

A SHORT METHOD
OF
CONVERTING ALL THE ROMAN CATHOLICS
IN THE KINGDOM OF IRELAND.

HUMBLY PROPOSED TO THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY
OF THAT KINGDOM.

1. IT is a melancholy consideration to those who love the Protestant interest, that so small a part of this nation is yet reformed from Popery. They cannot observe without a very sensible concern, that, in many parts of the kingdom, there are still ten, nay, fifteen, perhaps upwards of twenty, Papists to one Protestant. Nor can they see any prospect of its being otherwise; few Papists being brought over to our Church, notwithstanding all the methods which have been used, while many Protestants are seduced from it.

2. Yet they cannot but earnestly desire, that all the Papists were convinced of their errors. How much would this redound to the glory of God, who willeth all to come to the knowledge of his truth! How greatly would it advantage their own souls both in this world and in the world to come! What an advantage would it be to the kingdom in general, to be no longer divided against itself, to have that grand cause of contention removed, and all its inhabitants of one heart and one mind! And how highly would it advance both the honour and interest of our gracious Sovereign, to have all his subjects cordially united together, thinking and speaking the same thing!

3. Why then is not this desirable end pursued with a vigour proportionable to its importance? Is it because we despair of any success,—because we think it impossible to be attained? But why should we imagine it to be impossible? A common and plausible answer is, Because the Papists are so bigoted to their Clergy; believing all that they affirm.

however contrary both to Scripture and reason, and doing all that they direct, whom they generally believe to be the holiest and wisest of men.

4. Undoubtedly this is a considerable difficulty in the way : And yet I cannot think it is unsurmountable. Still I conceive it is possible to convince all the Papists, provided there are proper instruments for the work. And what instruments are so proper as the Clergy ? not only as they are in every place, distributed through the whole nation, and always ready on the spot for the work ; but likewise as it more immediately belongs to them ; as it is no inconsiderable branch of their business who are peculiarly set apart to “ watch over the souls of men as they that must give account.”

5. But what way can the Clergy take, with any probability of success ? There is one way, and one only ; one that will (not probably, but) infallibly succeed. If this way is taken, I am willing to stake my life upon the success of it. And it is a plain, simple way, such as may be taken by any man, though but of a small capacity. For it requires no peculiar depth of understanding, no extraordinary height of learning ; but only a share of common sense, and a honest, upright heart.

6. It was observed that the grand difficulty of the work lies, in the strong attachment of the Papists to their Clergy. Here therefore we are to begin ; we are to strike at the root ; and if this bigotry be but removed, whatever error or superstition is built upon it will of course fall to the ground.

Now, this may be effectually done thus : The Papists themselves allow that one set of Clergy were holier and wiser even than their own, namely, the Apostles ; they allow these both to have lived and preached better than the present Clergy even of the Roman Church.

Here, therefore, is the short and sure method. Let all the Clergy of the Church of Ireland only *live* like the Apostles, and *preach* like the Apostles, and the thing is done.

The Romans, on the same ground that they prefer the Apostles before their own Clergy, will then prefer ours before them ; and when they once do this, when we have carried this point, when their attachment to our Clergy is stronger than that to their own, they will be convinced by hundreds, till there is not a Roman left in the kingdom of Ireland.

7. If it be asked, But how did the Apostles live and preach ? I answer, (not to descend to particulars,) as to their inward

life, if I may so speak, they "lived the life which is hid with Christ in God."

"They were crucified with Christ. Nevertheless they lived; yet not they, but Christ lived in them." So that each of them could say, "The life which I now live in the flesh," even in this mortal body, "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

And this faith continually wrought by love, that "love of God" which was "shed abroad in their hearts," and was a perennial "fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life."

By this loving faith their hearts were purified from anger, from pride, from all vile affections, from the love of money, of power, of pleasure, of ease, from the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life; all their "affections being set on things above, not on things of the earth." In a word, that "mind" was "in them which was in Christ Jesus."

Let but this mind be in every Clergyman of our Church, and Popery will vanish out of the kingdom.

8. As to the outward life of the Apostles, it was, in the general, holy and unblamable in all things. Herein did they exercise themselves day and night, with regard to every word and action, "to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man." And their continual ground of "rejoicing was this, the testimony of their conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity they had had their conversation in the world."

They were temperate in all things. They denied themselves, and took up their cross daily. They "kept under their bodies, and brought them into subjection," even in the midst of distresses and persecutions, "lest by any means, after they had preached to others, they themselves should have become castaways."

They were, in every respect, burning and shining lights; they went about doing good as they had opportunity, doing good of every kind, and in every possible degree, to all men. They abstained from all appearance of evil; they overcame evil with good. If their enemy hungered, they fed him; if he thirsted, they gave him drink; and, by patiently continuing so to do, "heaped coals of fire upon his head," and melted his hardness into love.

In fine, it was their meat and drink to do the will of their Father which was in heaven. And hence whatsoever they did, whether in word or deed, they did all to the glory of God.

Let every Clergyman of our Church live thus, and in a short time there will not be a Papist in the nation.

9. As to the preaching of the Apostles, with regard to the matter of it, they preached Jesus, "the Author and Finisher of our faith," having "determined not to know anything, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." They preached Jesus Christ as "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." They declared, "Other foundation" of morality, religion, holiness, happiness, "can no man lay." All they spoke, either in public or private, centred in this one point, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

More particularly, they preached that "a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law;" that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness."

10. They preached farther, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" except he be "born from above," born not only of water, but "of the Holy Ghost;" and that "the" present "kingdom of God is not meats and drinks," lies not in externals of any kind, "but righteousness," the image of God on the heart, "peace," even a peace that passeth all understanding, "and joy in the Holy Ghost," whereby they rejoiced with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

They declared "that he that is" thus "born of God doth not commit sin;" that "he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not;" but that as Christ who hath called him is holy, so is he holy in all manner of conversation.

11. As to the manner of their preaching, they spoke with authority, as speaking not their own word, but the word of Him that sent them, and "by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." They were "not as many that cauponize the word of God," debase and adulterate it with foreign mixtures, "but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, spake they in Christ." They approved themselves the Ministers of God, "in much patience, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge," knowing all their flock by name, all their circumstances, all their wants; "by long-suffering, never weary of well-doing, by kindness, by love

unfeigned; by the word of truth, by the power of God" attending it, "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left." Hence they were "instant in season, out of season," being never afraid of the faces of men, never ashamed of Christ or of his words, even before an adulterous and sinful generation. They went on unmoved through "honour and dishonour," through "evil report and good report." They regarded not father or mother, or wife or children, or houses or lands, or ease or pleasure; but, having this single end in view, to save their own souls, and those that heard them, they "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they might" make full proof of their ministry, so that they might "finish their course with joy, and testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Let all the Right Reverend the Bishops, and the Reverend the Clergy, only walk by this rule,—let them thus live, and thus testify, with one heart and one voice, the gospel of the grace of God, and every Papist within these four seas will soon acknowledge the truth as it is in Jesus.

THE ADVANTAGE

OF THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

OVER

THOSE OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

I LAY this down as an undoubted truth:—The more the doctrine of any Church agrees with the Scripture, the more readily ought it to be received. And, on the other hand, the more the doctrine of any Church differs from the Scripture, the greater cause we have to doubt of it.

2. Now, it is a known principle of the Church of England, that nothing is to be received as an article of faith, which is