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Woodstock, September 1850.

ADDRESS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE PRIESTS' PROTECTION SOCIETY,—IRELAND. TO BRITISH PROTESTANTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

(Concluded from our last.)

In former years we have pointed out to you, and have invoked you, to employ the following means for your individual and national peace and prosperity.

PRAYER, UNION, ACTION.

Entire perusal of the BIBLE individually and annually. We have the promise of Him—the Eternal Invincible Himself—that they, and they alone, are blessed who read his Word; and proofs abundant in the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, that these nations prospered so long as they and their kings put down idolatry, and set up the spiritual worship of Jehovah.

Let us all, then, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the year that is before us, set about this duty and privilege in right earnest; and, as faithful soldiers of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, scale the walls of heaven, and the hearts of our fellow men—Romanist, infidel, and nominal believer—and subdue them to the power of the cross of Christ. Let this be our real object, and you may be perfectly confident you shall thus obtain the consummation of your labours, and at length enter into the joy of your Lord.

What we have laid before you in the years gone by, has been done with the deepest humility, and under a sense of divine obligation; otherwise we should not have been emboldened to address you, many of who are our superiors in age and intellect. To the follower of Christ we make no apology, as he has learned from Him to bear with meekness even the infirmities of the weak. To the wise in this world we would say consider our counsel with patience; for God often chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, God hath chosen to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.*

We would make only two new suggestions this year, to build up and strengthen the Church of Christ, and that branch of it especially in this country to which we belong.

Ours is a small island, compared with the territories to which the teaching of the united Church of England and Ireland extends; but we must not forget that the island, small as it is, according to the Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, in the year 1834, contains a population of eight millions of souls, over whom the Irish branch has taken the spiritual oversight, as the law of the land and the subdivisions of the country indicate. She also thus assumed to herself the awful responsibility of breaking to each of these souls in error "the bread of eternal life." No minister of this Church can, therefore, by any ingenious, subtle quibble, escape from the obligation, coolly and deliberately entered into in public at his ordination, by a vow and covenant the most binding and solemn that can bind man to man, and man to his Maker. How far that oath has been kept God is the judge, the impartial judge; and how far the efforts have been successful to reclaim "the ignorant, and them that are out of the way," it is not our Province to decide. But one stupendous fact remains, and stands forth prominently before the face of Christendom itself; that the BLIGHT of POPERY pervades, by the above report, the mind of SIX MILLIONS AND A-HALF of the population, and that the very darkness of death is upon them.

There is another fact, no less humbling and astonishing which we wish to draw forth, and with shame to expose it to the world, namely, that in Dublin, in the year 1644, the Protestant population amounted to 5,551, and the Romanist population to 2,603; more than two Protestants to every Romanist—nearly three to one. We find by the same report of 1834, that the population of Dublin was as follows: 61,833 Protestants, and 174,957 Romanists. The increase of the former has not kept pace with that of the latter. On the contrary the reverse is the case; there are now two Romanists for every Protestant, nearly three to one!

We might go further into detail, and state more extraordinary facts, from an actual visitation we have made, in the past year, of the city churches. But this is enough for our present purpose, to call your most serious attention to the first suggestion we have to make, namely,

TO REFORM THE CHURCH.

It is self-evident, that in any country, civilized or uncivilized, where there is an Established Church, that the institution is for the benefit and education of the people, and that the clergy and her ministers; they are the servants of the people for Christ's sake, and they are to labour constantly for their conversion and salvation. Neither the people nor the clergy compose the Church, but the Church is the congregation of the faithful; and the National Church is consequently made up of such congregations.

"We solemnly ask you, then, brother Protestants, why are not all the inhabitants of this island, after so many years of expensive instruction and probation, one vast congrega-

tion of faithful men, wherein the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered?"

*Article XIX.

We have paused again and again, and have often asked ourselves this question. After due reflection and observation, we think we can truly answer the question, all absorbing and important as it is.

We say deliberately, THE BISHOPS ARE THE CAUSE OF THIS EVIL, this national disgrace—this idolatry and superstition, which overspread the land. We do not affirm that the Bishops are individually bad and incompetent men; there are exceptions; there are noble and apt and godly men among them, who are zealously striving for the faith of the Gospel, and who have a good report among the brethren; but alas! these are only exceptions to the rule, and do not weaken the force of our charge. If the tree be evil, the fruit must be evil; if the fountain be impure, the stream is impure. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No, not one. The last two hundred years in Ireland establish this truth, and six millions and a-half of voices corroborates its verity. This is a fearful testimony, and an irrisistible proof bearing witness in favour of our accusation. The evil is increasing rapidly and lamentably since the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in the year 1829. The appointments to high places in the Church have latterly become so odious even, not to say wicked, that her faithful members are ashamed and disgusted with them! Men are appointed by Popish and Infidel influences to offices in the Church, who, if the body were in a healthy state, and if they received their desert, would be either put out of the Church altogether, or be suspended, until the same body should deem them worthy, after deep repentance, of readmission, and holy intercourse.

We shall now recommend one or two remedies for this wide-spread evil, which is preying like a canker on the very vitals of our Church, and tending to make her unpopular and inefficient for the work for which she was established and endowed in the land by the legislature.

When a vacancy occurs in a bishopric, let an aggregate meeting be convened of all the Episcopal inhabitants of the diocese, to which the See belongs, and let an humble petition, emanating from that meeting, and signed by all the same religious inhabitants of that diocese, men, women, and children, be addressed to Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen, praying her Majesty, with the spiritual advice of the Archbishop Canterbury and her Prime Minister, to "appoint a man full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" to the high and holy office. Even should the petition fail in its object at first, the very agitation of the matter, after a religious manner, will be attended by the happiest and best effects; and eventually the measure shall succeed. The convocation of the people will promote religious discussion and inquiry, and a sifting investigation into the character of the men who may be thought fit and competent for the holy office. Be assured Her Majesty will not resist the prayers of her loyal people, if they only approach her in a right spirit and a becoming manner.

The aggregate meetings might be managed by a Court of Directors in Dublin, composed of noblemen and gentlemen, possessing property in Ireland, and representing the population in each of the twelve dioceses into which the island is divided.

Let no man imagine that it is not his interest to be engaged in this choice of a spiritual overseer. All the intermediate ranks, from the peer to the peasant, are more or less effected by the choice of a bishop. The rich in his tenantry and household, the poor man in his children and trade. True religion diffuses among all classes peace, contentment, and industry; and promotes improvement in schools, refinement, and agriculture. These are a few among the many blessings which shall result to the nation, from having "men after God's own heart" elevated to the episcopacy.

We would also advise another remedy, which might prove more efficacious than the former, because it would go more deeply to the root of the evil.

Let the clergy of the diocese meet, in the event of a vacancy to a bishopric, and nominate by ballot three fit and proper persons to the office, for the final selection of one of them by the Queen. In the event of a vacancy in the incumbency of a parish, let all the clergy of the diocese assemble, and select three clergymen, in the same manner, for the final choice of one of them by the Diocesan. And when a curacy is vacant in a parish, let the Episcopalians, who pay rent-charge or minister's money, assemble and vote by ballot for three candidates, who have been on probation in the parish for two Sundays in the exercise of their clerical duties, and thus assist the Rector in his final selection of the most suitable minister. The admixture of the laity, and the infusion of their judgment in the administration of the affairs of the Church, would tend greatly to promote her growth and strength, as is proved by the state of the district churches in Dublin, and in other parts of the United Kingdom.

*1 Cor. i. 27—29.