

accept less than this and surely the time has not come when even a few ministers would advocate a less just course.

The claims of this Fund are exceptionally strong, its object being to make a small provision for men who have been worn out by age or infirmity in the service of the Master. To them the church owes much, more than she can ever pay, and it is a grave matter for any minister or journal to pursue a course whereby the liberality of the church is diverted to other channels, and whereby many generous impulses are nipped in the bud, and veterans tottering on the brink of the grave deprived of a moiety. It is not enough that this course which in the interest of the church, we condemn, should have aroused a storm of indignation, as indicated by the many letters that have been written on the subject. The indignation ought to assume practical form, the form we would suggest being such a rally to the Fund, that the effects of the ill-conceived attacks may be to some extent off-set and neutralized.

#### PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN MADAGASOAR.

The *Independent* publishes a letter from the Rev. James Sibree, missionary of the London Missionary Society, in Madagascar, which discloses a deplorable state of affairs in that Island. He describes the losses incurred by missions on account of the war, and they have been severe and trying, but harder and more dangerous is the attitude assumed by the Jesuits of late. The establishment of the French power, he says, has given the Jesuits the opportunity of persecuting the protestants and they are now using it, according to Mr. Sibree, most unscrupulously. "The military commandants" says he, "in several districts have become facile instruments in the hands of the Jesuits in terrorizing the people. In several instances our Protestant Churches have been seized and mass performed in them; the schools have in many cases been handed over *en masse* to the priests; the congregations have been browbeaten, threatened and frightened into becoming, nominally, Roman Catholics. In very many cases they have been told by people in authority that if they continue Protestants they will be accounted as rebels. They are told that their English missionaries are enemies to France, and, therefore, all who have anything to do with them will also be reckoned as the enemies of France. Local native governors are told that while there is, of course, religious liberty for the people (1), they, as men in authority, ought to be of the same religion as the French nation; and if they stand fast, they are soon accused of disaffection, and are degraded or fined. The consequence, of course, is that numbers of them, to avert suspicion from themselves, become almost more zealous and unjust than the priests themselves, and use all their influence to coerce the people to leave the religion they have been taught. Accusations on the most flimsy pretenses are got up against the best men in some of the districts—pastors, evangelists and others; and they are heavily fined, imprisoned, and some are now loaded with chains, although it is perfectly certain that their Protestantism is their only offense."

Mr. Sibree continues: It seems now a settled principle that if the majority of the people in a village can be brought, by any means whatever—such as those just named—to say that they are Roman Catholics, the church in the village, although built exclusively by and for a Protestant congregation, and always aided by grants from the London Missionary Society, can be taken for Roman Catholic worship, and the Protestants expelled. This has been done, and the priests are hoping by this clever contrivance that numbers of our Protestant churches will pass into their hands. And

from what has been said as to the means used to terrorize the people, it will be easily seen how easy it is to get the majority of the people in a village—numbers of whom never attended any place of worship—to profess themselves to be Roman Catholics. In some villages the priest has gone from house to house with two books to write down the people's names, telling them that all written as Roman Catholics in the one will be perfectly safe, while those in the other will be exposed to all sorts of danger and suspicion. Are any words needed to explain what effect such a proceeding must have upon a large number of weak and still very ignorant people? The result has been that in large villages where, until quite lately, there has never been a single Roman Catholic, the whole congregation has been forced to say that they have "quite voluntarily given up Protestantism."

It is evident that the British Government must interfere to protect its missionaries in Madagascar, for the condition of things here described ought not to be tolerated.

#### The Farthest North

According to a dispatch from Washington, by far the northernmost post office in the world has just been ordered established by the Norwegian government on Spitzbergen Island, to the north of Norway. An announcement to the Post Office Department from the Universal Postal Union says the office will be established for next summer. It will be mainly for the benefit of the excursionists who find their way there at rare intervals. It will give them an opportunity to mail Spitzbergen souvenirs from that place.

#### The License System.

Says the *Midland*: If drunkenness with all its evils be wrong, then it is wrong for the state to license the sale of that which makes men drunk. If it be wrong for the state to license the sale of liquor, it is wrong for legislators to vote for license laws. If it be wrong for legislators to vote for license laws, then it is wrong for us to vote for men for the legislature who will vote for license laws. What is done by our chosen agents is done by us. For our part we do not want to share any of the responsibility of men who vote for the continued existence of the saloon, which all know is responsible for sending the bodies of thousands to their graves until the last day and their souls to hell forever.

#### Protestantism in Jerusalem.

Protestantism is gaining a foothold in Jerusalem. Residents from the land of Luther are erecting a building there for divine worship at a cost of \$200,000. This is a remarkable fact. Ever since Mohammedanism has held sway in this far-famed city, she has ostracized Christianity, but now she gives it some recognition, and, strange to say, it was the Sultan who gave these Germans the very ground upon which their fine structure is being built. As the *Lutheran* remarks, "it may not, when finished, rival the famous Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, but it doubtless will be a fitting specimen of Protestant architecture." But, better still, it will present a worthier contrast. It will speak for a higher and nobler civilization, and for a purer and grander religion. It would stand for liberty of conscience, the rights of humanity and the redemption of mankind through a crucified Redeemer. We hope it will be true to its mission, and prove the forerunner of that blessed time when Christianity, in its purity and fulness, shall dominate not only the capital, but every part, of a rejuvenated Judea.

The seventieth annual report of the New York City Mission and Tract Society shows that it, with the other missionary enterprises, has suffered from the general depression. It closes its year with a deficit of something over \$9,000.