

rapid and fugitive associations, while they form a real, form also an unseen process; and we are not therefore to wonder, if, along with many solid explanations, they should have been so applied in the investigation of mental phenomena, as occasionally to have given rise to subtle and fantastic theories.

14. But our proper business at present is with results, rather than with processes; and instead of entering on the more recondite inquiries of the science, however interesting and however beautiful or even satisfactory the conclusions may be to which they lead—it is our task to point out those palpable benefits and subserviencies of our intellectual constitution, which demonstrate, without obscurity, the benevolent designs of Him who framed us. There are some of our mental philosophers, indeed, who have theorised and simplified beyond the evidence of those facts which lie before us; and our argument should be kept clear, for in reality it does not partake, in the uncertainty or error of their speculations. The law of association, for example, has been of late reasoned upon, as if it were the sole parent and predecessor of all the mental phenomena. Yet it does not explain, however largely it may influence, the phenomena of memory. When by means of one idea, anyhow awakened in the mind, the whole of some past transaction or scene is brought to recollection, it is association which recalls to our thoughts this portion of our former history. But association cannot explain our recognition of its actual and historical truth—or what it is, which, beside an act