

of science, may be regarded as so many attestations to the excellence of the general system. But it is important to bear in mind, that the application of the principle is not dependent on a printed form, or on a fixed series of questions and of answers; neither does it necessarily require the labour of committing to memory specific phrases or sentences. If certain truths or facts have been previously conveyed to the mind of the learner, with simplicity, with clearness, and with force, it may be easy to the Teacher to put to the test, and to elicit, the amount of knowledge which the learner may have acquired; and it may not be difficult to the learner, after being a little accustomed to the effort, to express the ideas he has imbibed, in terms the most familiar to his own mind.

Catechisms have been composed for different ages, and for different gradations of progress in knowledge; yet without a succession of catechisms, burdensome to the learner, it is exceedingly difficult to adapt the conveyance of truth to the diversified capacities of children, and the different stages of advancement observable among many, even of the same age. Difficulties, on the part of the Teacher, often increase rather than diminish, as the childhood of the scholar ripens into youth. Reluctance to the continued repetition of a catechism often shows itself, even if a Minister be the catechist; and few, comparatively, continue to be his catechumens, when arrived at that period of youth which is, beyond comparison, the most important, as connected with the growth and development of the human character. Now, this is the very period of life in which the principle of Bible-Class instruction may be brought to bear, with most promising effect, upon the opening and inquiring mind. If there be a desire of knowledge, and that desire be directed to the treasures of divine Revelation, is it not unspeakably important, that the Minister of the Gospel should avail himself of this state of mind, with a view to the conveyance of that truth which maketh wise unto salvation?

But in what manner, it may be asked, may the attempt be made by the Christian Minister with the greatest probability of success? The Committee of the Sunday-School Union venture, with the most respectful deference, to suggest only a few hints, which, by the blessing of God, may be improved and expanded by ministerial wisdom, and by that practical facility in devising expedients for doing good, by which they doubt not many of them are distinguished.

Let it be supposed, then, that some book of Scripture, such as one of the Gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, has been selected for familiar explanation. Either at a public lecture, or in a meeting with the young, a chapter, or part of a chapter, may be elucidated with clearness and simplicity of statement, and pressed with affectionate earnestness on the conscience and the heart. The young people of the congregation may be divided into classes, at the discretion of the Minister. Two classes, a senior and a junior, may include all the young females of the congregation; and two additional classes may be formed; the one for the boys, and the other for the young men. Let each class meet separately, once in the week, or once in a fortnight; and let plain and pointed questions be addressed to them individually, of such a character as to call forth the knowledge they have acquired by the previous explanation of the chapter, and by their private study of the passage. It may be found equally to facilitate the labours, both of the Teacher and of the learners, to use such a help as is to be found in "Judson's Scripture Questions," employed to a great extent in the American Bible-Classes, and reprinted in London, at a very low price, by the Religious Tract Society.

If such a course of Bible instruction be steadily pursued by Ministers of the Gospel, with earnest prayer for "an unction from the Holy one," advantages of the very highest character may be expected to result. To some of these the Committee beg leave concisely to advert.

1. The Christian Pastor will be brought into more immediate and intimate contact with a most interesting and important part of the flock entrusted to his care. He will discover the most direct avenues, both to the heart and to the intellect, of the different classes of the young. He will love them, and they will love him. They will venerate him as a father, and confide in him as a friend. His own qualifica-

tions for usefulness among them will increase, by a growing aptitude for the communication of truth, and a growing delight in the employment.

2. An impulse will be given to parental diligence among the people of his charge.

It has been said that some parents have declined sending their children for the catechetical instructions of the Pastor, lest their deficiency of scriptural knowledge should be regarded as a reproach to their parents. When it is expected that children should be sent for such instruction, it will rouse the parents who have been negligent, and give an additional incentive and encouragement to such as are diligent. Pious parents will know how to value their Pastor, as a coadjutor with themselves, in training up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord: they will "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

3. Pulpit instructions will be rendered more available.

On how many minds, especially among the poor and the young, the discourses of the pulpit, produce no effect! They are altogether inefficient. They are not even understood. They proceed on the supposition of a habit of attention, which is not acquired, and of a facility of apprehension, not attained. But the discipline of the Bible-Class is one of the most efficient means of mental culture ever employed. Every faculty is roused, and placed in requisition. The judgment, the memory, and the power of attention, are vigorously exercised, and progressively strengthened. Where these Classes are in operation, sermons are now heard with a listening ear, and, in many cases, by the grace of God, with a susceptible heart. The young people having learned, in the Bible-Class, to love their Minister, as well as to understand him, consider themselves as personally concerned, and as personally addressed, when he dispenses the word of life.

4. Young persons are qualified for the important engagements of Sabbath-School Teachers.

This appears to the Committee to be one of the most momentous objects at which the Christian Minister can aim. It is in the highest degree desirable that the children in Sabbath-Schools should spend their time on the Lord's day, as much as possible, in obtaining the elements of the knowledge of Christ, and not in the merely preparatory task of learning to read. It is equally important that their Teachers should themselves be taught of God, and qualified to teach the children the way to salvation. Let then the Teachers form a part of the senior Bible-Classes; and having been first instructed and examined by the Minister, on a portion of the word of God, let the Teachers, in their respective classes, explain that passage to the children. If they have also the aid of such book as "Judson's Scripture Questions," it will be found to render very valuable assistance.

Without dwelling at greater length on the advantages which may be anticipated from such a course of Bible education, will it not be readily conceded, that those already specified present sufficient incentives to enter on the system recommended? May it not be hoped, that God will graciously vouchsafe his special blessing to labours such as these? May they not be expected to contribute most powerfully to that revival of the power of vital religion, which many Ministers and churches so ardently desire, so earnestly implore? Let holy diligence be combined with humble dependence and persevering supplication, and what may we not expect? "Prove me now herewith," (we may regard the Lord as saying to us,) "and see if I will not pour you out a blessing, so that there shall not be room enough to receive it!" It is no new experiment. It has been tried with increasing success, in Scotland and in America, and, more recently, by Ministers and private Christians among ourselves. The well-merited praise of the Rev. Mr. Gunn, of Christchurch, Hampshire, for such labours of love, is already in almost all our churches. May there be many diligent and successful imitators!

The Committee will only add the expression of their heart's desire and prayer, that the Lord may pour out his Spirit, in copious effusion, on the Ministers of the Gospel, and on all classes of the people of their charge; and especially on those who teach, and those who learn, in our Sabbath-Schools. May one say, "I am the Lord's, and another call himself by the name of Jacob, and another subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel!"

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

Mission of the London Missionary Society, at New Lattakoo, South Africa.

New Lattakoo is about 600 miles northeast from Cape Town, and quite in the interior. The mission there was established about twelve years since, and has been much disturbed by the incursions of neighbouring hostile tribes. The natives, also have manifested little concern about their salvation, knowledge increases very gradually, and the missionaries have felt much disheartened. (Vol. xxiii. p. 354.) Still they have continued their labors, and at length they have been permitted to witness the most gratifying results; which they introduce with the following instructive remarks respecting the

Former Discouraging State of the Mission.

It is with peculiar feelings that we now take the pen to address you: for through the tender mercies of our God, we feel called upon to write in a strain rather different to that which has hitherto been the burden of our communications. The contents of our former letters, like Ezekiel's roll, were only calculated to depress the spirits and lower the hopes of such as longed and prayed for the prosperity of the Bechuana Mission. Thanks be to God for that gracious aid by which he has ever kept his feeble servants from sinking into despair. The gracious promises of our Redeemer; his faithfulness and zeal to perform them; his interference in seasons of affliction and distress; and the prayers of his church,—are topics on which we have often dwelt, and which have proved a reviving cordial to our desponding souls. We have always felt great diffidence in noticing those changes which to some might appear flattering, lest we should be found to glory in that in which we had really no cause to glory. Whenever a gleam of hope darted on our prospects, we have rejoiced, but it has been with trembling, having but too soon learned that according to our joy so was our sorrow. Under repeated disappointments, it afforded some consolation to know that the acquisition of the language was going on. Knowledge of divine things was becoming more extensively disseminated, and through the force of our influence and example on the station, many families originally poor and others who had been plundered of all, were enabled to derive tolerable support from grounds which never before yielded food for man. We have no hesitation in saying (though it has been with much labor and suffering) that we have studiously attended to the temporal interests of the natives. Indeed, this course of conduct was absolutely necessary for maintaining our ground in a country desolated with war, and depopulated with famine. In attending to this secondary object, we have always had an eye not only to arresting the attention of a people whose minds are exclusively alive to the wants of the present hour, and to whom the past and the future are things of little moment; but likewise to the probable advantages which we hope will arise to the society, from a reduction of that expenditure which the stations would otherwise require.

Solicitude of the Natives concerning their Salvation.

In the following paragraphs the reader will recognise the deep conviction of guilt and unworthiness, the humble and frank confession of sin, and the peculiarly graphic description of their feelings, which gave such interest to the narratives forwarded by the missionaries some years ago respecting Africaner and his band of Namaquas, and the liberated negroes at Sierra Leone. It is an interesting fact, that those awakening influences of the Spirit were felt at New Lattakoo near the same time as which they began to be felt in the Choctaw nation, where missionaries had labored about the same length of time and under similar discouragements.

From these preliminary remarks, we trust that you will not be induced to expect more than what we are now about to communicate. From former letters, you would learn that for nearly the last twelve months, the attendance of the natives on divine service was not only pretty regular, but continued imperceptibly to increase; and our hearts were often gladdened to see that riveted attention to the speaker, which to us seemed a prelude of something real. Our congregations also began to assume that decorum and solemnity which we were wont to behold in our native land. Whether this arose from respect to their teachers, or the force of truth, we were for a time, at a loss to know. A few months ago, we