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ART. I.—*Melancthon's Letters*.*

WHOEVER feels an interest in the Reformation, feels an interest in Melancthon; and yet, to judge others by ourselves, he is comparatively little known. The noble edition of Luther's correspondence, published by De Wette, which is, in fact, the best biography of Luther, made us wish for something of the same kind, to bring us personally acquainted with *Magister Philippus*. We supposed, however, that the epistolary remains of Melancthon would probably not prove so illustrative of his history and character, as those of his more ardent and open-hearted colleague. We even doubted whether there existed a sufficient mass of his letters, to form a collection of tolerable size. We are, therefore, both surprised and pleased to see three goodly quartos, filled with the miscellaneous papers, chiefly letters, of Melancthon. While we gratify our own curiosity respecting them, we propose to take our readers with us, for the purpose of affording them a glimpse at Master Philip, through the faithful glass of his own private correspondence. Before doing this,

* Corpus Reformationis ed. C. G. Bretschneider. (Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia.) Vol. I.—III.—(Epistolae, Praefationes, Consilia, Judicia, Schedae Academicae.) 4to.

monstrated against ecclesiastical abuses and popish practices, every edict of the court confirmed and increased these causes of complaint. In this conflict it required no prophet to predict the result. In like manner, at the present day, public feeling in England is for civil and religious liberty, and against the assumptions and abuses of the church. In direct antithesis to the spirit of the age, rises up the spirit of Oxford, pushing the claims of the church and the clergy to the extreme of popish arrogance; becoming more exclusive and denunciatory as the necessity for conciliation increases. What must be the result of a conflict of a small minority,* insolent and encroaching, against the body of the nation? If this minority should go on to array against itself not only the opposition of dissenters, but of all who retain any love for the doctrines of the Reformation, and the cause of religious liberty, the doom of the church can be neither doubtful nor distant. That liberty as well as truth is involved in this conflict we think is very plain. The principles of these Tracts have never been combined with zeal and power without leading to persecution. The men who are the apologists and eulogists of Laud, whether in this country or England, are worthy of no more confidence when they claim to be friends of civil and religious liberty, than those advocates of toleration, who are forever praising the inquisition. We have no faith in the professions of either. Our hope and prayer are, that God would so revive pure religion, both in the Church of England and her American daughter, that this baneful spirit of popish superstition and intolerance may be effectually extinguished; and the whole body of the Reformed be united in one great brotherhood, as in the days of Cranmer and Calvin.

ART. VI.—*Physical Theory of Another Life.* By the Author of *Natural History of Enthusiasm.* New York. D. Appleton & Co. 1836. pp. 278.

WERE it indispensable to the usefulness of all speculations on the powers and conditions of man that these speculations

* Even the nominal members of the Church of England are less than one third of the population; about four million out of thirteen. The high-churchmen are very careful to place the duty of establishing a particular church on the ground that it is the true one, not that it is the church of the majority. *British Critic*, No. 43, p. 226.

invariably follow the path of truth, the range of profitable reflection on the properties and prospects of the human soul would, in this life, be confined to narrow limits. It seems a concession to our mental infirmity, that we may gain advantage to both the understanding and the heart from random excursions of thought, in proper directions and for proper ends, although we cannot propose to ourselves as the result of our study, the attainment of absolute truth. We are often tempted from pure love of truth to adventure on doubtful ground. The pleasure of discovering a rare gem in the field of science awakens the strenuous activity of the mind, and sustains it through a long and laborious series of experiments, often fruitless of all but the incidental benefits of exercise in the intellectual employment, and of acquaintance with the field explored.

The chief end of the present life of man is holiness and happiness to come; labour in the present for reward in the future; discipline in the present for perfection in the future. The very definition of a course of tuition and discipline for the human mind on earth, embraces the idea of a sparing communication of self evident truth; and accordingly, instead of coming at once into possession of the truth we are capable of perceiving and enjoying, we have the field laid open before us where the treasures of truth are to be found; and where we are to search and dig them out, with only certain knowledge enough beforehand to give us a taste for the truth, and only help enough to encourage us to help ourselves.

The object of the present life of man relates so purely to his immortality, and every power and circumstance of his nature is so subordinate to his religious character and destiny, that his intellectual attainments here have little value, except as they contribute to secure for him the privileges of that future state. Whether there be tongues, they shall fail; or whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. It suffices us here that we know in part. We have truth enough, established and understood, to give ample knowledge of duty, and to furnish the outline of a safe sphere of mental exercise; and for the rest, we may employ and discipline and entertain the mind in balancing probabilities, tracing obscure analogies, framing conjectures, or inventing theories. While we look for more and better knowledge in another life, we cannot deem it an unsuitable preparation for that higher intellectual state, that in this we should toil so hard and long to find a little truth, and be borne towards that world of light on an ocean of probabilities, where here and there only an island

of established truth stands in cheering prominence and eternal stability above the waves.

We are, therefore, predisposed to favour plausible speculations on the physical conditions of our immortality. We do not receive them coldly because they may not be true. Nor do we insist, as one of the terms of our approbation, that such discussions shall always promise the discovery of truth; nor that they shall prove their course to lie in the direction of positive truth; nor even that they shall make the attainment of truth their professed aim. It is lawful to discuss probabilities. It is lawful to discuss possibilities. Between the utterly absurd and the absolutely certain, an almost illimitable field lies open to the excursions of reason, and yields, when skilfully explored, a copious and varied tribute to the lasting wealth of the mind.

Our relish for this class of speculations has given us an interest in the "*Physical Theory of Another Life.*" We have read this work with a pleasure arising from several sources. The volume is replete with the marks of a capacious and discriminating mind. To say nothing here of the "*Theory*" itself, which has, at least, all the recommendation that ingenuity could give it, we regard this volume as the best specimen the author has yet given us of his taste and power as a writer. Every paragraph reveals the hand of a master. Although mainly bent on spreading out his theory of another life, he has incidentally given us fine examples of the higher grades of philosophical analysis, of rigid reasoning and glowing imagination.

As to his style, we are happy to perceive in this work, fewer of his peculiar faults, than in his previous volumes; while he retains all such of his characteristics as are unquestionable virtues. He is more perspicuous and direct. We have fewer occasions to stop at the close of a sentence to draw out some common thought from the author's verbose and elaborate obscurity, or to recover the sense that escapes us as we wind through his graceful involutions. The cast of his thoughts, as well as their connexion, is remarkably original; yet when he falls, as he sometimes inevitably must, upon ideas which have occurred to other minds, he arrays them in the costume and gives them the air of strangers. His commonest thoughts are the obscurest. As if ambitious to appear never to touch or approach the track of inferior minds, he changes the features of every thought that might meet us as an old acquaintance, and often affects to be a stran-

ger through the mere strangeness of his dress. Even in this volume, the best in this respect the author has given us, we find many pages, which, if they were clearer, would seem less profound.

It is not the design of this article to prosecute a thorough examination of the book. We may recur to these speculations at a future day; and if we should, our suggestions on this or any other theory of another life may be a sequel to a few thoughts we propose now to offer on what may be considered *the relative and permanent grade of man on the scale of intellectual being*.

Every physical theory of another life must involve the whole system of mental operations in the future state; and the book before us follows the natural order of thought, by inquiring first into the conditions of the mind's immortality, and thence inferring the probable attributes of an immortal body. The first theory must relate to the glorified state and exercises of the mind.

Among the conjectures which would be comprehended in a rational theory of the future life of man, will be found that of his probable continuance in his present relative rank of intellectual being. If any point in the philosophy of our immortality is settled by the tenor of the scriptures, it is that men will continue for ever to be men. As they are now lower than the angels, they will remain so. Their perfection and glory does not, from any revealed process, and certainly not from natural necessity, imply their promotion to a higher nature. They will not take intellectual rank with the innumerable company of angels; but remain a distinct order;—spirits of just men made perfect. Their perfection will be the perfection of men, not of angels. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars; and each glory has its own perfection. The perfect star is not a moon, the perfect moon is not a sun, nor is a perfect man an angel. We have more than the obtuse hints of faint analogy to teach us that the human soul, through its everlasting ascent on the scale of glory, will retain the characteristics of its order.

It will, therefore, be an indispensable though negative virtue of our philosophy of the future state, that we do not theorize away the identity of the race. The supposition that distinctions between the orders of intelligence will ever be annihilated is gratuitous. There are scriptural allusions in great variety, which intimate, that some, at least, of the

general laws of mind which govern our experience here, will prevail in our experience for ever.

The intellectual life to come, (we speak of life in heaven,) is uniformly represented in the scriptures as, in many and momentous respects, superior to the present. All that is imperfect will be done away, and that which is perfect will come. Human nature, while it will remain human nature, will be raised to its perfection. Then shall we know, even as we are known. The change from one state to the other must be great, and it may not vary far from truth to suppose that the happiness to follow will be enlivened by the ceaseless perception of the contrast between the two states of being. However perfect may be our knowledge hereafter, we here know in part; and be our intellectual condition hereafter what it may, it is unquestionably and extremely imperfect here.

Some of the qualities of our mental constitution which are recognized as imperfections are incidental to the connexion between the mind and a material organization; some are even ascribable to moral depravation; others may without controversy as we judge, be accounted essential characteristics of humanity in all its probable conditions.

The method we propose in these remarks does not contemplate these several classes of imperfections in distinction from each other; but will treat them promiscuously, as evidence cumulative of the mental inferiority of man; and from the whole discussion, if we do not mistake, the conviction may be gathered, that the human race stands at or near the bottom of the intellectual scale.

Were it necessary to conciliate respect for our views of human insignificance, it might be well to premise, that we would not be thought to favour indiscriminate and reckless declamation against the excellencies of our nature, and the many and high advantages of our present state. We have no sympathy with such as refuse to see any thing desirable in human life or character, and ascribe to man no excellence because he has not all. There is an earnest and deep conviction of the imperfection of man, which is not the sullen obstinacy of misanthropy. It is worthy of attainment to be able to appreciate both the evil and the good in human nature, and to estimate our endowments according to truth.

And in following the train of our thoughts on this subject, we do not consult alone the profit of the understanding. If any doctrine of the Christian system requires enforcement by

the united powers of scripture and philosophy, it is the doctrine of human imperfection;—the imperfection as well of the understanding as of the heart. Although not less a doctrine of reason than of scripture, it is an element of true religion, and with the use of it our spiritual improvement must begin and continue. A vivid and correct understanding of this doctrine is an indispensable preparative for the whole sequel of Christian knowledge, experience and duty.

The nearest approach to demonstration in morals, is where nature and revelation give direct and positive evidence to the same point. Respecting any truth established by the mouth of these two witnesses there can be no reasonable controversy. The perfection of moral evidence is the testimony of God; and when both his works and his word bear witness to the same doctrine, the testimony is complete.

It is therefore the legitimate office of reason to compare scripture with scripture, and nature with nature, till we understand them apart; and then mark their mutual agreement. Nor does our calling up the world to bear witness of its Creator betray distrust of the scriptures; for, without the feeblest tendency to unbelief, we may enjoy every word by which nature corroborates the testimony of the bible, from a pure relish for the pleasures of faith; just as, from a relish for the pleasures of taste, we seek new sources without implying dissatisfaction with the old. The testimony of nature for the doctrines of revelation, tends to exalt the holy scriptures in our esteem, and increase our joy in believing.

Hence we are more than justified in employing science as the handmaid of religion; in searching out analogies between them, and making free use of those analogies in explaining and enforcing religious truth. Although the bible does not derive its credibility from the things that are made, it yet appeals to them in illustration of its truth, and gives us a hint, that by our observation of nature we may augment the practical efficiency of faith, and make it more perfectly the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Now to engage our reflections on the intellectual inferiority of our species, we have the high and solemn motive of a spiritual necessity. The temper to be cultivated by the use of these reflections, is a virtue of the Christian system; and without the help of these humbling views that humble virtue will not, in due degree, be cherished.

The two opposite aspects in which man may be contem-

plated, are equally just, and of equal practical importance. If we compare him with the lower grades of being, we may extol his excellence. His rational and moral endowments, the high ends of his being, the extent and dignity of his responsibilities, and his sublime and solemn destiny mark him clearly for a superior rank. We may celebrate his dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea; and his divine right to appropriate to his sole convenience the whole irrational world. But comparing him with higher grades of being we are reminded of his confinement in this world, to a low and narrow sphere, his corporeal grossness and infirmity, his limited knowledge, and his want of control over his own experience and destiny. We may even suggest the immense abatement of his lordship over the lower creation, arising from his dependance on that creation for much of his life and enjoyment; from his necessity of providing for and serving all things that serve him; from his subjection in common with all earthly beings to the destructive power of elements above his control; and his exposure to injury from the very creatures over which he claims dominion.

In one of these aspects, man appears among the noblest works of God; a little lower than the angels, fit for glory, honour and immortality. We magnify his responsibilities, and assign him to an exalted station in the universe. In the other, his glory is obscured by his many infirmities; his highest power and offices dwindle into insignificance, and we exclaim, Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him?

Such is the union of extremes in the constitution of the human race;

“From different natures marvellously mix’d
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds;”

a compound of the great and the small, the noble and the vile. Here then must be joined the responsibility of greatness with the humility of littleness; and the complete moral character of man must fill the space between the two wide extremes of aspiring desires and purposes and a lowliness of self-esteem.

The upper extreme is most naturally considered by the reflecting and intelligent portion of mankind; the latter needs to be better defined and more insisted on. Pride, self-flattery, and self-complacency press spontaneously upon the higher limit of our nature; so that, for want of a practical and

habitual remembrance of our infirmities, we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. The true doctrine of human imperfection is often perverted by men's comparing themselves among themselves; and taking the difference between man and man instead of the difference between man and higher natures as the measure and the motive of humility.

If, moreover, in our present train of reflections, we find reason to admire the inherent and inestimable worth of mind, as a personal endowment in all its degrees, we shall gain by the discussion another and valuable end. When invited to the contemplation and exercise of intellect in its sublimest offices; when we see the highest displays of its glory; when we consider its lofty aspirations, its exalted and exalting sentiments, its generous sympathies, its splendid imaginations, its ethereal and blissful activity, its searching, lucid and commanding reason, and its inborn thirst for truth,—we rejoice in the immunities of intellectual life. We glory in the name of *man*. We claim fellowship with the universal family of intelligence; and, though perhaps last born of the family, and least endowed, yet nevertheless justly conscious of a high nature and destiny. Our esteem for mind will rise, our rational views of its essential excellence will be enlarged and enlivened, by observing how small a portion of the precious essence produces so magnificent effects. If, by calculating the value of a grain of gold, we learn to admire the massive wedge, on the same principle, while considering the minuteness of our own inestimable mental gem, we may learn to adore the Infinite Mind, whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Now that the human understanding is formed on a scale exceedingly small, perhaps even the smallest conceivable, we think to be strongly suggested, I. By several of the most obvious disadvantages of our intellectual constitution; II. By the imperfection of our knowledge in both kind and degree; and, III. By the vast failure of its legitimate results.

I. Of the obvious advantages of our intellectual constitution, the one most prominent and comprehensive appears in the very beginning of our existence, when the human being may be said to have *no understanding at all*, and puts forth scarcely more signs of intelligence than appear in a sensitive plant.

Wishing not to disturb any man's theory respecting the intellectual powers and exercises of infancy, and to keep

clear of contestable ground, we merely state the fact as it is practically recognized by all. There is a period in the life of every man, when, to all the purposes of this argument, he has no intellect; when he thinks not, reasons not, remembers not; when he exists in a state which, if protracted through the whole term of human life, would never suggest to us the presence of so much as the embryo of an intelligent mind. Who ever goes back to the field of his infancy to gather its productions for the support or the entertainment of his maturer years? What is there in infancy to enrich, to adorn, or to flatter the man? What account is taken of even the whole of the first broad stage of human life? In the biography of man, you read that then and there he was born, and then a blank,—a broad and silent blank, tells the history of years of that living soul!

Compare now this universal condition of man's intellectual being with its opposite. Place by the side of that sensitive thing in the cradle—that prelude of a man—that negative quantity of humanity—place in contrast with it a newly created intelligence of human kind, in the height and glory of his maturity, sending forth over the whole prospect of his three score years and ten the glowing promise of a brilliant career; and let any man, who loves the treasures of the mind, be requested to say which of the two conditions he would, from intellectual considerations alone, prefer. And let him say by how much he would prefer it. Let him tell us what, that is not life itself, nor real and permanent mental excellence, he would not give for choice, if choice could be allowed him, between these two ways of beginning existence. The difference is that of two extremes. For a being destined to immortal and ever-growing intelligence, whose understanding is to accomplish, in the short term of this earthly life, a momentous part of its grand design, and seems to have been created mainly for the sake of the results of its highest perfection—for such a being to begin his life without the least perceptible sign, or the least consciousness of an intellect, and to reach his destined capacity by those slow degrees which occupy so great a portion of his present term, is a most humiliating restriction upon the prerogatives of intellectual life. It is a disadvantage, in its kind, the greatest conceivable.

Then, secondly, from this low beginning *the ascent is only toilsome*. The maxim, *Nil sine labore*, holds peculiarly respecting the valuable attainments of the mind. The

hill of science, at the foot of which every man is born, is to be climbed by patient exertion, and with long and oft repeated alternations of weariness and rest; no man being placed at first upon the summit, or rising by a natural buoyancy. Why might not man—we exclaim in our natural coveting of mental advantages—why might not man be permitted to make, without effort, all the acquisitions for which his capacities were prepared? And we praise those minds which learn with least effort, and we recoil from intellectual labour, and we are copious in expressions of our preference for superhuman exemption from the claims of this universal law of our nature. Alas, the next evil to that of having no knowledge at all, is the evil of getting knowledge at so hard a rate.

And then, *thirdly*, as if every way to buffet man's complacency in his mental endowments, there is *the necessity of intellectual discipline*. Mental discipline is the chief end of education. To be capable of acquiring knowledge with the greatest facility, and of using it with the best effect, the human intellect must have a long and thorough training, at vast expense of toil and self-denial, and half, perhaps, of the term of its earthly existence. How far superior to ours would be that mental constitution which might rise above this necessity of laborious and expensive discipline, and comprehend, in a spontaneous developement, the whole preparation of the mind for its destined office. The least superiority to discipline is among the higher proofs of intellectual greatness among men. Perhaps no endowments draw more general admiration than those which enable a man, with least of mental discipline, to produce its greatest results. But the necessity of this discipline is universal, in order to the mind's maximum of efficiency; and we here adduce it as one of the disadvantages of our mental constitution, and an evidence of the inferior rank of the human mind.

The three foregoing unquestionable disadvantages adhere to the mind's entrance on its stage of action; and we pause to challenge the conception of greater imperfections in their kind, which would still leave to man any thing the least desirable as an intellectual boon:—beginning with nothing, having all to gain by hardest labour, and spending half the lifetime in learning to work!

But having gained its highest improvement, the human mind still reveals in all its acts its own imperfection; as, we observe, *fourthly, in the exercise of attention*. The recognition of such a faculty concedes an imperfection; imply-

ing the temporary confinement of thought within a narrow compass; and the greater perfection of this faculty implying the greater imperfection of the mind possessing it, as though the power of thought were compressible indefinitely. We have the power of withdrawing the thoughts from their rapid excursions among various objects, and fixing them on a single object, or directing them in a particular line; and that the mind may exert its greatest power upon a given subject, it must confine its thoughts for the time to that subject alone. We hold this faculty of the mind in due esteem, and are fully aware that it is the higher perfection of this power that gives some minds their great superiority over others; but its usefulness results entirely from the mind's want of power to do its perfect work on more than one subject at a time.

We wish not here to agitate the question whether the mind has power to carry on, at the same time, two or more distinct operations, or whether it only passes so rapidly from one object to another as to seem to attend simultaneously to both. We take simply the undeniable fact, that every man who proposes the highest application of his thoughts to one subject abstracts his attention from every other, and this single fact we take to prove the very inferior power of the human understanding; it must collect itself upon a single point to perform its appropriate work; as, if the sun, to dissolve the frost of winter and raise vegetation in one field should be compelled to withdraw his light from all others.

Now that there are powers of thought superior in this respect to our own is easily conceivable. We know indeed of one intellect which considers all things at once and with equal and effectual attention; and down along the scale of intelligence we can imagine various degrees of this power above our own and still below perfection; but having descended to the sphere of man we seem to have reached the end of the series. That there may be degrees of this power of expanded attention above us and below the infinite who can deny? Is it inconceivable that a mind conversant with objects of the same kind with those of human knowledge should be able to think intently and effectually on many things at the same time, and perform simultaneously a number of difficult operations? Is such a mental constitution inconceivable as would enable the person, at the same time, to calculate, unerringly, a future eclipse of the sun; solve an intricate problem in mathematics, conduct an exact and extended argument in political economy, investigate a profound

doctrine of theology; and all this, while addressing an eloquent appeal to a popular assembly on some topic of public and exciting interest? That such a power may be an endowment of some superior order of intellect is altogether conceivable, nay, probable; but does it seem possible that a mind could be formed inferior in this respect to the mind of man and still possess the characteristics of a thinking and reasoning soul—a mind which must think of less than one thing at a time and which still can think?

And, *fifthly*, we are admonished of our mental imperfections *by the faculty of memory*. The imperfection of the memory itself needs hardly to be mentioned, it is a common topic of plaintive remark. From the school-boy, who forgets one lesson while learning another, to the philosopher, who must classify his acquisitions and provide repositories far his knowledge out of his mind, we trace this great and grievous sign of mental imperfection. How great a portion of all the labour of the student consists in classifying and arranging his articles of knowledge, and placing them where they may be found in the time of need.

And let any man consider how few of the thoughts and feelings which exercise his mind during any portion of his life leave permanent traces on his memory; let him reflect what myriads of thoughts, some of which are perhaps as precious as any of his mental offspring, escape at the instant of conception, and are seen no more, and he will be disposed to consider his mind almost like a channel through which a current is constantly gliding, and in which nothing remains stationary but some fragments of thoughts which float in eddies near the margin of the stream.

But the infirmities of the memory may be the result of its connexions with a material organization. They may belong only to the present life. When the mind shall enter upon the stage of its future and enlarged action, it may drop this mark of imperfection, and the memory may become a more expanded and tenacious repository than it now is of the past exercises of the soul.

Instead, therefore, of insisting on the imperfection of the memory as an essential characteristic of the mind, we would suggest the kind of mental inferiority implied in the very existence of the faculty. Why is it that our mental constitution requires such a faculty as the memory? Why is it that the mind is furnished with the power of recalling its past thoughts and feelings, and making them matter of pre-

sent consideration? It is an indispensable power to the human mind because the thoughts and feelings of that mind must exist in the form of a series, and because the attention must be confined to one individual of the series at a time. With such a mental constitution the want of a memory would detract largely from the value of the power of thought. So little could thought and reason avail us without the memory that if deprived entirely of memory we might almost as well relinquish the other powers of a rational soul. But a higher power of understanding which should embrace a wide range of simultaneous thought might be less dependent on memory, for its proper effects, and the less dependent the higher it rises towards perfection; till, if it could reach the perfection of the Supreme Mind, its exercises (if such terms may be applied to such a subject) can bear no resemblance to a series, no relation to time, nor admit any prerogative of memory. The very existence of memory, therefore, and its vast importance in our mental operations as infallibly indicate the imperfection of the human mind as the machines of locomotion indicate the imperfection of locomotive power in the human body. The memory meets the wants of the mind in its relation to time as locomotion meets the wants of the body in relation to space.

We will notice under this head but one other broad mark of imperfection which distinguishes the human mind, viz. the immense deficiency of intuitive power, which a comparison of man with a higher order of intelligence might reveal; the necessity of reaching abstract truth by circuitous and laborious reasonings. It seems scarcely questionable that we stand in this respect not one degree above the lowest conceivable. The axioms of philosophy show fair specimens of the truths we perceive by intuition. "The whole is greater than a part." "It is impossible for a thing at the same time to be and not to be." These and such like are the truths which the human power of intuitive perception is supposed to reach! And what do they add to the stock of knowledge? What satisfaction does the contemplation of them impart to the mind? They scarcely deserve the name of truths; they give no exercise to the power of intuitive perception; the mind looks upon them and sees nothing, as the eye looks off into the blue depths of space. The perception of such truths seems to be no proper act of the mind. It is rather a necessary state of the mind at rest, having before it no article of valuable knowledge, nothing which it can contemplate with

satisfaction as an acquisition; and yet this kind of abstract truth is the only kind that the human mind receives as self-evident; the only class of truths which comes within the reach of the intuitive power of the human mind. Could such a faculty be imagined to exist in smaller measure? Is there a conceivable degree of the power of intuition lower than this? Detract at all from this, and what power would the mind retain of taking one step in a process of reasoning for the discovery of truth, or even of perceiving truth when we found its locality.

In such facts as those above stated we have strong suggestions of the doctrine that the intellectual endowments of the human race belong to a very low, if not even to the lowest order.

II. The doctrine finds further illustration in the imperfection of our knowledge.

The nature and degree of our knowledge of objects of sense is perhaps one of the most palpable proofs of our intellectual imperfection; for what and how much do we know of them? We know the fact of their existence; we distinguish what we denominate their properties, such as solidity, form, colour, and the like; we observe their apparent changes, and infer thence a general state or law of their being to which we give a name. Of the essential nature of things, we know nothing—we pretend to know nothing. If any one desires to feel the full force of these assertions, let him seek a definition of gravity, of colour, of animal or vegetable life—a definition which shall reach the essence of the things; and if the result of his inquiries give him leave still to “think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”

And what but a world of mystery to us is the science of mind, of politics or of morals?

The science of the human mind, the most attractive of all the branches of philosophy, the branch upon which the mind is disposed to expend its highest efforts for correct and ample knowledge, is involved in deepest obscurity. It is in this field of knowledge that the mind advances with greatest difficulty. It feels least confidence in its discoveries. It seems to stand in its own light while surveying itself, like a man before a mirror with the lamp behind him; and the dark depth of the subject, the very thing which tempts intellectual adventure in every other field, repels the mind from the study of itself. Here we seem to stand in the centre of the cloud,

where the mental eye is but half supplied with light, and where the same darkness envelopes both the observer and the object; while in other sciences we seem ourselves to stand in clear light, and look upon the dense and well-defined surface of the cloud as upon a veil which obscures nothing but what it hides entirely.

We need not enumerate the questions which the mind of man is perpetually prone to ask about itself, and to which it expects no answer; questions of the essence of the soul, of the nature and mutual relations of its powers, of the faculty of perception, of memory, of reason, of imagination; how these powers, if indeed they are such distinguishable from each other, are combined to form one conscious, individual agent. We have long since learned better than to press such questions. The better part of all our knowledge on these subjects is to know its impassable limits. After all the advances of mental philosophy, and we do not condemn them as insignificant and useless, the assertion will not perhaps be confidently contradicted, that mental powers now distinguished, and classed as such by the ablest philosophers, *may* yet appear no more justly distinguishable from each other, than the heat which melts wax from the heat which hardens clay. What uncertainty still hangs over these very elements of our knowledge. When can we hope, with such progress as we are making, and with the warmest zeal which man's unquenchable ardour for knowledge has ever yet evolved, to reach the "ultima thule" in the science of mind.

Scarcely fewer or less equivocal are the signs of imperfection in the political knowledge of mankind.

It may, at first view, seem an all-sufficient argument on the deficiency of our political knowledge to refer to the universal and perpetual turmoil of the political world. But, since it may be said that a perfect government among imperfect beings is not to be expected, and that perfect laws in a perfect administration would not prevail to make all bad men do right, nor cause a people who are wanting in virtue to lead quiet and peaceable lives, we will not require too much from political wisdom, nor presume that its absolute perfection would make this world, in its wickedness, a peaceful and happy abode.

But of the man who should pretend to infallible knowledge in political science, thus much may be demanded—that he shall give us, with all desirable evidence of their truth, those principles for the constitution of a state, includ-

ing the form of the government and the distribution of its various powers, which shall most perfectly balance wickedness against wickedness, restrain corruption by corruption, repress the propensity to evil doing by the fear of suffering, make one man's interests the defence of another's, and thus hold the elements of anarchy at their maximum of tranquillity, while he gives, at the same time, freest scope for the exercise of all existing virtue.

That such principles, with their demonstrations, have never yet been given to the world, is evident from the fact that they have never been recognized and applied; more evident, however, from the ceaseless agitation of many questions in political philosophy, which are by no means the most difficult of solution, but to which the answer, giving universal satisfaction, has never yet been found; some comprehensive questions of international law; of the foundation of the right of property; of the proper connexion between civil government and religion. Until such questions as these are settled, and the world has become of one mind upon them, we will speak with reserve of the perfection of our political wisdom.

We cannot fail to observe how few of the truths of political science have been discovered by means of intuitive knowledge of human nature, or by any strict process of reasoning; how largely the political wisdom of any generation is drawn from the previous experience of the world, and drawn by a process in which the reasoning faculty exercises only a partial and inferior office. Men do sometimes learn to shun the fire which has once burned them; and from this experience of previous generations it is that the practical wisdom of the statesman is almost totally derived. "Teach us," he exclaims, "the lessons of the past; pour upon us the whole, the needful, the condensed light of the world's experience." Every system builder of political philosophy explores the length and breadth of the forest of history for his materials; and wisely, indeed; for what could he do without them? Put out the light of history, and you might almost as well put out the statesman's mental eye. For five and twenty centuries from the creation of man, till God taught Moses politics, the statesmen of the world were such as the patriarchs, the Pharaohs with their magicians, and the three and thirty kings of the little valley of the Jordan.

In moral philosophy the human mind finds itself encompassed with infirmity at every step. The reasoner in morals

has ever been perplexed by these two elementary questions:

1. Whether a given action be right. 2. Why it is so.

To take the last first. How long has the moral philosopher been employed in forming a definition of virtue, which should prove its own correctness alike to all; and here, on the threshold of their science, have the teachers of morals stumbled and reeled against each other, disputing about the reasons they would give their pupils why they ought to do right; and never by their philosophy alone would they have conquered the difficulty. They have been driven to seek from a direct revelation from heaven the only correct definition of virtue.

As to the question whether a given action be right or wrong—we have a natural conscience which answers the highest of practical ends; but we are not now concerned with the conscience. It is a question for the understanding that we raise, to be settled by the intellectual application of the rule of right; and we need but suggest the fact that a long list of actions might be mentioned concerning which the wisest human moralist might be unable to decide correctly whether they were right or wrong.

We cannot omit to mention here the notorious fallibility of human judges in the dispensation of particular justice. A degree of intricacy scarcely above the least conceivable, or the feeblest contrariety of personal interest, is frequently sufficient to confound the judgments of different men, causing their decisions to contradict each other, and the same man, in different circumstances, to contradict himself. When we witness a series of decisions in successive courts alternately reversed, the last decision being, perhaps, no more clearly right than the first, while the law and the evidence before all the judges are the same; when judges on the same bench give opposite opinions in the same case, upon the same evidence and under the same laws; when we see a jury failing to agree in a verdict, or agreeing only by compromise; nay, when we consider the utter and vast diversity of individual judgments, of which the verdicts of juries, in very common cases, are compounded—half marking one extreme, half the other, and all falling at length, perhaps, upon the mean, we are strongly tempted to pronounce such decisions of justice the impulses of blind chance. Nor is it only in intricate matters of law that these diversities prevail; they extend to matters of simple equity, and are often more conspicuous, mortifying and injurious in matters of equity than of law.

We perceive in such imperfection as this, a necessity that the civil law should be only a partial *rule* of justice, and the administration of that law a still more partial *security* for it; while the ceaseless occurrence of flagrant injustice in forms which no human laws contemplate, and the actual failure of the laws to defend right in a thousand cases which they fairly reach, give us ample warning to prepare to suffer wrong with Christian meekness from the impossibility of redress.

But the highest of all evidence of the deficiency of man's moral discernment is found in his natural blindness to the principles of Christian piety. Although this blindness is to a great extent, if not chiefly, attributable to moral depravation, and may not with strict propriety be classed among the original imperfections of the human mind, it yet evinces the fallibility of the intellect, and proves frailty to have been one of its essential properties. The doctrines of Christianity are not offered to man to be sought as matters of discovery. They are fully revealed. They are to be learned by the simple process of faith in a positive declaration of God. While truth, so intelligible to the understanding, is set before us in plain words, it is one of the mysteries of moral degeneracy that the natural man should not receive the things of the Spirit of God, and that these things should appear to him as foolishness. So delicate and frail an organ is the eye of man's moral discernment, that its power of vision has perished amid the impure exhalations of a corrupt heart; and now under the noonday beam of the sun of righteousness, "the sightless eyeball rolls and finds no ray." The destruction is complete, and none but he who first caused the light to shine out of darkness, can restore the sight. Such frailty attaches to the human power of moral discernment the noblest power of the soul; the first to die, the last and the hardest to be revived.

III. On the last topic of our proposed remarks, *the vast failure of our knowledge in its practical results*, we have room for a few words only; but in those few words much may be said.

Knowledge is chiefly valuable for its practical uses, and the ability to make the most effectual application of our attainments to the purposes of life must be an important endowment of mind. The want of this ability must be a great infirmity, and any degree of this want a proportionable evil. No reflecting mind can overlook the manifest deficiency of the human understanding in this very thing.

In how many branches of knowledge has science gone centuries ahead of art; the laws of nature being understood for ages before their uses are? Did not the ancients know the properties of the useful metals, the mechanical power of falling and of boiling water, the tendency of fluids to a level? Yet think of the generation after generation that tilled the ground with the wooden plough, wrought their clothing from the distaff, ground their corn by hand, built the aqueduct on a single plane, and travelled three miles an hour. Where slept man's practical genius through that long night? Now when we behold the application of long known science to the arts of life, the age is astonished at its own improvements. But these improvements have been long coming, alas, how long. This "intellect in man," this "understanding which the breath of the Almighty hath given him," has only shown its capability of wonders in these last days of time. How long a training, what an immense extent of observation and accumulation of experience, what a perpetual and mighty pressure of circumstances have been necessary to develop it; and if now, at length, we would glory in what man has done, we may well blush to remember how long he has been doing it. We may half suspect that these developments have only come in time to teach the world before it dies that few and feeble as are the powers of the human understanding, it still has powers which it long knew not how to use.

Of the practical application of our mental philosophy, it may suffice for the present to say, that the use of our knowledge is quite as imperfect as the knowledge itself. Although a part of the practical benefit of the science of mind in regulating and improving the intellectual and moral powers, may in some cases be secured, still we know not what can be said with clearer certainty than that spite of all known laws for the regulation of mind, most minds even of the educated classes are but illy regulated either in their thoughts or their emotions. If happiness be one of the chief ends of our intellectual constitution and exercises, the failure of this chief end is momentous. Every reflecting man is often sensible of an afflicting deficiency in the application of the known laws of mind to regulate his mental action and secure its most beneficent results.

That part of the practical use of mental philosophy which relates to the education of the young is equally defective. We are not concerned to decry the approved plans of education. We earnestly commend them. Their offices are indis-

pensable. It is but common praise to mention immeasurable benefits, both public and private, to those who enjoy their influence. Still who pleads for them that they are perfect? Or who demands for them so much as the reputation of strict conformity to the acknowledged principles of mental science? and as philosophy advances towards perfection, its application to systems of education will ever, as it has done, follow afar off.

But were the plans of education perfect it would be directly to our purpose to ask, have they resulted from the application of the science of mind to the art of teaching? It were the more natural process, and in our view far the more probable, that the science of education should have grown out of the art, and that philosophy has done less for education than education for philosophy. Improvements in education, as in many other matters, come by experiment. The most illiterate mechanic improves his tools by observing which kind works best. We have little room for boasting in the manner in which the art of education is conducted, since the connexion is so ambiguous between our science of mental philosophy and our practical efforts to improve the mind.

We reckon among the evidences of our intellectual inferiority this incapacity of applying our knowledge to its highest practical use.

The three classes of imperfections above enumerated fall far short of comprehending the catalogue of infirmities with which the human mind is encompassed. They are only the most palpable; and when we have subtracted all which are the manifest result of our present complex, fallen and disciplinary state of being, there will still remain original, inherent, and essential characteristics of a low grade of intellectual endowment.

We are far from underrating the value of the human intellect. We do not indulge in loose detraction from its excellence by striving to find and fix its place on the scale of rational being, and refusing to ascribe to it what it does not not possess. What we have, we received from the hand of our Creator, and one of his own cautions to us is that we think not more highly of ourselves than we ought to think.

The farther our meditations run in the train of the foregoing remarks, the more deeply do we become interested to examine every probable theory of another life. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" but our curiosity presses with peculiar eagerness against the veil which hides the heavenly glory of this rational soul from our view.

One of the most natural inferences from the preceding view of the human mind, is the unspeakable excellence of a rational nature. If we must regard our own minds as mere sparkling points of intelligence, which seem, like the point in mathematics, to have neither length, breadth, nor thickness, we perceive how little of this high principle is required to make a thing of vast importance. Estimate the value of this mind in miniature, whose acquisitions, after all the toil of gaining them, are, in quantity, almost the least conceivable, and in kind the lowest possible; insignificant as it appears, with what shall we compare it? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

We prize, therefore, by no means too highly these powers of a rational nature; and while we thus hold our own small intellectual endowments in reasonable admiration, we may learn to admire all that we know of higher understandings which are greater in power and might than we; those intellects upon a larger scale. We know not their points of superiority, but presume they excel us not merely in extent of knowledge. Do they learn without labour, and perform their most perfect work without intellectual discipline? Can they think with utmost intenseness on many things at once? Do they perceive, by direct intuition, all the truth which they perceive at all? Do they look into the essence of things? And can they apply to immediate and perfect practice all the knowledge they possess?

There are strong hints from analogy that the happiness of glorified men in heaven will partake largely of the pleasures of communion with superior minds, and suggestions to the same purpose come from the laws of our nature. Those, therefore, who live on earth in hope of the glory of God, may entertain the prospect of living for ever under the delightful power of the Infinite Understanding, and of being merged for ever in the splendour of his pure and perfect thoughts. By our rational endowments, whether held in high or in low degree, we are allied to the family of mind. We have indeed close bounds set to our knowledge on every side; say even, if we must, that we are the least of the intellectual world; yet are we capable of knowledge; of perceiving and enjoying truth; the same power which, in its perfection, constitutes, in part, the Essential, Infinite Glory, in whose image we are made. If found redeemed from sin at last, and restored to our forfeited standing in the favour of God, we become en-

titled to a place among the great and good of every world; and the glorious society of heaven is to be composed of the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

ART. VII.—*A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands, with remarks upon the Natural History of the Islands, Origin, Languages, Traditions, and Usages of the Inhabitants.* By John Williams, of the London Missionary Society. London. 1837. 8vo. pp. 589.

THE South Sea Islands, from the time of their discovery until now, have continued to excite a lively interest in the public mind. The earliest accounts of them which were brought back to Europe by the navigators of the Pacific, mingled with the marvellous, and received as pledges of the discovery of the long-sought southern continent, were highly attractive. And when subsequent voyages had abated the romantic expectations at first cherished, the public interest was still sustained by the wonderful descriptions given of the lovely scenery of these islands, and the peculiar mixture of barbarism and civilization in the manners and customs of their inhabitants. Humboldt seems disposed to complain that his own researches are deprived of the interest which they might otherwise awaken, by the superior attractiveness of the South Sea discoveries. "The savages of America," he says, "inspire less interest since the celebrated navigators have made known to us the inhabitants of the South Sea, in whose character we find such a mixture of perversity and meekness: the state of half civilization in which these islanders are found gives a peculiar charm to the description of their manners." Authentic information respecting the past and present state of these islands is still sought with avidity, though they have already formed the subject of more writings than many of the kingdoms of Europe. The Tahitians are already better known to us than the inhabitants of Hayti, and yet we are gratified with every new account of them. We follow the voyager from island to island, and never tire