

PROPOSAL

For Civilising the Highlands, by Erecting of Schools there ; And Providing of Ministers to be sent thither : With some Reasons perswading thereunto.

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AS habitual Criminals seldom consider their Guilt ; so, for the most part, other men do not think aright on the greatest Evils which are very common : whereas if the same Mischiefs were rare, they would surprise, alarm and awaken, to the providing of remeed for them.

This is what has occasioned, that the Reduction of the Highlands to a Right Mind and Order, seems Reserved to the present King, who has provided such Fences against Popery and Prophanity ; and for the safe enjoyment of Property both as to our Persons and Estates. For all former Projects, whether by planting the Highlands with Loland Colonies, or making strict Laws against them ; have laboured of this fundamental defect, namely, that the Inhabitants were not, by fit methods, duly prepared with instruction of their Duty.

How much, the knowledge of Religion, does conduce to susceptibility of Government ; and on the contrary, the ignorance thereof, does, in great measure, render other methods abortive, appears not only from the nature of the thing, but likewise by experience in parallel instances. Thus the honourable Mr. Boyls causing print the Bible in the Irish Languages, and the famous Mr. Eliots Labours amongst the Americans near the English Plantations, who could not either be cajolled or cudgelled to Discipline till they became Christians ; and the noble Marquis of Argiles success in reforming his own Country, &c. have had much more, lasting effects, then the severest Laws could actuat : while, on the other hand, the wilde Raperees. barbarous Cossacks, our own wild Highlanders, &c. observe no Rules, except what is the immediat effect of Force.

Hence, they will not mis to continue unhappy in themselves, and disturbers of their Neighbours Peace ; and by their Atheism, Idolatry and Prophanity, help to draw down Judgments on the Nation ; and the Laws made against them will be of no use, where they think they have opportunity to evade them : unless they be instructed in the Truth.

In order hereunto, the full settlement of Gospel Ministers among them, were indeed the fittest mean. But this will be impracticable for several years, in respect of the scarcity of Labcurers having the Language of that Country. And therefore, the next best method, both to prepare them in some Knowledge, which may thereafter be improved both for their Spiritual and Temporal Interests ; as also, to sow the Seeds for Students from among themselves, who may, besides, come to be happy Instruments in that great Work : Is, that there be Free-Schools erected in convenient places ; the Masters whereof, may likewise serve for Catechists to the Neighbours round about, both before and after Ministers are established in these bounds. As also, that persons having the Highland Tongue be maintained at Colledges and Professions of Divinity.

But this cannot be done, 1. Without Fonds for carrying it on. 2. Unless the Application thereof to fit persons be lodged in proper hands. For it is not to be imagined that the Highlanders themselves, for the most part, will be at the Expense of breeding Youth, or will execute the Law concerning School-Masters ; and the distance of place excludes the influence of others who might prevail with them thereanent.

The following Scheme, is therefore humbly Proposed to the consideration of his Majesties high Commissioner and the Estates of Parliament, Viz.

1. That there be a voluntar Contribution thorow all the Parishes in the Kingdom, on the first Sabbath after yearly, for the space of three years, to the Uses after-mentioned.

2. That all vacant Stipends in the Highlands, or adjacent Shires whereof a part is Highlands ; except in so far as the Presbytry of the Bounds shall find them necessary for pious Uses within the respective Parishes : be applyed in the same manner, for the future.

3. For the faithful administration of these Fonds :

That the General Assembly, or their Commission, name a person to whom the general Collection shall be payed in ; and who shall lay the same out again to the respective Synods after-mentioned, in such manner as the Assembly or their commission shall appoint : And failing thereof, his Majesties Privy Council.

That each Synod, by themselves or their Committee ; and they failing, a Quorum of the Commissioners of Supply within the respective Shires ; do name a Collector to uplift the vacant Stipends within their Bounds, and to receive their Quota of the general Collections : who is to expend such Share thereof, to the persons, and in the places, and after the manner, as they shall appoint ; for erecting and maintaining of Schools in the Highlands, and breeding of Students, who have that Tongue, to Theology, for being Ministers there.

That these Collectors be lyable to their several Constituents, or the Agent of the Kirk calling them to accompt before the Judge Ordinary : and failing thereof, to the Council ; or such as they shall nominat for that effect.

That

149 That School-Masters being constitute, all Magistrats and Commanders of Forces, particularly the Governour of *Inverlochic*, do protect them according to Law: and the High-land-Cheiffs, Landlords, Captains and Leaders, be lyable for their Dependents who injure them, or Preachers sent thither, or Ministers to be settled there, as for Thieves.

That the *Superplus* of the Fonds (if any be) shall be employed by the direction foresaid, for buying of Bibles, and Books of practical Divinity; to be distribute *gratis*, particularly to such as the foresaid School-masters, Preachers or Ministers, shall think expedient.

It is confidently hoped that no good man will make any *Obstruction* hereunto, either upon account that the Southern Shires as being *remote*, are less concerned in the voluntary *Contribution*; or because *Patrons* in the Northern Shires, have an Interest in the Vacant Stipends. For; Not to mention, in the first place, that whoever marrs so good a Work, is in a manner, *chargeable* with all the Injuries to GOD and Man that will be the consequences of the neglect of it: or in the next place, That as all the Nation is *one Body*; So the *Patrons* within the same Shires, are in a more particular Society: Or, in the 3^d place, that as there has been general Contributions for *Strangers* or *private men*, whereas this is for a *great Body*, who may be called our *elder Brethren*, being the antient race of *Scots*: So there is a precedent in the 24th Act Parl. 1690 granting the Vacant Stipends in the Synod of *Argile* to be employed by the Synod, for training up of Youths at Schools and Colledges; for ever. It is manifestly, not only the *Duty*, but likewise the *Interest*, of the Nation in *general*, and every Subject of it in *particular*, to concur therein.

As to *Duty*. The Law of God and Nature oblidges us to rescue such as are *ready to perish*. Does not *Humanity* bind those who are able to assist their Neighbours, in a *sinking Ship* or a *burning house*? And, if we are not to hide our selves from our Brothers Ox or Ass fallen down by the Way, Deut. 22, 4th. much less from his Soul that is dropping down to the Pit of Perdition; these People being *destroyed for lack of Knowledge*, Hof. 4. 6. Is not this a *Christian Charity* and Honourable *Generosity* to the Nobler part, the Soul that wants the *Bread of Life*? and it is an express *Command*; *Let no man seek his own but anothers Wealth*, 1 Cor. 10. 24. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others: let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*. Phil. 2. 4, 5. Will not this take off a *National Guilt*, that has been, hitherto, in want of *Zeal* for GOD and *Pity* towards men that are so near us; when other Churches have spent a *Treasure of Money and Lives* for converting those that are in the fardest parts of the Earth?

And as to *Patrons* in particular. They, in the first place, have no right to the Vacancies for their *own behove*. In the next place, this cedes, consequentially, to the good of the Paroch: and is only after their own *peculiar Necessities*, are relieved. In the 3^d place, as this is only *temporary*; So its known how much of the Vacant Stipends *perish* in the Tenents hands; and if they be mixed with *private Fortunes*, it is *Sacrilege*, and proves a great *remora* to the planting of Churches: *Sed interest reipublice ne quis res sua male utatur*; So that the Parliament may very well command, for a time, a *proper use* for them; as to which there are many precedents in paralel Cafes. In the 4. place, it is the Patron and his Successors own Interest. Which leads to the next head,

As to *Interest*. It is plain in these particulars, 1. The Nation will, thereby, be exonerated of their *Duty* to, about, a third part of their Brethren; and thereby *avert the impending Judgments*, which amongst other causes are imminent for this oversight heretofore 2. In time of peace, they will be liberat of the Beggars & Sojourners who come from thence and of the occasion of Cesses that are partly imposed for maintaining Forces against Depredations; and in time of *Troubles*; there will not be such hazard of the Highlanders, watching all Opportunities of *Ravaging*, and being *Revenged*, wherever they come: 3 It is notour how great a Destruction their Robberies are to the Native Product of Cattel, how great Expenses there are laid out upon Processes thereanent; and how great Improvements might be made by the Highlanders, both in Cattel, Corns, Wool, Trades and Manufactories; considering the advantagioufness of their *Situations, Harbours, Numbers, &c*: which as it would advance the Trade and strength of the Nation, so they could relieve, in a greater proportion; of the publick Burdens thereof, 4 The Highlands are common Nestels of Rebels, Priests, Murderers &c, which defeats, in great Measure, the good Laws made against Popery, Prophaniry and other Crimes; Whereas if the Gospel obtained amongst them, many of them are known to be most affectionat and serious, how soon they are come to know aright the GOD that made them; and thereby in case of a sudden storm from Papists or otherwise (whereof the good GOD in his Mercy avert the Prognosticks) this place may prove like the Valleys and Mountains of *Piedmount*, a Shelter and Sanctuary for many against the rage of Persecution, 5 If these men were reduced to *Probity* and *Frugality*, whereof this is the only mean as stopping the River at the Fountain; then would not only Ministers be safe to go amongst them for perfecting the Work; But likewise considering their numerousness and valour, they would be a good Nurserie for the Kings Armies, and our *Farraign Plantations*, when Providence allows us such; whereas it is not unknown how much *Rebellion* and *Debaucherie* has been dangerous to our