

The mean annual receipts of the "Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris" are about 100,000 francs (£13,000). The maintenance of the African mission costs about 75,000 francs (£10,000). Its funds are principally obtained from the evangelical churches of France. In 1847, that is to say, at the time of its financial crisis, it was obliged to have recourse for help to English and American Christians, and they generously came to its assistance. It received especially, at this time, incense from the Cape of Good Hope, from Calcutta, and from Bombay. This was an exceptional case, being the only one which has occurred since the commencement of the Society.—*Re Christ*

ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN SWEDEN

BY THE REV. F. O. MULLER.

The Lutheran confession, with Episcopal church government, is the established religion of Sweden. All Swedish subjects, except the Jews, are obliged to be members of the State Church. No dissent is tolerated, upon penalty of the loss of property, and banishment for life from the country. By a law which, although absolute, is not repressive, parents are subject to a heavy tax, if they appear to have their infants baptised, at the age fifteen or sixteen, except a person must go through a course of catechising, previous to his confirmation. Then, after a man has been confirmed, he must, according to law, receive the sacrament, at least once in twelve months, or else he will lose his privileges as a citizen. For instance—No person is allowed to hold any office, either great or small, who does not go to church, and the Lord's table, at least once in twelve months. No one can appear as a witness in a court of law, in any case, without this. If a person be ever so trustworthy, if his opponent can only bring evidence that he has not, within twelve months, been to church, his testimony will be refused.

The same law exists in regard to marriage. Those who wish to unite in the matrimonial bond, must prove that they regularly and with reverence receive the means of salvation (by which expression is meant the sacrament). This law goes so far as to exclude persons from entering on business, or being masters in any handicraft trade, who do not conform to it.

The pastors are obliged, each one in his parish, to see that this law is conforming to. In this manner the Lutheran clergy are able to keep every Swedish in connection with the state-church. If a person moves from one parish to another, he may be free, high or low, he cannot be re-quired to join another church, or to receive the sacrament, if he does not bring a certificate from the pastor of the parish from which he comes, or if in that certificate the pastor does not testify that he is a regular and devout communicant.

Thus every man born within the borders of Sweden is nationally, without his own consent or knowledge, made a member of the Lutheran church; but after he comes of age, he is free to choose for himself, either that church, no matter what his convictions are, or to leave the country. The clergy being empowered to act as a police, there is no chance of dissent from the state-church, even in a single instance.

There is also a law, forbidding any number of persons to assemble together for reading the Word of God, and offering prayer together, or in any other way edifying one another from the Word of God, or exhorting sinners to repentance. No assembly for religious services is allowed, except those ordained by the law, conducted by the lawful ministers of the Establishment, in the consecrated houses for Divine worship, and in the proper seasons. By the same law, every head of a family is commanded to instruct his children in the catechism, and to exhort his household to fear God, but such things must not be extended beyond his family circle. If any assembly be convened together, for the purpose of edifying one another from the Word of God, or the reading of the Scriptures, and the one who opens his house for that purpose, are both subject, for the first offence, to a fine of about five pounds; and for each of those who assembled at such a meeting, about one pound. The second offence, the fine is doubled; and if they are not able to pay the fine, they will be imprisoned on bread and water for twenty-eight days. For the third offence, they are to be banished from the kingdom.

But this law has also caused a number of infants, within the last two or three years, to be taken from the parents, torn from their mothers' arms by parish constables and sheriff's officers, and brought to the parish churches for christening, against the consciences and wishes of their parents. In two instances have the cows been taken from the parents, their only property, and sold from them to defray the expenses for the pastor's and the officers' unasked service. Besides, there are now at this moment a woman and a young man, who desire to be united in matrimony, and who for that purpose applied to the pastor where the woman resides (in Sweden, marriage is altogether an act of the church) to be wedded. When the pastor saw the man's certificate from his own parish minister, he refused to marry him. Why? because he was a Baptist, and the woman also. The case was brought before the bishop and consistory at Skara, and a short time ago an answer from that venerable tribunal came, and says that, if the persons had ever so good a motive, the fact that they had left the Lutheran church communion was enough to cause the bishop and chapter to refuse the marriage celebration. In consequence also of these laws, a man has recently been banished for life, taken away from his friends and relations, and in a legal manner,

to prevent it.—*Rean Christ.*

THE CHURCH OF THE WALLESESS IN THE PIEDMONT-TSIC VALLEYS.

BY J. B. REV. J. R. BALVE.

If the humble church, which I have the happiness to represent, dare make its feeble voice heard in the midst of you, dearly beloved brethren, I must first of all implore your indulgence for it.

That church was born, it lived, it suffered, and its ruins still remain amongst the rocks, whence flow those waters which fertilise a large and beautiful part of Italy; and yet it was but yesterday that Italy re-ceived it. Not many years ago a great Prince—one who will always hold a high place in noble and generous Italian minds—allowed it to be proclaimed in his name, that the church of the Walldesses was a thorn in the heart of his dominions. This same monarch took care, it is true, to give a very interesting commentary on these words, in the preamble of the edict of the 17th February, 1818, for the emancipation of the Walldesses, when he declared that the good conduct and the virtues of his portion of his subjects rendered them worthy of such a favour.

This unna usual position, which has lasted several centuries, has obliged the church in the Piedmontese valleys to contract very precious relationships, and to adopt both the French language and appearance. Although it speaks French, yet it is as the Italian Evangelical church that it comes before you to-day, to tell you of its existence, what it is, and what it wishes to do.

If it is necessary to be brief, and shall therefore not abuse your time and your patience; allow me, however, to make one more preliminary observation.

The Evangelical Piedmontese church has not officially enrolled herself as a member of the Evangelical Alliance, but she felt herself to be such; and she is desirous to declare in this assembly, that you have considered her as naturally, and by right, an interested part of that beautiful association which has been formed for the advancement of the kingdom of our Saviour.

Perhaps you thought that you could not refuse a place to the elder sister of the Evangelical churches. You certainly remembered and rejoiced in the fact that she still holds in full force the confession of faith of 1605, and only in another sense, since the synod met on the 26th, 27th, 28th, and 29th, of this last May, that she declared, in its 45th article, that "considering the attacks recently directed against the Divine authority of the Scriptures, and wishing to show to all the aversion of the church of the Walldesses to such doctrines, as being subversive of true faith and true piety, and to declare her firm intention to remain, on this point as well as on every other, firm in the faith of the prophets, the apostles, and the holy martyrs, she proposes to send, in a special and solemn manner, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th paragraphs of the confession of faith of her church."

For myself, I feel the necessity of insisting at this time on another title which she has to be a natural member of the Evangelical Alliance; this title is, that, three hundred years ago, she was the promoter of a similar union.

Would you beg you to carry your thoughts three hundred years back, and what do you see? A holy Evangelical Alliance, at its head, you may see crowned heads, eminent statesmen, and great doctors of the church. Who have been the cause of it? Some small companies of shepherds in the Hautes Alpes, and in the retired valleys of Piedmont. These peaceable flocks only demanded of the country, and of those who governed it, the privilege of being able to feed in the green pastures and near the still waters of the Word of God. They declared, in their 45th article, upon them, torn, dispersed, and wished to annihilate them. Their plaintive cries are heard, and an Evangelical Alliance is formed; its centre is here in London, and it displays most extraordinary activity; it calms the fury of their enemies, save the remnant of Israel in the Alps, and heals the wounds of the daughter of Zion with the sweet and refreshing balm of charity; so that, towards 1607, between 7,000 and 8,000 Walldesses were able to gather together for themselves and their families, Perouse, and St. Martin, between the torrents of Pôis and of Cluson, which were assigned to them as impassable barriers.

From a statistical statement, made shortly before the emancipation of 1818, it appears that 21,278 Valdais and 4,462 Roman Catholic lived within these limits. It was also remarked, at that period, that 1020 Valdais had been obliged to expatriate themselves for a time, and go to get a livelihood in France and in Switzerland for themselves and their families. Since the edict of February, 1818, this expatriation has much diminished, and many Valdais, who lived in foreign countries, have returned to their native land, to the great profit of industry, commerce, and agriculture, and especially, I trust, to the advancement of the kingdom of God. All this may prove, some one may say, that there are still some Valdais in those valleys, but not that there is a true and faithful body of Christians. This is however, what the Christian world will know, now will you accept as a sufficient proof the fact that I have the honour of addressing you at this moment in its name, and sent by that church. As, according to the Word of God, one may know a tree by its fruit, it appears to me that every church, animated by the Spirit of Christ, may produce the fol-