

Christian Observer of Public Events.

It is gratifying to see that British statesmen do not overlook matters in which religious rights and interests are concerned. A subject of this nature recently engaged the attention of the House of Commons. Spain has long maintained an unenviable notoriety for the thorough subserviency of civil power to the domination of Romanism, and hence the suppression of all kinds of religious liberty, except that of conforming to the forms and ceremonies of Popery. Not only has the circulation of the Scriptures been strictly prohibited, but even travellers have often been subjected to the indignity of search, and in case Bibles have been found in their possession, though only for private use, they have been taken from them. In the year 1809, a naturalized British subject was arrested and confined in a leathsome dungeon, and was afterwards condemned to nine years' penal servitude in the galleys. His only crime was that of circulating the Holy Scriptures. Remission of the penalty was, however, obtained, through the intercession of the British Consul. Since the date of the above, the Romish priesthood, becoming alarmed at the spread of Bible truth, have been active and vigilant in searching out the Bible dealers, and through the aid of police officers, many have been arrested and subjected to cruel persecution. Mr. Baird brought up the subject in the House of Commons, and in a speech of considerable length, gave the details of the proceedings in England against large numbers of persons, and, recently, too, under the sanction of civil authorities; and he inquired of the Government what had been done in Great Britain to put a stop to these

persecutions. The answer of Lord Palmerston is worthy of notice. He said "he was sorry to say, in reply to the inquiry of his honourable friend, that the efforts of Her Majesty's Government to obtain the release of those to whom his observations referred, had not been attended with any satisfactory results." Lord Palmerston thus speaks of the chief obstacles in the way of obtaining any mitigation of the intolerant and persecuting laws in that country:—"The Spanish nation is a nation full of valiant, noble and chivalrous feelings and sentiments; but, unfortunately, the Romish priesthood exercise a greater sway than they possess in any other country; and, however liberal,—I believe I may say so, the Catholic laity in most countries are, history tells us that wherever the priesthood gets the predominance, the utmost amount of intolerance as invariably prevails. *And although in countries where they form a minority, they are constantly demanding, not only toleration, but equality; in countries where they are predominant, neither equality nor toleration exists.*" We have put this last sentence in italics as worthy of special notice, not merely as coming from the first of statesmen, and uttered in the legislative hall of the British Empire, but because it contains a truth which the whole Christian world ought to consider well, and which the friends of Protestantism and liberty in Canada should not overlook. The extent to which the bloody and persecuting laws of Spain are put in operation at the present time, are becoming matters of serious consideration by others besides the Protestant Government of Britain. Even in France these deeds of inhumanity are