

It has often been asked how it was that a people so faithful to God as have been the Irish nation has been permitted by the Almighty to suffer so much! How is it that so many of the Irish people have been obliged as it were to leave that land which they love so well? The sufferings of Ireland have been proposed as an enigma or as a proof of the errors of Catholicism, by those who know not the workings of God's providence; by those who have not faith. And to merely human thought, it is strange that with a people who love their native land as none but the Irish do, there can hardly be seen a spot on earth where an Irishman cannot be found. The limited geographical position of the Country is assigned as a natural reason, but such an explanation would apply with equal force to other lands, and the Irish emigration exceeds far that from other countries. Besides it has been demonstrated time and time again, that, were her waste lands reclaimed, Ireland could sustain a population of from 15 to 20 million, and yet its actual population is but five million and a half, and six million are in other climes. The persecutions to which Ireland has been subjected have been a cause alledged. But the greatest emigration has been since Ireland by emancipation was in a measure freed, when the day was dawning on the dark night which was passing as a cloud, when the pall was lifted in a measure from the land. It is again asserted that the famine is the reason. A cause of leaving, to many indeed it was, but thousands left that had no need, and the Irish emigration exceeded that of other lands long before the famine. No complete memorial has been transmitted of the particulars of emigration in earlier years. We know, however, that in the last two weeks of August, 1773, 35,000 Irish emigrants landed in the city of Philadelphia, and that numbers of British vessels containing mostly Irish emigrants sailed for America that year. It is true that the great period of emigration was in the ten years from 1851 to 1861, when 1,646,028 souls left Ireland. But after all, the Irish did not cause the famine. If I seek the reason I find it not in social or political, but secondary causes. Nations and men are the instruments in the hands of God. I seek it, and I find it in "the great first cause" least understood by finite beings: in God's will to make known the Gospel of his Son. "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid!" Theirs are to be the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things. Their