

Literary.

Mental Science.

NO. VI.

Mental Science, also, corrects false self-love. Self-love, which is considered that instinctive principle, in man, which impels him to preserve his life and promote his own happiness, cannot be accounted, in the abstract, sinful; but a merciful and gracious provision of his divine Author, for the preservation and comfort of human life. In this sense of the phrase, self-love is not only lawful, but absolutely unavoidable. Our love of self is, however, false and vicious.—(1.) When it leads us to judge too favourably of our faults.—(2.) When we think too well of our righteousness, and overvalue our mental abilities, and entertain too good an opinion of our knowledge and capacity.—(3.) When we overvalue our good actions, and are pure in our own eyes.—(4.) When we are proud and vain of inferior things, and value ourselves upon the station and circumstances in which, not our own deserts, but some other cause, has placed us.—(5.) When we make our worldly interest, convenience, ease or pleasure, the great end of our actions.—Or, (6.) When we take pride in our abilities, attainments, popularity, power, property, and splendour. The whole of these are indicative of either mental pride, or mental weakness!

But amidst all we know and possess there is enough to humble us, and divest us of all false self-love, in ten thousand other matters of which we are utterly ignorant; and of these, the knowledge of which, we should attain. Do we know to perfection anything that belongs to either the material or spiritual world? What do we know of the essence of matter, or the essence of spirit? Do we understand gravitation or attraction, on the principles of which almost all the phenomena of nature, in its grandest operations, and the laws of the heavenly bodies, have been explained? What is the nature of magnetism? By what kind of action is it, that, in a moment, the lungs separate the oxygen from the nitrogen, suddenly absorbing the one, and expelling the other? By what power and law does the blood circulate? Who can fully comprehend, and satisfactorily explain, all these? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, who "dwell in houses of clay, and whose foundation is in the dust," who are but of yesterday.

This science then, is to teach us the littleness of man, the folly of pride, ambition, and self-exaltation, and of all that earthly pomp and splendour with which mortals are so much enamoured; and that our thoughts and affections should soar above all the sinful pursuits and transitory enjoyments, of this subliminary state of existence.

The science of mind teaches us to resist vice, and to restrain the unruly passions. It presents the mind of man to us free and unfettered,—not compelled to pursue any particular line of conduct by an absolute necessity. He appears, what he really is, a free agent, capable of resisting vice, and of attending to virtue, or of indulging vice, regardless of virtue. Spiritual life and death, moral good and evil, wickedness and piety, are within his reach, and may be attended to, or disregarded, by him. By the abuse of moral agency he becomes vicious: By becoming a co-worker together with God, and attending to the moral and spiritual requirements of his mental nature, he becomes virtuous. The moral agent appears both for good and for evil. We are just as sure that we possess liberty, or the power to act or not to act, to speak or not to speak, to think on a given subject or not to think, to do this or the contrary, to do or not to do, as we are of our existence. To deny this would be to deny the constant experience of all mankind. And altho' we have not an absolute control over our minds, because of the corruption of our natures; yet, through the assistance of divine grace, we have power to choose and do good, as well as evil. We have power to choose whom we will serve; and, if we choose the better part, to continue therein until death. We are not mere machines, similar to clocks or watches, that move so long as they are wound up, though unconscious of either their motions or utility; on the contrary, we are perfectly conscious of our volitions and actions, and have power to render them vicious or virtuous. Our actions, then, are our own, and spring from our choice.

Vice or depravity, is a course of action perfectly opposed to virtue; and to indulge the unruly passions is to be vicious. Our passions are bestowed upon us for noble purposes; and, if properly regulated, are designed to exalt human nature, and to enable us to answer the great end of our being. It is the abuse of these passions in which our moral nature consists. Mental science teaches us to correct them, or to keep them in due subjection to nature, reason, revelation, and the necessity of our state of existence. And if these be adjusted as nature requires, reason dictates, the word of God unfolds, and the circumstances of our condition demands, we shall not be governed by unruly passions. We shall govern them, and not they us.

GEORGE JOHNSON.

Point de Bute, August 6, 1851.

Correspondence.

For the Wesleyan.

MR. EDITOR.—On Sabbath, June 29th, I preached my farewell sermon to our Societies and congregations in the Barrington Circuit; on the Friday following left the Barrington Mission House, and arrived on the evening of the same day in Yarmouth—my present station.

My residence in Barrington has been to me a time of great interest and importance. My congregations were generally good, and our societies there love Methodism. I felt much interest in the Sabbath Schools, particularly at Barrington Head, where our school is well conducted, and would be an honour to any community.

Two Bible classes were formed while I resided there, consisting of sixty-one members, all young persons, for whose spiritual prosperity I feel much solicitude. These classes met each alternate week, and read a chapter in the Pentateuch, in the Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles, in rotation. The explanations which I was enabled to give of those scriptures, were listened to with great attention; and the conversation which ensued, connected as it always was with miscellaneous matter, seemed to produce an influence on the minds of those youth, which will not soon be eradicated, and which I pray God may be a blessing to them in future years.

Through the community of Barrington there appears a great desire for improvement and the acquisition of knowledge.

From that people I am now separated, and as I cannot now preach to them, or speak to them personally, I beg to take my leave of them, by addressing to them the following Pastoral letters, through the columns of "The Wesleyan."

Yours truly,

WILLIAM WILSON.

Yarmouth, July 12, 1851.

Pastoral Letters.

NO. I.

To the Members of the Wesleyan Society in the Barrington Circuit.

DEAR BRETHREN.—During the past two years I have with much pleasure and satisfaction laboured in your Circuit. I have often met you in your Society meetings, and with many of you I have conversed freely and frequently in your own houses, besides preaching to you and to others the gospel of life and salvation. Those meetings have generally been seasons of comfort to my own soul, and I have reason to believe they have been no less so to you. I could gladly have staid with you longer, but the itinerant peculiarity of our beloved Methodism has rendered my removal from you necessary; and being in the path of duty, at whatever sacrifice of personal feeling, we have cheerfully taken the "parting hand;" and to each other, have perhaps uttered the last farewell. But

"We part in body, not in mind—
Our souls continue one;
And each to each in Jesus joined,
We hand in hand go on."

"Subsist within us all one soul,
No power can make us twain;
And mountains rise and oceans roll,
To sever us in vain."

You will permit me, in retiring from your Circuit, and in resigning any pastoral charge of you to my successor, to address a few words of advice to you, trusting that while I give them to you, the same will be duly impressed on my own mind.

First, and above all things, attend to your personal piety and growth in grace. You remember the time when you were "without God in the world;" and therefore "having no hope." You remember also, when you were brought to a saving acquaintance of the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced a sense of sin forgiven. Given reflect upon those times, with humility and thankfulness; consider frequently the progress you have made, and are now making, in the way to heaven. Do not rest in present attainments. Never forget there is no standing still in religion.

In order to promote your onward progress to heaven, let me press upon you:

1. *The duty of a constant, careful and devotional reading of the Holy Scriptures.* Make the Bible your constant companion, and your universal directory. It is by that blessed book you are to understand "doctrine," and from it you are to receive "reproof," correction, and "instruction in righteousness."

By its threatenings you are to be warned; by its promises you are to be comforted; by its examples you are to be stimulated; and by that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which it tenders to you at the termination of your Christian race, you are to be encouraged to persevere unto the end. Think upon the address of the Saviour, to the suffering members of his church, in the city of Smyrna: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

2. *Live in the Spirit of prayer.* The Christian cannot retain his piety without prayer. Frequently retire to your closets, and pour out your souls to God in prayer. Pray for yourselves,

that God may have mercy upon you, and that you may "find grace to help in time of need." Pray for the members of the Church of Christ, who are your fellow-travellers to Zion. We read—Job xliii. 10—"And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." Pray for the ministers of the gospel—they need the prayers of the Church: for they, like other Christians, are often in difficulties. Sometimes they are discouraged—sometimes they are almost overawed by the greatness of their work; and they always have trials peculiar to their place and station. When Peter was in difficulties and had been cast into prison, "Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him," Acts xii. 5; and in answer to the prayer of the church, he was delivered. The apostle Paul exhorts the Thessalonians—(2 Ep. iii. 1.)—"Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." Pray for your enemies. Your Saviour, as he hung on the cross, prayed for his murderers—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Pray for the universal spread of Christianity through our fallen world. The Evangelical prophet expresses both the feeling and practice of every Christian mind when he declares:—"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."—Isaiah lxii. 1.

3. *Be punctual and regular in your attendance on all the means of grace, whenever practicable.* Many of you are, by your avocation, prevented for a length of time each year, from attending the ordinances of religion; for you "go down to the sea in ships," and "do business in great waters." You are therefore often obliged to spend your Sabbaths on the "great deep;" and sometimes in lands where "God is not known;" but whenever you have the opportunity avail yourselves of it; attend the house of the Lord, and be there in time; enter it in the spirit of devotion; kneel down and ask the Divine blessing upon his word which you are about to hear; hear with deep attention, and always pray for the preacher. Preachers can preach when the people pray, but it is hard work to preach to a prayerless people.

Attend the sacraments of our holy Christianity. Those of you who are parents, bring your children forward and dedicate them to God in their earliest infancy, by his own ordinance of baptism. In this you may sometimes meet with opposition, because there are those around you, who affect to despise infant baptism, and make the most unwarrantable assertions in reference thereto; as that it is "unscriptural;" "it can do the infant no good;" "it is popish;" "it is wrong." But I trust you all know enough to satisfy you that assertions are not proofs; and that you will neither allow the ridicule of the ignorant, the sneers of those who have a portion of learning, or the mere unfounded assertions of individuals, prevent you from presenting your children at the baptismal font, for initiation into the visible church. For infant baptism is certainly founded on the New Testament—was the universal practice of primitive Christians, and from those times down to the present day (with the exception of one small body of Christians), infant baptism has been the practice of the whole Christian church.

Regularly attend the sacrament of the Lord's supper. This sacrament is to be attended frequently, and when attended in faith and prayer, is always a means of comfort and refreshment to the Christian mind. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come."—1 Cor. xi. 26.

For the Wesleyan.

"Let us go again and visit our Brethren in every city, where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do."—Acts xxi. 20.

MY DEAR BROTHER.—While proceeding with my regular course of reading in the inspired volume, my attention was more than ordinarily arrested the other morning by the verse at the head of this communication. We see in it—1st, What was the feeling of the Apostle, and what must be that of every other minister of the gospel, viz., a desire to know what is the religious state of those to whom he may have ministered in other places in the days of former years; and 2nd, the satisfaction afforded him in again addressing, both publicly and privately, those to whom he was, perhaps, first of all the messenger of glad tidings from God, and with whom he has often enjoyed Christian fellowship. How delightful it is for him to be favoured with renewed opportunities of presenting to the minds of such those inspiring truths, which in former years he had endeavoured to inculcate on them. While girding up his own loins anew, obedient to the command of Christ, he "speaks to the children of Israel that they go forward."

Most probably this train of thought was more particularly induced from the circumstances arising out of my annual visit to Prince Edward Island, and from what I witnessed of the grace of God in various places during my journeyings.

Leaving home on the 20th June, I proceeded to Bay de Verte, with the hope of obtaining, without much delay, a passage to Charlottetown; but in this I was disappointed, as eleven days elapsed ere an opportunity offered for my leaving the

main; here, however, I saw the good hand of our God, as my time was pleasantly and profitably occupied, at least to myself, in addressing congregations and individuals, personally, from house to house, on the momentous concerns of the soul, that blood-bought, deathless principle, the value of which must appear incalculably great, in the estimation of Him, who asks, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The attention given at Bay de Verte by those who came to hear the Word, was encouraging; some appeared to be particularly susceptible of Divine impressions, but O, how desirable it was to see the Word, as a "fire and a hammer" breaking in pieces the rocky heart—such indeed it was to the jailer at Philippi, but it was equally efficacious in the case of Lydia, to whom God spake in a small still voice. Often have we evidence that the Spirit administers reproof, and convinces of sin, when there is no audible cry for mercy by the subject of such conviction; and often is the Christian minister's heart encouraged in the prosecution of his important work, by the intelligence that, years ago—probably just at the time when he might have been questioning the reality of his call to the sacred office, from apparent want of success—he was the instrument of arresting the attention of a thoughtless sinner, and leading him to Christ, though at the same time he had no knowledge of either the individual or of his convictions. A circumstance or two I will here advert to, with the hope of affording encouragement to some youthful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, who may be depressed in spirit from not witnessing that fruit of his exertions which appears so desirable. A few weeks ago, a minister of many years standing was accosted by a person to whom he thought himself a perfect stranger, with the information that, twenty-five years before, when only twelve years of age, under a farewell sermon preached by him at his father's house, he was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth. The same minister, only a few days after, while on a journey, drove up to the door of a person with whom he had had some acquaintance in the early part of his ministerial life, and on asking him if he recognized him, he replied, "I shall never forget you; your sermon from such a passage of scripture—mentioning the text—'was the means used by God to awaken my sinful soul.'"

But to return to my late visit. I was much encouraged, not only by the attention and seriousness of my congregations at the Bay, but also with that of individuals in my visits from house to house. Perhaps at no former period of my public life have I been so impressed with the saying of the Apostle, as of late—"Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." Christ, the Son of God, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, must indeed be the subject matter of all gospel preaching, and He alone. Yet if the terrors of the law be not proclaimed—if the awful consequences of rejecting Christ be not fully, faithfully and constantly brought before the view of our hearers, we preach to them but a partial, mutilated gospel. The same apostle who said "by grace are ye saved," thundered the terrors of Mount Sinai in the ears of sinners; he indeed used the law as a school-master to bring them to Christ. Not only did he attend to this duty in public, and by letter, but also by plain, personal, pointed addresses—Acts xx. 20, 21 and 31. The same course of conduct we apprehend the Apostle enjoins on his son Timothy, in the words "Be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort," &c. If, then, attention to the duty of public preaching be the means of warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, much greater success may be expected, when such ministrations are followed by private admonition and instruction. O, to be so influenced by the consideration of the love of Christ, and the value of souls, in the discharge of our duty, as to be able to say, "I am pure from the blood of all men."

During my detention at the Bay, I preached five or six times, and enjoyed the privilege of conversing freely on the things of God, with some whom I had not seen for many years. The aged and infirm especially claimed my attention, also some who were severely afflicted; there can be but one opinion as to the benefit resulting from free and unrestrained conversation with those upon whom God has laid His chastening hand. It is good to go to the house of mourning—here we learn much, and often in endeavouring to pour the oil and wine of consolation into the soul of the sufferer, we have the enjoyment which is peculiar to those who are required "to speak a word in season to him that is weary," in attending to those duties, I felt myself more than rewarded—expressly more. And if—O, if I have been the instrument of but awakening one soul from the sleep of sin, or of affording encouragement to any Zion-bound traveller in the prosecution of his journey, I shall consider myself as having done an infinitely greater work, than would be the saving of millions of my fellow creatures from the greatest temporal calamity.

When the time came for me to leave for Charlottetown, I was indeed glad; many attractions have I there. The Island is my native place—for nearly half a century, there did my honoured father labour for the good of souls, and now many dearly beloved relatives were awaiting my arrival; but what renders it more than all other