

precipitating remarks on the preacher, if he has not come up to their standard, than to pound the message, which he may have been commissioned by God to deliver to them. Is it to be wondered at, if, while sermons are heard in such a spirit, the soul continues unimpressed and unmoved?

God not unfrequently reproves his own people, when they lose sight of Himself, and causes them to know that it is not the eloquence or the more intellectual power of men, but the influence of the spirit, which can promote their spiritual prosperity. It is related that on one occasion a person who accidentally, or to speak more correctly, providentially heard the celebrated Ebenezer Erskine, was much impressed and edified by the discourse to which he listened. At another time the same individual travelled a considerable distance for the express purpose of hearing the eminent divine. On this occasion, however, there was great disappointment. The divine was as earnest and as eloquent as before, but the sermon was heard without much interest or edification. Having had an opportunity of conversing with Mr. Erskine, the individual mentioned the circumstances, and expressed his regret and surprise at the difference. "I think," says the divine, "I can explain to you the cause; formerly you went to hear the word of the Lord—this time you came to hear Mr. Erskine." Are there not many amongst us who continue without spiritual prosperity or advancement, just because in waiting on the means of grace, they lose sight of God and his word, and merely look to the instrument?

The habit of criticising sermons is often productive of the most pernicious effects on the minds of the young, when it is done in their hearing. In the life of the Rev. Dr. Alexander a fact is stated, which shows the evil effects of light and depreciating remarks on sermons which have been preached by the servants of God. At one time he was living, in his youth, in a remote part of the country, where he had not the privilege of waiting regularly on the preaching of the gospel. A travelling minister having preached in the neighborhood, the young man went to hear him, and received a deep impression from the sermon delivered on that occasion. This impression was, however, he tells us, entirely obliterated by the disparaging remarks which were made by his parents. We fear there are many instances of the young being hardened and prejudiced against the gospel, by the light and disparaging way in which their parents and others speak of ministers and of their performances.

Would that we had more faithfulness and godly sincerity on the part of ministers, and more simplicity and earnestness on the part of hearers. Then might we hope to see the word preached, not returning void, but producing mighty effects on the consciences, the hearts, and the lives of men. Then might we hope to see many brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Then might we hope to see the wilderness and the solitary place made glad, and the wilderness made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

#### DEATH OF THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

Intelligence, which we have every reason to regard as well founded, has just come, of the death of Nicholas, Emperor of Russia. Apoplexy is said to have followed an attack of influenza, and to have been the immediate cause of his death. Whatever may be the immediate effects of his death on the war which is now being carried on in the Crimea, it is almost certain that it will materially facilitate the negotiations for peace. It is scarcely to be supposed that a young Emperor, whatever may be his individual view as to the present struggle, will exhibit the same iron will, the same unbending purpose, the same reckless determination, which characterized Nicholas. In this view we cannot but recognize the hand of God in the event to which we refer. At the very time when negotiations with a view to peace were about to be entered into, the man, whose ambition and unbending purpose occasioned so much bloodshed, and whose duplicity would have rendered negotiation peculiarly difficult and dangerous, has been cut off.

What an illustration does this event give us of the effect, even in this life, of unbridled passion and uncontrolled ambition. The Autocrat, who reigned over millions of subjects, could not control his own spirit. He gave himself up entirely to the lust of power. Now harassed and prostrated in mind and body, he succumbs to disease, superinduced, in all probability, by mental vexation and physical excitement. What an illustration does it also give of human nothingness, and of God's irresistible and sovereign power. But a short time ago Nicholas, Autocrat of all the Russias, controlled thousands by his individual will. Now he lies a mass of corruptible clay. God, who witnessed his ambitious projects said, "hitherto shalt thou come and no farther." The sentence goes forth from his mouth, and straightway his body returns to the dust as it was, and his spirit departs to its God and judge. Thus God poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

The Czar has died in his 59th year. He was undoubtedly, possessed of many great faculties. But he was the slave of his own ambition, to gratify which, he was utterly regardless of human life. Even since the present war commenced, many thousands have been sacrificed to his insatiable ambition and unbending determination. May his successor be taught to pursue a different course, and to follow the things which make for peace.

THE CLERGY RESERVE BILL.—It turns out, that, according to the fears of many, the Government, instead of recognising individual ministers in the matter of commutation, will do nothing without the sanction of the respective churches. This confirms the suspicion that the whole affair was a mere scheme to blind the community, and to secure to the favourite churches as a perpetuity, their shares of the Reserves. A motion brought forward by Mr. Brown, with the view if possible, of preventing the apprehended evil, has been lost. If not too

late, petitions should be got up against commutation, more especially as the Government pretended that the country approves of the plan, because there have been no petitions against it. If people will only speak out their felt sentiments, there will be no want of petitions.

#### THE FORMATION OF A PROTESTANT ALLIANCE.

A Protestant Alliance has now been formally organized in Toronto. The objects that are contemplated by the formation of such an Alliance, may be best learned from the Resolutions which were adopted at a public meeting lately held in the city. These Resolutions, so far as they bear on the objects of the Alliance, were in the following terms:—

1. That it appears desirable to form an Alliance, which shall combine all classes of Protestants, whose object shall be not merely to oppose the progress of Popery, but to maintain and defend, against all its encroachments, the scriptural doctrines of the Reformation, and the principles of religious liberty, as the best security, under God, for the temporal and spiritual welfare and prosperity of this Province: and farther, by scriptural means, hereafter to be specified, to aim at the conversion of Roman Catholics to the pure faith of the gospel.

2. That such an Association may promote this most important object, by the following, among other methods:—by awakening Protestants of different classes, and of different opinions on politics and church government, to such a sense of christian patriotism, as shall lead them, in the exercise of their constitutional privileges, to regard the interests of Protestantism as the paramount object of their concern, keeping minor and merely political differences in subordination to this great end; by uniting the Protestants of the Province in a firm and persevering demand, that the Legislative support and encouragement given to Popery, shall be discontinued. In this demand would be included all endowments of Popery in every form and of every kind drawn from the public revenues—any concession of rank or precedence to Romish Ecclesiastics, and the allowance of conventual establishments, not subject to the inspection and control of the law.

3. That the Alliance shall extend their sympathy and support to Protestants in foreign countries, who may be suffering oppression for the cause of the Gospel; and they shall exert themselves to call forth the Home and Provincial Governments to obtain for Protestants in every part of the world, religious liberty equal to that which is granted to Roman Catholics—especially the liberty of public worship—of free discussion—and the unrestricted use and circulation of the word of God.

We observe some difference of opinion has shown itself as to the expediency of organizing such an association. We are, however, decidedly of opinion, that it is high time for something being done for uniting Protestants in an intelligent, scriptural, mild, but still firm opposition to Popery, as being a system directly opposed to the social and political, as well as to the moral and spiritual interests of any community. The present policy of Roman Catholics, their increasing demands, especially with regard to Education, and the subservience to Popery so often manifested by those in power, render the organization of a Protestant Alliance, in our opinion, not only expedient, but necessary. Such associations are now being formed all over Great Brit.