

natives, without perhaps perceiving in the conduct of the Christians of apostolic days, who went everywhere preaching the Word, an example for their imitation, but influenced by the same principles and feelings as the early disciples, walked in their footsteps. They set themselves to work among their ignorant and perishing neighbours. The merit of the missionaries is that of having, instead of restraining or forbidding their movements, accepted, cherished, guided, and improved the offered assistance.

The nature of the employments of the teachers has varied with the views of the missionaries, the requirements of the missions, or the qualifications of the parties. Their designations have been even more varied than their offices and labours. They have been styled Sunday-school teachers, school-masters, catechists, teachers, preachers, class-leaders, deacons, and pastors. Some of them commence their public works of usefulness as teachers of classes of adults or children, others by praying at the meetings of the brethren. They then proceed to give occasional addresses at such assemblies. In a little time, if their gifts are deemed suitable, they are appointed as public preachers. As occasion requires, the more staid and discerning of the preachers are employed, each in his own village or locality, to watch over his fellow-members, to guide and instruct candidates, to bring into the fold those who still wander, and to report to the missionary on their character and conduct. It may be that heathen tribes still remain in different parts of the island or group of islands, and the best qualified of the native assistants are deputed, as home missionaries, either to travel or reside among them, as may be practicable and advantageous.

As the influence of the mission extends, persons residing in distant and very inaccessible situations become members of the church. It is difficult and undesirable for them to leave their, perhaps young, families to attend the table of the Lord. On account of the nature of the roads and the difficulty of keeping children in due order when away from home, it is equally inconvenient and improper to bring them with them. The numerous engagements of the missionary render it impossible for him to pay frequent visits to those places. In some cases, therefore, of this kind, the teacher in charge of the place has been authorised to administer the Lord's Supper to the members of the church in his neighbourhood. In connection with this privilege, it has been necessary to instruct the teachers and members to investigate any cases of doubtful conduct occurring amongst them, and to suspend from the ordinance offending parties; the final decision as to the restoration of such persons to church privileges, or their entire separation from the church, being reserved until it may be in the power of the missionary to attend the meeting of the members.

Some missionaries have intrusted their teachers in distant places to baptize, as well as dispense the ordinance of the Supper. Others, particularly those who regard adult baptism as admission to full standing in the church, considering that baptism can always be deferred to the seasons of their own visits, and, moreover, that it cannot be performed without their previous judgment of the Christian character of the candidates, have thought it unnecessary to commit the administration of that rite to teachers.

In some of the older missions of the Pacific,—that is, Tahiti and the Sandwich Islands,—natives have, within the last few years, been ordained as pastors of the churches. The right to manage their own

affairs has been fully accorded to these ministers and the churches over which they preside. This step, in completion of the spiritual edifice has, no doubt, been taken advisedly. Some individuals may be found qualified for this trust; but they are few as yet. Those who have received such appointments feel their insufficiency for the difficulties and responsibility of their position; and they and their people gladly avail themselves of the advice of any missionary who may be sufficiently near to be consulted by them, and eagerly listen to him while he further instructs them in the things of the kingdom of Heaven.

FOREIGN SERVICE.

There still remains to be noticed another very extensive and important department of native action and usefulness. Great numbers of the converts have become foreign missionaries to heathen islands and groups many hundreds of miles from their homes, and to people speaking dialects and languages different from their own. They have, indeed, pioneered the work of God among almost all the nations or tribes which, since the introduction of the gospel into this quarter of the world, have been turned from darkness unto light. In the prosecution of their holy enterprise they have been desolate, afflicted, and in many cases slain. In some instances, sickness, ill-treatment, discouragements, and deaths, have led to the abandonment of stations. In others, years of toil have met with little success. But the native churches have not failed to furnish men willing to re-occupy the deserted posts, and to strengthen the hands which were hanging down and the hearts which were ready to faint.

SUPPORT.

The practice in reference to the support of native agents has varied in different missions. Those labouring in their own countries need but little assistance from the foreign missionary societies. The people whom they serve generally aid them in getting up their houses, and make them presents of food, with which, and the produce of their own labours, their wants are well supplied. By feeding some poultry, and other contrivances, they can provide themselves with clothing. The Wesleyan and Church Societies appear to render some assistance to the native catechists. In the early years of the Samoan mission, an annual present of calico and clothing, to the value of about ten shillings, was made to each teacher, with the view of enabling him to appear in decent attire before the people. But of late years this gift has been discontinued, and the people of each village are recommended to make every year a voluntary offering to their teachers of such things as they have. This arrangement is attempted as being more just in itself than drawing on foreign funds, and as being more beneficial to the churches and the people, by initiating them in the scriptural mode of supporting education and religion among themselves. It has already been found to yield, upon the whole, a far better support to the teacher than the old plan.

TRAINING.

The nature of the assistance afforded in the education of native agents varies with the circumstances of the missions, and with the views of the missionaries and the means at their disposal. Efforts of individual missionaries are soon found inadequate to the growing wants of the missions. To insure, amid the increase of intelligence among the people, the respectability, acceptance, and efficiency of the teachers, an improved education must be provided