

ty of the congregation, and congratulate the minister on having people of such a liberal spirit to preach to.

Now what does a *present* mean? It means a gift when no claim can be made either legally or morally on the donors. But in congregations where the salary of the minister is at a beggarly low figure, the people come with a present—a gift for which the minister is expected to be *grateful*, and in general to remember it in his words and acts—when in reality there was no *present* at all. It is true there was something given, but it was not a *present*, for the simple reason that the minister's income is too small, and thus his claims upon his people increase from year to year, and that which was called a present should in reality come as payment of the debt the people owe their minister, by paying him too small a salary. Take what I mean into the ordinary concerns of regular business. A man owes a bill of one hundred dollars to his grocer; of this he pays sixty dollars, and then comes, and by way of laying his grocer under obligation, and by way of getting the name of being generous, he offers a *present* of ten dollars. What would the result be? Either that the indignant grocer would say: "Pay your bill first, and then we will talk of presents," or he would quietly credit the sum in his books, without the slightest feeling of obligation on his part; and suppose the family Doctor's bill for the year is one hundred dollars—fifty dollars are paid, and then a present offered. I don't think that the good physician would feel himself the recipient of a generous donation at all. Yet, strange to say, the minister is expected to be grateful and thankful, and obliged for precisely the same thing. His income is small, he does not receive one half the annual sum he ought to receive—not one-half the sum his people could give if they chose, and under such a state of matters the congregation have no right to offer gifts in the form of presents. I do not say that they should do nothing—far from it—but what they do should go to the increase of the yearly salary of the clergyman till it comes to the figure at which it ought to stand. For example, if the minister's salary is eight hundred dollars, while though it ought to be at

least two thousand, there is morally a balance due the minister of twelve hundred dollars annually, and the people have no right to give presents till this just debt is first paid off. It, therefore, becomes a matter of the utmost practical importance that the people of all congregations should lay this matter to heart, and act accordingly. With presents from individuals I have nothing to do. An individual in a congregation is fully at liberty to treat the minister of the congregation as he would any other of his or her individual friends; it is different when deputations from the congregation "wait" upon the minister.

The object of this short article will be completely frustrated if it merely has the effect of causing those who have been in the habit of giving presents to their ministers to cease doing so without doing anything else. Better by far to give presents than to give nothing—but better than both—increase in a rational way your minister's salary, and if possible, by private endowment, place his income beyond the exigency of trade, depression and crop failures, so that in the time of destitution and want the clergyman may be able to open his hand to the poor and needy. C.

The Madagascar Mission.

The remarkable progress which the gospel has made on this large Island has turned the eye of the Christian World towards it. Seldom are we privileged to witness such wonderful triumphs or to see so fully verified the oft-repeated adage, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church as we behold in the history of the good cause in Madagascar. Despite great obstacles, and amid grievous trial, the work has been carried on, making it manifest to all that it bears the stamp of Divine approval. From small beginnings and under rather unfavourable auspices it commenced, but has resulted in great and glorious issue. Previous to the arrival of Protestant Missionaries among this people, the intercourse of Europeans among them produced anything but a favourable impression. Their principal object in visiting them was the prosecution of the slave trade, and hence they were led to look