

or the only way of escape from the difficulties now felt.

The Committee of Distribution have a delicate task to perform in working the scheme recently adopted. On the part of that committee there is an evident desire to do the best they can, though they are hampered greatly in the work assigned them. The scheme itself is a compromise, and, like most compromises, it fails to work well or to secure the confidence of candidates and congregations. The question of supply is receiving considerable attention, and no doubt some plan can be devised that will result satisfactorily to all concerned, and obviate several of the anomalies that are inseparable from all half-measures and compromises. So long as the present state of affairs is suffered to continue, there will be waste of effort, grumbling and general dissatisfaction, which, not being for edification, can only result injuriously to the best interests of the Church. A proposal is at present before one of the Ontario Presbyteries that something like a bureau be established, by means of which ministers and congregations may be brought into immediate and direct correspondence, thus obviating delay and uncertainty, not to speak of possible intrigue and canvassing for hearings, etc., degrading to ministerial character in the long run, which some are apprehensive of under present conditions. Whatever else may be said for or against the proposal, it certainly has the merit of simplicity to recommend it. At all events some remedy is urgently required, and the wisdom of the Church may be depended on to supply it.

THE SUPREMACY OF CONSCIENCE.

THOSE who assume that evolution is the ultimate fact discoverable by science are disposed to deny that conscience is a power inherent in man's nature. By such its existence is not denied but its authority is disputed. They are disposed to regard it as a dethroned sovereign. For long it has exercised sway over the actions of men, but by the progress of enlightenment it is looked upon as a usurper who has too long exercised despotic powers, and is rightfully deprived of its supremacy. Its origin is explained by the long continued exercise of educative influences on the human mind. Its place and its power are thus, they think, satisfactorily accounted for. Few on reflection, however, will deem such an account of the origin of conscience either complete or satisfactory. It does not account for the universality of conscience. The actions of which conscience approves and condemns may be radically different among different races, but conscience itself is a possession of the most degraded savage as well as of the most refined and cultured Christian. That conscience is a faculty of the human soul—pertaining to man as man—can neither be seriously nor effectively denied.

Were man destitute of conscience, education could not impart to him a faculty he does not possess. The radical distinction between right and wrong would have no meaning for a being who had not the power of distinguishing between them. No degree of education can impart additional faculties to man's nature. Education may and does develop in a wonderful degree the powers possessed by the human mind, but as yet there is no recorded instance that new and distinct powers have been added to those whose existence has been recognized in the history of the race. The idea therefore that conscience is the resultant of educative influences is unsupported by consciousness and by fact.

But if conscience cannot trace its origin to education, it is nevertheless highly susceptible to educational influence. How else can the want of uniformity in its dictates be accounted for? That it is capable of terrible perversion is only too apparent. What among one race of people and in one age may be considered highly meritorious, may among another race and in a different age be the object of the severest condemnation. This does not negative the existence of conscience, neither does it discredit its authority; it only proves that, like every other essential faculty, of man's moral nature, it is liable to perversion. It also follows that as education and training are necessary to the full development and exercise of every mental faculty that man possesses, conscience cannot innocently be left in abeyance. It is just as much a natural and religious duty to educate the conscience as it is to cultivate the reason or to train the memory. All men possess, though in widely differing degree

the æsthetic faculty, the power to perceive beauty. In some it seems as if wholly latent, while in others the beauty of a landscape, or a fine artistic creation in any form, will awaken a thrill of delightful emotion, so to one whose conscience has lain dormant, or has been seared and blunted by neglect and disobedience of its dictates, an act may appear altogether indifferent, which to another, whose keen perception of right and wrong and a high sense of duty lead him to view the very same act as one of much importance whether it is done or left undone. Conscience urges on man's attention the sense of obligation. It teaches him that he is environed by duty. As it is the arbiter of right and wrong to him individually, it is of the utmost consequence that its decisions should be just and unerring. To reach this state of efficiency it should receive all the cultivation of which it is susceptible. In her conflicts with John Knox, Queen Mary pled in justification of the course she pursued that she followed the dictates of her conscience. "Conscience, Madam, needs to be enlightened," was the inflexible Reformer's direct rejoinder. The enlightenment of conscience would work marvels in every sphere of human activity.

For the education of conscience there is no means equal to the sacred Scriptures. Some modern scientists who affect to think that evolution has destroyed the authoritative basis of morality, are casting about in search of some authentic and trustworthy inspiration and authority to take the place of the divine, which they think has been superseded. They have not ventured to discard the morality of the New Testament, nor have they proposed the abrogation of the moral law. Its inherent excellence and its universal obligation remain unchallenged. Until a purer and a loftier morality than that which the Scriptures teach, and invested with a higher authority than that emanating from the Divine Lawgiver—whose vicegerent conscience is—has been revealed, we do well to take heed to our goings according to His word. It is no light thing, it is no safe course, to run counter to the monitions of conscience. To disobey its behests is to wrong one's self, not to speak of the injury that may be done to others. Conscience can be, and often is, disobeyed. It may be so outraged by disobedience that it becomes seared as with a hot iron; but the man with the deadened conscience is not one to be envied. If conscience were supreme in every human breast, or even in the breast of every professing Christian, and if its commands were obeyed with a willing devotion, what a transformation in human society would be the result!

Books and Magazines.

THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY. (Toronto: Educational Monthly Publishing Co.)—The number of this valuable magazine for August-September opens with a thoughtful paper by Professor William Clark, M.A., on "The Formation of Public Opinion." It is followed by an "Introduction of Zoology into High Schools," by Professor Ramsay Wright. The other contents of the number are varied and interesting to all engaged in educational work.

THE OLD TESTAMENT STUDENT. (New Haven, Conn.)—This very valuable aid to a thorough study of the Old Testament scriptures, under the editorial care of Dr. Harper, one of the Yale professors, and an accomplished Hebraist, is showing signs of marked improvement. The September number contains a new and excellent feature, viz., a New Testament supplement giving four admirably arranged and comprehensive inductive studies on the Life of Christ. The publication is one of great practical value and deserves an extended circulation.

KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY. (Toronto.)—The September number of this ably conducted magazine contains a number of excellent and timely papers. Dr. Thompson, of Sarnia, has a brief but interesting and practical paper on the Gospels, under the title of the "Fourfold Life;" Dr. R. F. Burns contributes an excellent and characteristic paper on "The General Presbyterian Council," in which he was an active participant. The Rev. John Knox Wright gives an account of "Presbyterianism in Trinidad," from which he has recently returned, and the Rev. J. C. Tibb, B.D., writes thoughtfully and sensibly on "Revivals of Religion." The Missionary Department is equally full and interesting.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

NUMBER OF NATIVE CHRISTIANS IN THE DARJEELING MISSION.

Mr. Turnbull says that, having been called upon by Government to furnish the Church of Scotland returns for Darjeeling district for the year ending 31st March, 1888, he returned 982 native Christians—K Kalimpong division, 543, Darjeeling division, 439. The Church at home will be glad to know the impression made upon the mind of Rev. Mr. Smith, Principal of our Calcutta Institution, by the work in the Darjeeling Mission, as conveyed in one of his letters recently received: "I have just returned from Darjeeling, where my wife and I spent a pleasant fortnight with the Turnbells. It was Panchayat week when we arrived there, and I had an opportunity of seeing from catechists' reports and otherwise what a splendid organization the Darjeeling Mission is. From the Darjeeling supplement to *Life and Work* it can be seen how energetically all the various branches of the work are directed. I have now seen both divisions of this great mission, and I do not now wonder that the native Church there has increased from 184 in 1880 to 982 at the present time."

EGYPT.

In his work on the Jews, Dr. Kellogg states that there is at Cairo the largest college in the world. There are 300 professors who teach Mohammedanism, and 100,000 students. At the head of this university is a Jewish pervert to Islam. Surely this suggests the amazing energy of the Jewish nature, and that the recovering of Israel to Christ would be "life from the dead." The Mohammedan propagandist goes out from this institution with this only as his outfit—a turban, a cloth round his loins, and a Koran. There has been a tendency of late, through recent discussions to disparage missionary zeal among Mohammedans. But have we not, as followers of our crucified Lord, something to learn from them?

LIVINGSTONIA MISSION.

Mr. Frederick M. Moir joined his father, Dr. Moir, on the 11th August, looking well, but with his wounded right arm so far from well that it was found necessary to perform a severe operation on the elbow-joint. The hope is that eventually it will come all right. He was to meet the committee a few days ago. The latest letter from Rev. Dr. Laws is dated 16th May, in which he writes from Bandawé: Archdeacon Maples and Rev. Mr. Johnson have very kindly sent across their steamer with our mails. We were all gladdened indeed to hear of the earnest spirit of prayer manifested by the Church at home on our behalf, and already we have an answer to these prayers. We trust this earnestness may be continued and deepened, and much blessing will be the result to this land, to the Church, and to her representatives in the foreign field. On Sabbath, April 29, I had the privilege of baptizing an adult, Napoleon Tanganyika, who has been more or less under the influence of the mission teaching for the last twelve years. Six natives of this district have also come forward to join my catechumen class, and several others may yet do so. On May 2 we closed our schools with an attendance of 1,224 scholars and thirty-eight native teachers and monitors. An outbreak of smallpox had caused several deaths in the neighbouring villages.

THE SLAVE-TRADE.

Dr. Laws thus refers to the serious troubles caused by the slave-traders: "My last told you of the wound Mr. F. Moir had received at the north end, and of the state of matters there. We have no further accounts from the north, but the *Charles Jansen* has brought us the news of the seizure of Acting-Consul Buchanan and Mr. Johnson by Makanjira, and the murder of one of Mr. Buchanan's men, the seizure and retention of the *Charles Jansen's* boat, and the holding of both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Buchanan till they were ransomed by those on the steamer. This outrage on the consul and his flag is a serious matter, and illustrates the attitude of the slave-trader to the British Government in a way which will probably open the eyes of the British nation to the fact that the slave-trade is not extinct nor amenable to consular moral suasion in the way some of those who extol Arab and Mohammedan influence and kindness would have them believe."