

But should any of our Christian brethren feel surprised at the above statement, a due consideration of the following things, we hope, may remove it. The inhabitants of this isle may almost all of them be styled refugees of one kind or another. Of these, some fled from the United States, for their loyalty to their British Sovereign. These were not likely to bring much religion with them from a scene of political strife and bloodshed. Others fled from their mother country, to escape the horrors of imprisonment for debt, or for higher crimes. A part fled from threatened want, or in hope of gaining worldly riches—a hope seldom realized. And of a great number who came from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, of which your petitioners form a part, some were involved in Popish darkness before they left their native country, and still remain so; and with regard to others, we may say the light of the Gospel had but dimly shone in their native Highlands before they emigrated, many of them could read none, and having no teachers in their native tongue, they remain still in the same state of deplorable ignorance of that truth, which is able to make them wise unto salvation; and many of their children remain untaught to the present day. But as worldly motives of one kind or other seem to have drawn most of the settlers here, it has pleased Providence to give them in general but a scanty portion of the same. But had it been given in abundance, it would, with many, have been consumed upon their lusts; for God was not in all their thoughts, and no man cared for their souls. No church, Established or Dissenting, sent a messenger of good tidings after those few sheep that had wandered from their own folds, to direct their souls to the rich pastures of redeeming love, or comfort their minds with the hopes and joys of a better world, whilst they were enduring every fatigue, and suffering every privation in the present, of which human nature is susceptible. Consider also how long some of the settlers here have been without a preached Gospel, and some till lately without a Bible, and not yet able to read it, or any other book in any language whatever. Some have been upon the island near twenty years, others thirty, some forty, and a few nearly fifty years, in this state of deplorable want of almost all means of religious instruction; and yet they are retaining the name of Protestant, but at the same time knowing nothing of real Protestantism but the name. Some born upon the island, we have been told, and cannot disbelieve it, have arrived at the age of twenty without hearing a Protestant sermon; and some have forsaken the faith of their forefathers, merely from ignorance of its noble principles, and of the absurdity of the Romish faith, which they have now embraced.

From what we have stated, (and much more might be add-