

efficacy to the ordinances of religion, still to know and prize scriptural doctrine, and to exemplify conduct of a corresponding nature, may be contemplated somewhat in the aspect of cause and effect. On the contrary, vague and undefined notions of religious truth, taking only a loose hold of the affections of the heart, can never be supposed to result in a consistent and holy practice.

As catechetical exercises, especially in the rural districts of Scotland, used to occupy a high place in public estimation, so, not only did the families in the particular section of the congregation more immediately concerned, feel it to be their solemn duty to attend the place of assembling, but those also of other sections regarded it as their privilege to be present, and to receive instruction in the capacity of hearers. Hence on such occasions there was commonly a great multitude of persons collected. There were many circumstances that imparted to these meetings a peculiar interest—the number and variety of the questions proposed—the diversified and often striking illustrations of the subject under review—the answers given—their different degrees of pertinency, and the ground they afforded for remark, elucidation, or correction, on the part of the examiner—the amount of doctrinal matter exhibited—the familiar style in which the whole business was conducted—all this conspired to render of high consequence this portion of ministerial labor. It was the general persuasion, that, at one such meeting, there was often, more information communicated, than was to be derived from several sermons.

But the truths thus brought under notice, frequently formed the subject of after reflection and conversation. It was kept in mind, who were the persons that had best acquitted themselves in the answers returned; what the mistakes that had been incurred; the corrections with which they had been followed; and their coincidence with the infallible standard of revelation. The tendency of all this was to produce more correct, and extensive views, of divine doctrine; to qualify to hear the gospel with more understanding; to peruse treatises on religious subjects with greater advantage; and to render more fit for subsequent examination.

While thus a taste for sacred truth was invigorated, there was also a greater aptitude to impart information to those, whose cases might most urgently require it. Something of the above, the writer of these remarks has witnessed in Scotland, in his younger days. To such scenes he cannot look back, but with respect and affection. While he mentions this, he must express the feelings of many in these Provinces, who have kindred recollections.

It does not, however, appear that Presbyterian Scotland, with all her excellent features, continues to exhibit the same regard to catechetical exercises by which she was once distinguished. There is evidently in this respect a partial falling off, which forms a ground of painful reflection, to not a few of her most worthy clergymen. I might mention, for example, the Rev. Dr. McKerrow, of the United Presbyterian Church. Nor does this dereliction seem to be fully compensated by changes and improvements in other forms. Let it be our care to follow all that is useful, from whatever quarter it may be derived, but practically to condemn every injurious omission, wherever it may be discovered. In proportion as we are solicitous to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good,” so may we hope, that true success shall attend us. As anciently there was a system of Philosophy called Eclectic, which was composed chiefly of what was reckoned valuable in other systems, so, if different religious parties had the candour and magnanimity to adopt from each other, as respects the particulars in which they themselves might be found deficient, whatever were scriptural, and therefore to be prized, this could not fail to operate to the advantage of all.

Catechetical exercises have, I believe, been followed from the very first, by our Church in this country. Their beneficial effects have been also perceptible. It is hoped they will be zealously continued, and that no coolness towards them will be manifested on the part of those, whose duty it especially is, to afford them their support. Their utility and obligation are uniformly adverted to, at the ordination of clergymen. The new incumbent virtually gives his solemn promise, that they shall occupy a due share of his atten-