaking and misrepresent-

ing her teachings, placing the human soul above God, the interests of time above those of eternity, and civilization above religion. His blunders and self-contradictions in stating the teachings of the church would be exceedingly amusing, did they not concern so grave a matter. He insists that the church places all her confidence in the outward visible sacrament, and grows merry over her carefulness in baptism, for instance, as to the matter and form, and yet confesses that she regards the outward visible sacrament only as the medium of an inward grace. He asserts that she places the supreme authority in an outward visible organization, and forgets to inform his readers that she teaches that her authority is from God, and is limited in teaching and governing all men and nations to things which her Lord has commanded her. He forgets also that she professes to be able to do it only because he has promised to be with her all days to the consummation of the world, and that she has the simplicity to believe that the promises of God cannot fail.

Dr. Clarke seems to be animated by a bitter hostility to the church, and when speaking of her loses his usual placidity of temper. He loses command of himself, and becomes almost as enraged against her as the Jews were against our Lord when they gnashed their teeth at him. We do not comprehend his hostility and rage, which make him forego all respect for truth and decency, and to sully his pages by repeating the foulest slanders ever uttered against the church, unless we suppose that he holds the body superior to the soul, while she requires him to subordinate the body to the soul, the flesh to the spirit. He cannot pretend that she is dangerous to men's souls,

for he expressly denies the endless punishment of the wicked, and holds that all men will finally be saved. It is only in this life and only in relation to this life that he can believe that the church or anything else can injure either soul or body. The sufferings, the sorrows, and the injuries of this life, which can be but momentary, and to be succeeded by an eternity of bliss, whether we have done good or have done evil, are hardly worth getting angry at or troubling one's self about.

We have no intention of following the author, and correcting his misrepresentations of Catholic teaching, and refuting his charges against the church, especially as he says expressly that he objects to Catholicity not as religion, but as a political organization or conspiracy against freedom and for the establishment of universal despotism. Religion is the *lex suprema*, the supreme law for all men and nations, alike for individuals and governments; and he who can see in the unwearied efforts of the church to bring all men and nations into subjection to religion or the law of God, which it is, only the vulgar ambition for political ascendancy or efforts to establish a universal despotism, is past being reasoned with, especially if he calls himself a Christian. Such a man has not taken as yet even the first step of belief—that from atheism to theism. But he repeats a statement often repeated against one of our collaborators, which it may not be amiss to correct. He says, after having quoted the Syllabus and the Paris *Univers* in support of some of his charges against the church :

“If it be thought that such doctrines cannot be held by Catholics in America, we refer to the following passage, extracted from Mr. Orestes A. Brownson's *Review*, to show the contrary. Mr. Brownson is an American, educated a Protest-

ant, for many years the advocate of the broadest religious liberty. If such a man as this, on becoming a Catholic, defends persecution, it is evident that nothing in modern civilization or modern education can neutralize the logic which carries every consistent Catholic to that conclusion. Thus spoke Mr. Brownson, some years ago indeed; but he has never retracted his declaration :

“The church is a kingdom and a power, and as such must have a supreme chief; and his authority is to be exercised over states as well as individuals. If the Pope directed the Roman Catholics of this country to overthrow the constitution, sell its territory, and annex it as a dependent province to the dominions of Napoleon, they would be bound to obey. It is the intention of the Pope to possess this country.” (Pp. 265, 266.)

The passage was never extracted from *Brownson's Review*, and was never written by Dr. Brownson, but is an unblushing forgery. Mr. Hepworth, Dr. Clarke's brother Unitarian minister in this city, quoted the same passage from an infamous book entitled *Pope or President*, and asserted it was from *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, but when called upon by a Catholic through the *New York Times* to prove his assertion, he confessed, after some shuffling and quibbling, that he could not do it, and that it was probably a mistake. We do not accuse either Dr. Clarke or Mr. Hepworth of forging the passage, or of being capable of such baseness; but neither is excusable for not having ascertained the facts in the case before making the charge.

Even on the low ground of civilization, Protestantism is no step in advance of Catholicity, as it were easy to show, and, indeed, as it has been shown over and over again even in this magazine, especially in the articles reviewing the great work of the Abbé Martin. Protestant civilization has only a material basis, or at best rests only on the human soul, and runs off into philanthropy and a vague hu-

manitarianism which tramples down more good by the way than it effects even in gaining its end, as we may see in both England and the United States. The author's "step from Romanism to Protestantism" is, under every point of view, a step backward and not forward; and if, as he says, Protestantism places the supreme authority "in the human soul," it is a step downward from theism to atheism. A more severe condemnation of Protestantism cannot be pronounced than to say that the highest authority it recognizes is the human soul, that is, man himself.

The fourth step the author takes is that "from the letter to the spirit." We have already shown that this is a step in the descending, not in the ascending, scale; for it is the rejection of all objective Christianity, all dogmatic or doctrinal belief, all that can be drawn out in distinct propositions and formally stated, and the reduction of religion to purely subjective states, affections, sentiments, or emotions of the human soul. This is what the author must mean when he rejects theology, all creeds and dogmas, and tells us Christianity is not a doctrine, but a life, and a life lived not by communion with God, but by communion of men with one another—the communion of humanity or the socialism of Pierre Leroux, or, at the highest, simple humanitarianism, which is only a clumsy form of atheism, and amply refuted by the author himself.

Perhaps, in justice to the intentions of the author, we ought to say that, when he rejects all external authority and places the supreme authority in the soul, he does not mean absolutely to deny the authority of God to command us, but that God teaches and commands in the human soul, not through any external media or organs. The authority is God in the human

soul, something like the "inner light" of the Quakers. But in this sense God must be in all souls alike, and teach all alike, whether Jews, pagans, Mohammedans, Catholics, or Protestants. The teachings of God are always and everywhere absolutely true, and free from all error and all liability to error, for it is impossible for God to lie. Then all religions, however they contradict one another, are true and good. Why, then, declaim against the Catholic religion, and seek its destruction? God is in the souls of Catholics as well as in the souls of Protestants, if in the souls of all men, and is equal to himself in all, and must be infallible in all. How, then, is it possible for any human soul to err? Yet, if the author is to be believed, the materialist, the atheist errs, the theist outside of Christianity errs, the "Romanist" errs, and the greater part of Protestants err; indeed, all the world are in error or fall short of the truth, except Dr. Clarke and his church of the disciples, who have got rid of the letter that killeth, and passed over to the spirit that quickeneth. Very extraordinary, since every man has in his soul God, the infallible teacher!

But all do not listen to the voice of God in the soul. Most men close their ears to it, shut their eyes to the light, follow their own lawless desires or vain imaginings, lose the truth and fall into error. Very good. But who shall determine who those are who close their ears and shut their eyes, and who are they who keep them open? What is the criterion of truth and error? Dr. Clarke, however infallible the inner light, has none, and therefore, in order to lose no truth, his rule is to accept all errors. The inward teacher may be infallible, but it guarantees no soul from erring as to what he teaches, as the author

must himself confess. Then of what avail to him or to any other one is the inward teacher?

The Catholic doctrine on this point, we think, has some advantages over Dr. Clarke's, and none of its disadvantages. He supposes that the Catholic has only an outward authority, the authority of an external organization, which may indeed command the will, but cannot convince the understanding. Even this is more than he has, for the authority on which he relies can do neither; and, moreover, he contends that by doing what the truth commands, though against our belief, we may come to understand and believe the truth. But this is not all the Catholic has. The Catholic has reason as well as other men, and he asserts the inner light or the inspirations of the Spirit as earnestly, as fully, as confidently, as did George Fox, William Penn, or Robert Barclay, as the author would have known if he had ever read any of the writings of Catholic mystics, or any of the spiritual or ascetic works in which Catholic literature abounds. The Catholic directors and masters of spiritual life assert all of the spirit that he can, and infinitely more than he does. The Catholic does in no case stop with the outward or external. He relies on the internal, the spirit, not less, but more than others do; no one is or can be more persuaded than he that the letter alone cannot suffice, and that it is the spirit that giveth life; but he tries the spirit, for there are many false prophets gone out into the world, and he has in the infallible authority of the church the standard or criterion by which to try them. If they gather not and agree not with the church, he knows they are lying spirits, and he refuses to follow or even to hear them; if the spirit gathers with the church and

teaches in accordance with the eternal, he knows it is the Spirit of God, and he follows it, knowing that it leadeth not to error, but to all truth. It is not that we have less than our rationalistic friend, but more. He has nothing that we have not in larger measure than he, but we have much that he has not, and without which what he has is of no avail.

The great difficulty with our author, we may say in conclusion, is that he has no proper conception of the supernatural. Even at the very best, his Christianity does not rise above the deism of Lord Cherbury or of Tom Paine. He never once hints that man's destiny, his end, or supreme good, is and cannot but be in the supernatural. He does not reflect, even if he knows, that man is created for God as well as by God, and that God, whether as first cause or as final cause, is supernatural, above nature, since he creates it, is its author, sovereign, and proprietor. The evil of any creature is in not attaining the end for which it is made. This is the hell of the damned. They, through their own fault, miss their end, and remain for ever below their destiny, with their existence unfulfilled, craving for ever a good which they have not and can never reach. As the evil, the misery of a creature is in not attaining, so its good, its heaven or beatitude, is in attaining its end. As we are created and exist for God, as he is our end, he is our supreme good, and we can find our heaven, our beatitude, only in attaining to him and becoming one with him without being absorbed in him, as Brahminism and Buddhism falsely teach. This is what the soul craves, what it hungers and thirsts for, and must have, or be for ever miserable.

Now, as God is supernatural, it is evident that our end or our su-

preme good, our beatitude, is and must be supernatural, and consequently above and beyond the reach of our natural powers. We cannot by ourselves, without the help of the supernatural, any more attain to our end or fulfil our existence than we could have created ourselves. The natural is not and cannot be on the plane of the supernatural, and, therefore, man, with his natural powers alone, is not adequate to his end, or destiny. Even a revelation which should teach us what is our end, and what it is necessary to do in order to attain it, would not suffice to enable us to attain it, for our natural understanding and the natural force of our will are not even with the revelation equal to it. We must for that be supernaturalized, born again, regenerated, elevated to the plane of our destiny, and supernaturally sustained and assisted afterwards. Dr. Clarke and all rationalists overlook this fact, and either assume that man has no end, no destiny, and must remain for ever an inchoate or unfulfilled existence, or else that his beatitude is in the natural order, that is, in the creature, which is impossible, for the creature is finite, and the soul craves the infinite, thirsts, as Dr. Channing says, "for an unbounded good." Nothing finite can satisfy it.

But how is it possible for finite man to be placed on the plane of the infinite God? This would not be possible, nor would it be possible for man to attain to beatitude, to union with God as his final cause or supreme good, if God did not himself descend to man, and take his nature up to himself in hypostatic union with the Word. The possibility is in the Incarnation, the mystery of the Word made flesh. Born anew of Christ, the Incarnate Word, in whom the human and the divine natures,

though for ever distinct, are united in the unity of one divine person, we are born of God, are united to him by nature, and have him for our father in the teleological order, as we have him for our Creator in the initial order, or the order of generation. This supernaturalization, through the Incarnation, of all who are born anew, by the election of grace, of Jesus Christ our Lord, is not conceived of by our author, and is denied by what he calls "rational Christianity." The author has never penetrated in the slightest degree into this profound mystery of the Incarnation, or reflected that, by rejecting or explaining it away, he reduces Christianity to the natural order, and leaves man as helpless as he would be under naked deism. By rejecting it or failing to recognize it, he proves that he has in his conception never got beyond the initial order, and is wholly unaware of the teleological order, which is created or constituted by the Incarnation. He appears not to have learned that Christianity is purely teleological, and, therefore, necessarily supernatural, founded by our Creator to enable us to attain the fulfilment of our existence, our end, our beatitude, and, therefore, must have been included in his eternal decree to create, and without which the creative act could never be more than inchoate. It is only when Christianity is so understood that it is rational, that it does or can satisfy the demands of human reason or meet the wants and satisfy the cravings of the human soul.

Catholicity seems to our author irrational, shallow, absurd even, but it is only because it lies deeper than he has sounded. The shallowness and absurdities are with him, in his own thought, not in the Catholic faith. It is supremely rational, because it is supremely divine. Man

even if he had not sinned, would by nature have stood below the plane of his destiny, and never could have fulfilled it without the supernatural elevation of his nature. The very state from which he fell by original sin, the original righteousness in which he was constituted, was a supernatural righteousness, a supernatural state, to which he was elevated by supernatural grace. With the supernatural grace itself he lost by sin the integrity of his nature, but even with the integrity of his nature unimpaired he could not attain to his beatitude, his true beatitude, and fulfil the purpose of his existence, without the supernatural elevation by grace which we call the new birth, regene-

ration, or palingenesia. Dr. Clarke laughs at all this, nay, blasphemes it; yet how is a man to live a teleological life unless born into it? How is he to be either born into it or persevere in it without the act of God or supernatural grace? The doctor is learned in many things, but the Catholic child that has been taught his catechism knows more than he does, and stands on a plane that is infinitely above his reach, unless he be converted himself and become as a little child. Here is his error. He forgets that his end is in the supernatural, and that he cannot attain it without the light of revelation, nor without the assistance of supernatural grace.

THE THREE RULES OF RUSTIC GRAMMAR.

FROM THE SPANISH.

CHARACTERS.

Don José, a rich landed proprietor.

Doña Alfonsa, his wife.

Doña Concha, a rich widow, sister to *Doña Alfonsa*.

Calixto, the son of *Don José* and *Doña Alfonsa*.

Uncle Matias, the capataz * of the estate.

Maria, an old servant.

SCENE I.

Uncle Matias (entering).

The Lord be praised! (*Looks all around, and, seeing that the room is empty, adds*)—for ever! But what

are we coming to? The mason that built this house wouldn't know it. The master is not in his office; the mistress is not in the store-room; in this room there is nobody. Yesterday, I told the master, "Señor, the vineyard must be dug over, for the year comes in an ill-humor; and, if the stocks don't get what they're asking for, the vintage will be so bad that the holy father's blessing itself couldn't do it any good." For answer I got a growl. The mistress, when she meets me, doesn't say even so much as "Good-by, jackass!" The house has been upside down and inside out ever since young Master Calixto came home from the capital with his aunt—one of your furbelowed great ladies, with more airs than a pair of bellows, more trimmings and orna-

* General overseer, in-doors and out.

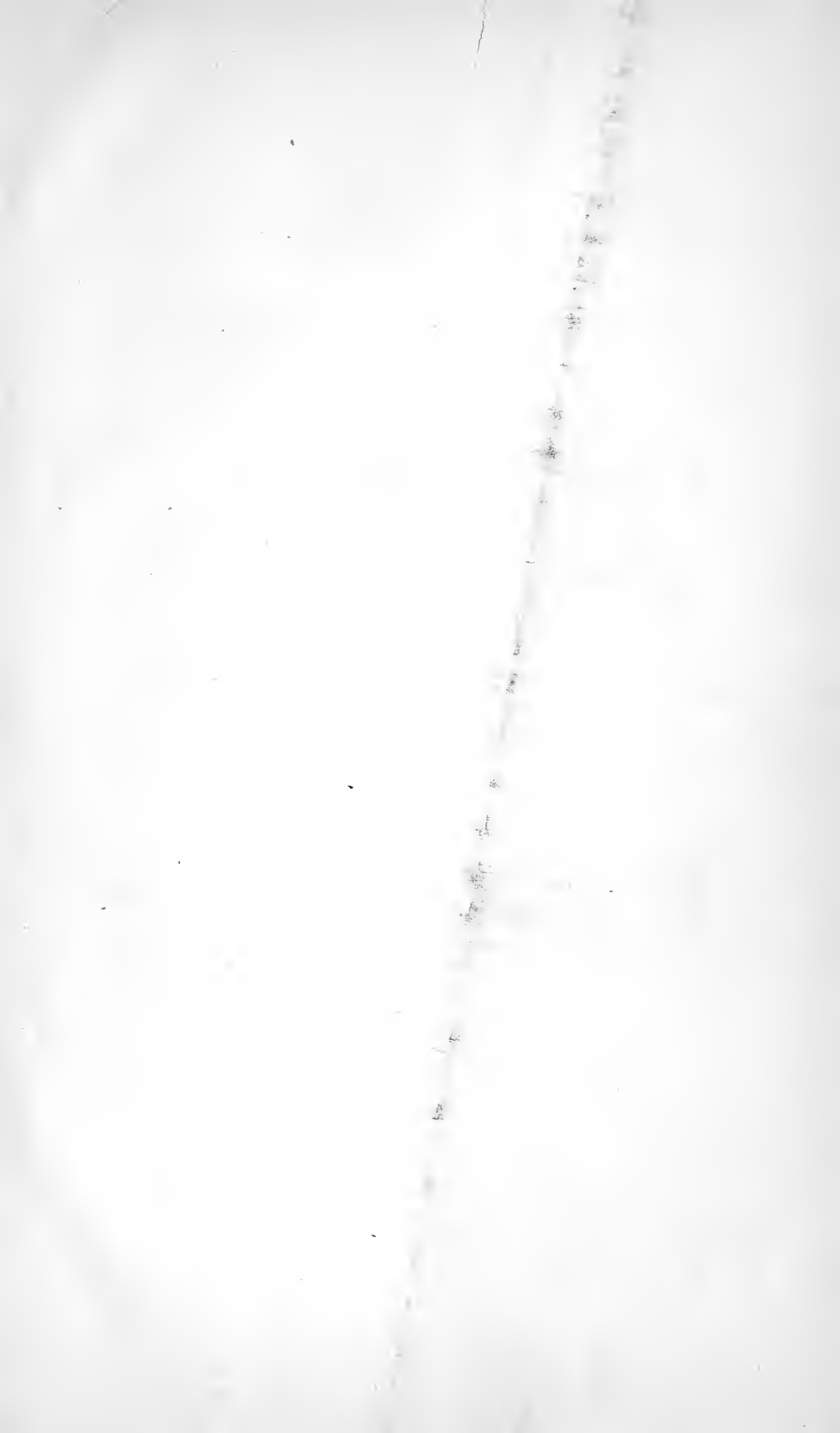
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