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No. I.

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

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

while he describes to us the romantic hills and valleys over which the charms of nature have been spread with the most lavish hand,—and the singular manners of their strange inhabitants. We delight to pause and inquire how these verdant specks in the wild waste of waters were formed and whence they were peopled,—to study the languages and customs of the islanders, that we may trace their affinities, and learn whence they have been derived—and then to observe the divergencies from their parent stock, and estimate the influences which have moulded the society of these beautiful regions to its present form. A new and absorbing interest has of late years been imparted to these islands, by the great moral changes of which they have been the scene. The history of the world, since the days of the apostles, presents no parallel to the suddenness and extent of the transformations which have there been made in the habits and customs of whole nations.

It is important that we should have all the information which can be given of the nature of these changes, and the means by which they have been wrought. The generation, now rising up in the South Sea Islands, will know little or nothing of the customs of their ancestors. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. Many interesting and important facts, tending to illustrate the former character of the people and the value of the changes which have taken place, must be recorded now, or they will soon be lost amidst the vague uncertainties of tradition. We are disposed therefore to look upon any work which adds to our stock of information upon this subject, or which, without contributing much that is new, gives an intelligent confirmation of what was already known, as a valuable contribution to the history of our race.

The work of Mr. Williams is a modest and unpretending account of what he has himself seen. In the year 1817 he joined the mission in the island of Raietea, the largest and most central of the Society Islands. But as so much is already known of this group, and the adjacent Tahitian or Georgian isles, his work is mainly filled with accounts of the Hervey and the Samoa or Navigator's Islands, to both of which he made frequent excursions, with the view of introducing and extending the influence of Christianity among them.

The Hervey Islands, seven in number, lie from five hundred to six hundred miles west of Tahiti. Little was known of any of them, and Rarotonga, the largest and most populous

of the group had never been discovered by any European, until they were visited by Mr. Williams in 1823. Hervey's Island, from which the cluster takes its name, was discovered by Captain Cook. When visited by Mr. Williams, he found that the population had been diminished by their exterminating wars to about sixty in number; and when he revisited it again six years afterwards, there were left only five men, three women, and a few children! and yet there was a contest among this miserable remnant as to who should be king.

The population of the Hervey Islands is estimated at from 14,000 to 16,000 persons. The history of the introduction of Christianity among these people is remarkably interesting. The first attempt was made in Aitutaki, an island about twenty miles in circumference, and containing 2000 inhabitants. While Mr. Williams was on a voyage to New South Wales for the recovery of his health, he touched at this island and left two native teachers from Raietea, under a promise from the chief of the island that he would afford them protection and treat them with kindness. The people were at this time sunk in the grossest heathenism, and exhibited in their manners and habits all the wild features of savage life. A little more than a year after these native missionaries had entered on their labours, Mr. Williams determined on visiting Aitutaki, to see what progress the gospel had made, and to concert measures for introducing it into all the Hervey Islands. When he reached the island, the ship was immediately surrounded by canoes, which were filled with the natives, crying out, "good is the word of God; it is now well with Aitutaki; the good word has taken root at Aitutaki." When the teachers came on board, they confirmed the joyful tidings, declaring that the maraes were burned; that the idols had been all destroyed or given into their possession; that the profession of Christianity was general, not a single idolater being left; that a large chapel was erected; that the Sabbath was regarded as a sacred day, no work of any kind being done; that all the people, men, women, and children attended divine service; and that family prayer was very generally practised throughout the island. Mr. Williams had immediate evidence of the change which had taken place, for the natives crowded around the boat in which he was landing, and 'instead of the unsightly gesticulations and lascivious songs with which he had been greeted on his previous visit, some were now spelling long words, and others were repeating portions of the catechism or a prayer, another asking a

blessing on his food, and others singing a verse of a hymn; indeed every one appeared anxious to show what progress he had made in the new religion.' The next day he preached to an attentive and decorous audience of from 1500 to 2000 people, who had all been savages and heathens fifteen months before. Then they were wild and unruly in their deportment, indolent, and cruel,—now they had become mild and docile, diligent and kind.

While at Aitutaki, Mr. Williams determined to go in search of the island of Rarotonga. The Aitutakians endeavoured to dissuade him from the enterprise, assuring him that the Rarotongans were a most ferocious people, that they were horrid cannibals, and exceedingly treacherous. But nothing could move him from his purpose, and he set out upon his hazardous undertaking. This island never having been visited by any European, was not be found upon the chart, and the directions which he received from the natives were necessarily very imperfect. After six or eight days unsuccessful search for Rarotonga, he steered for Mangaia, another of the Hervey Islands, containing a population of from 2000 to 3000 persons. Two native teachers, with their wives, were landed here, but they were compelled in a few hours to return to the ship for refuge from the rude and lawless violence of the natives. Two unmarried native teachers were, a few months afterwards, sent to Mangaia, and were favourably received.

Mr. Williams then sailed for Atiu, called, by Captain Cook, Wateoo. The following extract will show with what surprising suddenness the truth seemed often to find its way to the hearts of these people.

“We had not been long near the island, when we perceived a large double canoe approaching us, in the centre of which, on an elevated stage, was seated the principal chief. His person was tall and slender, and his aspect commanding. He was clothed in a white shirt, having a piece of Indian print girt round his loins; his long and beautiful black hair hung gracefully over his shoulders, or waved in the passing breeze, as, with the motion of his body, he kept time to the rowers. We gave him a hearty welcome on board.”—“By some circumstance, which I do not now recollect, this chief was induced to remain on board during the night, and the following day being Sabbath, he attended worship. In the course of my address, I read and commented upon what is said by David and Isaiah in reference to idols. The mind of Romatane was powerfully impressed by these vivid representations of the folly of idolatry, especially by the words, ‘with part thereof he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my God.’ Nothing could be better calculated to make an impression on the mind of an intelligent South Sea islander than these inimitable verses of inspired truth; indeed the effect is likely to be far greater than

that produced on the mind of an English reader. The natives have two words not very much unlike, but expressive of opposite ideas,—*moa* and *noa*, the *moa* meaning sacred, and *noa* the very reverse of sacred. All that pertains to the gods is the superlative of *moa*; and all that pertains to food, and the cooking of food, the superlative of *noa*. The idea now, for the first time, darted, with irresistible force, into the mind of Roma-tane; and he perceived at once the excessive folly of making a god and cooking food from one and the same tree, thus uniting two opposite extremes, the *moa* and the *noa*. The astonished chief appeared for some time lost in wonder. At length he retired, and spent the whole of the night in conversation with the teachers and chiefs from Aitutaki about the wonderful truths he had heard, frequently rising up, and stamping with astonishment that he should have been deluded so long, and expressing his determination never again to worship his idol gods. ‘Eyes, it is true,’ said he, ‘they have; but wood cannot see; ears they have, but wood cannot hear.’”

This interesting chief, though he had been up to this moment a bigoted idolater, immediately renounced his false gods, and employed all his influence to advance the enterprise of the missionaries. He sailed with Mr. Williams to two small islands, Mitiaro and Mauke, which lay in the vicinity of Atiu, and were under his government. Upon reaching the first of them, Roma-tane sent for the resident chief, to whom he stated that the object of his visit was to exhort him and the people to burn the maraes, abandon the worship of their gods, and place themselves under the instruction of a teacher whom Mr. Williams would leave with them. In like manner, when they arrived at Mauke, the first words which the chief uttered, as he leaped on shore, were, “I am come to advise you to receive the word of Jehovah, the true God, and to leave with you a teacher and his wife, who will instruct you. Let us destroy our maraes, and burn all the evil spirits with fire; never let us worship them again. They are wood, which we have carved and decorated, and called gods. Here is the true God and his word, and a teacher to instruct you. The true God is Jehovah, and the true sacrifice is his Son Jesus Christ.” He also exhorted them to erect a house in which to worship the true God, and to be diligent in learning his good word. The people immediately consented to follow his advice; and thus, in a single day, was idolatry overthrown in the three islands of Atiu, Mitiaro and Mauke. Their inhabitants, at the first call, abandoned the time-honoured customs of their ancestors, and applied themselves to learn the worship of the true God, fulfilling in a striking manner the words of scripture, “As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me—the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.” Two of these islands had never before been visited by the white man, and it is pleasing to re-

flect that the first ship which touched upon their shores, should have carried them our religion rather than our vices.

From Atiu, Mr. Williams sailed again in search of Rarotonga. After being baffled and perplexed for several days, when their provisions were nearly exhausted, and they were within half an hour of the time at which he had agreed to relinquish the search, land was discovered from the mast head, and it proved to be the long sought island. Nothing can surpass the richness and beauty of the scenery, which Mr. Williams describes as unfolding itself to their view in their approach to this lovely island. He deserves well at the hands of geographical science, for its discovery. He found it to be about thirty miles in circumference, and with a population of from 6000 to 7000. The people were, of course, heathen, as they had never had any intercourse with white men. The following extract however will show that they had, in a remarkable manner, been prepared for the arrival of these strangers, and the reception of their religion.

“A heathen woman had, by some means or other, been conveyed from the island of Tahiti to Rarotonga, and on her arrival she informed the Rarotongans of the wonders she had seen; stating that they were not the only people in the world; that there were others entirely white, whom they called Cookees; that Captain Cook had been to her island, and that, subsequently to his visit, the servants of Jehovah and Jesus Christ, the white man's God, had come and were still residing there; that at her island they had ceased to use stone axes for hewing their trees, for those servants of Jehovah, and others, had brought sharp things, which they called *opahi*, with which they could cut them down with the greatest facility; that they had also ceased to use human bones as tools for making canoes and building houses, for the same people had brought them sharp hard things, with which they could effect their work with far greater ease; that their children did not now cry and scream while they had their hair cut, as they formerly did, when it was performed with sharks' teeth, for the Cookees had brought them bright things, which were so sharp that the operation afforded pleasure rather than pain; and that they had no need now to go down to the water to look at themselves, because these wonderful people had brought them small shining things, which they could carry about with them, and in which they could see themselves as plainly as they could see each other. These, with a variety of other ‘*mea tu ke*,’ or very strange things, which this heathen female told the astonished inhabitants of this secluded garden of the ocean, excited so much interest, that the king, Makea, called one of his children ‘*Tehovah*’ (Jehovah), and another Jesus Christ. An uncle of the king, whom we hope is at this time a truly good man, erected an altar to Jehovah and Jesus Christ, and to it persons afflicted with all manner of diseases were brought to be healed; and so great was the reputation which this marae obtained, that the power of Jehovah and Jesus Christ became great in the estimation of the people.”

The unknown God, to whom they had inscribed an altar, and whom they ignorantly worshipped, was now declared unto them. The state of morals among this people was found to be such that the two native teachers, with their wives,

whom Mr. Williams had intended to leave with them, could not remain with safety. Another unmarried native offered to land and remain, provided Mr. Williams would send him a coadjutor, upon his return to Raiatea. This man went on shore, taking with him only the clothes which he wore, his native Testament, and a bundle of elementary books. So faithfully did he labour, and so remarkably did the divine blessing attend his efforts, that when his promised colleague arrived, four months afterwards, a large number of the people had already cast away their idols. And when Messrs. Tyerman and Bennet visited this island, only a little more than a twelvemonth after its discovery, the whole population had renounced idolatry, and were engaged in erecting a place of worship, six hundred feet in length. In less than two years, the whole face of society underwent a change. Wars, which before were frequent, and in the progress of which the prisoners were slain and their bodies, with those which had fallen in battle, eaten at the close of every engagement, had entirely ceased. The people had been taught to build ceiled houses and to furnish them with bedsteads and sofas. The women had learned to make straw bonnets. They were all attentive to the instructions given them, and numbers were able to read. Family and private prayer were generally observed throughout the island. We know of no more wonderful instance of the triumph of the gospel in modern times, than is afforded us in this history. The result is so disproportioned, in its largeness, to the means employed, that we cannot but refer the glory of the change to Him who turns the hearts of men, even as the rivers of water are turned. Two native teachers, and they too, we are told, "not particularly distinguished among their own countrymen for intelligence," were the instruments of effecting this wonderful change in the habits of life, the modes of thinking, and the religious observances of 7000 people, before a single missionary had as yet set foot upon the island.

In 1827, four years after the discovery of Rarotonga, Mr. Williams again visited it, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Pitman, who had determined to locate themselves there. On this occasion he remained at the island a year, and he gives an account of many interesting incidents which happened during this period. Being desirous at length, to visit the Samoa Islands to introduce the gospel among them, and not knowing when a ship might touch at Rarotonga, he determined to construct a vessel for himself. That such an idea should have entered his mind, and been seriously enter-

tained, shows that he was a man of uncommon energy; and the success of his undertaking displays a fertility of resources, unsurpassed by any thing which the imagination of Defoe has attributed to Robinson Crusoe. With but little iron, and with no coals, bellows, or forge for working that little; with no saws for cutting his timber; without oakum, ropes, or cloth for sails, he succeeded in building, equipping and launching a vessel sixty feet long and eighteen broad. He named her very appropriately, the "Messenger of Peace," and had the satisfaction of performing many voyages in her to bear the glad tidings of peace and salvation to the benighted islanders of the Pacific.

About this time two other missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Buzacott arrived, and occupied a station in Rarotonga. The people received them with gladness and attended eagerly upon their instructions.

The following extract will give our readers some idea both of the natural beauties of this island, and of the eagerness of the people to receive instruction.

"There is a good road round the island, which the natives call *ara medua*, or the parent path, both sides of which are lined with bananas and mountain plantains; and these, with the Barringtonia, chestnut, and other trees of wide spreading foliage, protect you from the rays of the tropical sun, and afford even in mid day the luxury of cool, shady walks of several miles in length. The houses of the inhabitants were situated from ten to thirty yards or more from this pathway, and some of them were exceedingly pretty. The path leading up to the house was invariably strewed with white and black pebbles; and on either side were planted the tufted top ti tree or *dracana*, which bears a chaste and beautiful blossom, interspersed alternately with the gigantic taro. Six or eight stone seats were ranged in front of the premises, by the side of the 'parent pathway.' These were relics of antiquity, some of which were regarded with much veneration by the people; who, while they pointed to them, would say, 'Here, my father, grandfather, or the great chief so and so sat.' They were generally formed of two smooth stones, the one serving as a seat, and the other sunk in the earth to form the back.

"Here, in the cool of the evening, after the labours of the day, with a wreath of flowers on their brow, anointed with a sweet scented oil, and wearing a new tiputa or the shining pakaku, sat the inmates of the house to chat with any loquacious passenger about the events of their own little world. It was thus I met with the spiritual beggar Buteve.

"In passing one evening from Mr. Buzacott's to Mr. Pitman's station, my attention was arrested by seeing a person get off one of these seats, and walk upon his knees into the centre of the pathway. When he shouted, 'Welcome, servant of God, who brought light into this dark island; to you are we indebted for the word of salvation.' The appearance of his person first attracted my attention, his hands and feet being eaten off by a disease which the natives call kokovi, and which obliged him to walk upon his knees; but, notwithstanding this, I found that he was exceedingly industrious, and not only kept his kainga in beautiful order, but raised food enough to support his wife and three children. In reply to his salutation, I asked him what he knew of the word of salvation. He answered, 'I know about Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners.' On inquiring what he knew about Jesus Christ, he replied, 'I know

that he is the Son of God, and that he died painfully upon the cross to pay for the sins of men, in order that their souls might be saved, and go to happiness in the skies.' I inquired of him if all the people went to heaven after death. 'Certainly not,' he replied, 'only those who believe in the Lord Jesus, who cast away sin, and who pray to God.' 'You pray, of course,' I continued. 'O yes,' he said, 'I very frequently pray as I weed my ground and plant my food, but always three times a day, beside praying with my family every morning and evening.' I asked him what he said when he prayed. He answered, 'I say, 'O Lord, I am a great sinner, may Jesus take my sins away by his good blood, give me the righteousness of Jesus to adorn me, and give me the good Spirit of Jesus to instruct me, and make my heart good, to make me a man of Jesus, and take me to heaven when I die.' 'Well,' I replied, 'that, Buteve, is very excellent, but where did you obtain your knowledge?' 'From you, to be sure; who brought us the news of salvation but yourself?' 'True,' I replied, 'but I do not ever recollect to have seen you at either of the settlements to hear me speak of these things, and how do you obtain your knowledge of them?' 'Why,' he said, 'as the people return from the services, I take my seat by the way side, and beg a bit of the word of them as they pass by; one gives me one piece, another another piece, and I collect them together in my heart, and by thinking over what I thus obtain, and praying to God to make me know, I understand a little about his word.' This was altogether a most interesting incident, as I had never seen the poor cripple before, and I could not learn that he had ever been in a place of worship in his life. His knowledge, however, was such as to afford me both astonishment and delight, and I seldom passed his house after this interview, without holding an interesting conversation with him.

It would be interesting could we follow Mr. Williams to the Samoa or Navigator's Islands, where the gospel, hitherto unknown, met with almost as ready a reception as in the Hervey Islands. But we must refer our readers to the work itself.

Mr. Williams has communicated many interesting particulars respecting the natural features and productions of the South Sea Islands. One of the most anomalous phenomena with which we are acquainted is that presented by the tides in these regions. The tide ordinarily rises only from one to two feet, and the time of high water is uniform throughout the year; so much so that the hours of the day are reckoned by the state of the tide. We know not how this can be reconciled with our received theory upon this subject.

We are disposed to adopt the opinions to which Mr. Williams' observations have guided him respecting the origin of the South Sea islanders. These islands are inhabited by two distinct races of people,—the one with black skin, woolly hair, and other features of the negro,—the other, of a light copper colour, with long black hair, and a countenance resembling the Malays. The first of these, the Polynesian negroes, inhabit the eastern part of New Holland, and the islands lying within thirty degrees east of it, including among others, New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, and the Fijis. They are found in a lower state of barbarism than the others, and are in every

respect an inferior race. Wherever their lighter-coloured brethren have come into contact with them, they have expelled them, or driven them into the interior and reduced them to a state of dependence. We know so little of the language and customs of this race, that we have no other ground than their colour and other physical peculiarities for hazarding the conjecture that they came from the coast of Africa. But we have little doubt that in the progress of our researches, the original identity between them and some of the tribes of Africa will be established by sufficient evidence.

† The other race inhabit Eastern Polynesia, including the Sandwich, the Marquesan, the Paumotu, the Tahitian, the Society, the Austral, the Hervey, the Navigators' Islands, New Zealand, and a multitude of smaller islands adjacent to these. The countenances of this race, their languages, their customs, their numerals, all show conclusively that they have had a Malay or Javanese origin. Mr. Williams gives sufficient reasons for supposing that they came from Java, or from some other radiating point of Malay emigration to the west, rather than from the coast of America, as Mr. Ellis and some others have imagined. Nearly the whole of this race are now converted to the Christian faith. From the Society Islands, where the first Christian mission was established among them, an influence has gone abroad over the other islands which has brought the whole nation of Polynesian Asiatics into professed subjection to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is impossible to read the accounts which Cook and Forster have left of these people, and contrast them with their present state, without having the heart filled with reflections upon the goodness of God, and the power of his gospel to make the moral waste to become fruitful, and the wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose.

The reformation, in its progress westward, has now reached the negro race. The Fiji Islands, which are inhabited by them, lie immediately west of the Friendly Islands. We hope that an effort may soon be made to establish missions among them. There is a vast nation of them scattered over the different islands of Western Polynesia, which may be ultimately reached, if the gospel can but be introduced into one of their settlements. Mr. Williams has gone to England with the purpose of directing the attention of British Christians to this people, and we hope he may be able to persuade them "never to relax their efforts or suspend their prayers, till all the islands that stud the vast Pacific shall be enlightened and blessed with the gospel of salvation."