

LETTER

TO

JOHN WILLISON,

ON A

Page in his Synodical Sermon, con-
cerning **ILLITERATE MI-**
NISTERS.

*led captivity Captive, and gave Gifts unto
Men.—And he gave some Pastors and Teach-
ers, for the edifying of the Body of Christ,
ill we all come, &c. Eph. iv. 7.—14.
And ye are complete in him, Col. ii. 8, 9, 10.*



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A

LETTER to Mr. John Wil- lison.

SIR,

IT no way surprises me, that when the Cry of *the Danger of the Church* is popular, you should appear as the Author of a Sermon or Pamphlet bearing that Title; but I confess I cannot so easily understand how you imagine that your Church is in Danger from a Sect, which you say, is *lately risen among us, who decry the Knowledge of Human Arts and Sciences, and of the Languages, as unnecessary for Gospel Ministers, and therefore make Choice of illiterate Men for that Office.*

This Complaint of illiterate Ministers would have come more seasonably to your Church, when they depos'd Masters *Colvil* and *Ramsay*, and licenced *John Gillone*, than at this Day when your Sect is every where complaining of the Church's Danger from Men, in Respect of whom you your selves are illiterate Men. Your Fathers, the Covenanters that abjured Independency, depos'd two able Ministers and exceeding peaceable Members of Society, and set

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set

set up an illiterate Man to preach the Gospel but the Men of Letters, of whom you stand in fear, have only declar'd a few turbulent Members of their Society, to be none of that Society of which they pretended to be a considerable Part, while they would not walk orderly in. And you cannot charge these Men of Letters with the Crime of palming illiterate Men upon you.

The Sect, that makes Choice of illiterate Men for Ministers, is none of your Society; their Ministers are not, pretend not to be, Ministers of your Church, and they impose the Ministry upon none. It cannot be easily believ'd, that you are seeking to promote the Welfare of that Sect; in the Warning you give of Danger of illiterate Ministers; and as little can it be perceived, what is the Danger to your Church from such insignificant useles Persons as you represent them to be. What has you to fear from such Men as have neither Skill nor Power to handle against an Adversary, only Weapon they pretend to use? Or is your Church in Danger from the Weakness of Adversaries? Yet if, while you are giving warning of your Church's Danger, you are also good as to point out to that Sect its Danger likewise; that Sect is certainly obliged to you.

After all, who knows but perhaps you have secret Fear, that thro' these illiterate Ministers your Craft may be in Danger of being set at nought; and, while you are far below the prevailing Party in the Knowledge of Letters and seek to excel in popular Preaching, you may someway rival you in that among

People that know not Letters, on whom you have the greatest Influence? Yet I am of Opinion you need have no great fear on this Head; when I consider the Subject of their Preaching, *The Kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom that's not of this World*, which can never take with the Multitude, as does the Preaching of your covenanted Kingdom; and when I think on the Strictness of their Discipline, to which your Followers, that can be esteemed good Christians at an easier Rate, will not easily submit; especially when they must lose all their Esteem among you as Christians, and become the Objects of universal Contempt the Moment they submit to it.

Perhaps you have a Suspicion, that as it sometimes happens to the best Fencers in Duelling, even so it may possibly fare with you in a Conflict with these same illiterate Men. A literate Friend of yours, for so we must call you, made a scornful Attack, not long ago, upon some of these Ministers, and all the Authority he could display, all the Grimace he was Master of, was not sufficient to bear them down; impudent Fellows that they were! They handled their Weapon in Defence, till he thought he had enough of it, if he be capable of such a Thought. But you are a little wiser: Your Way, as far as it is above Board, is to show in your *conciò ad clerum*, That the Church is in danger from a Set of Men, to whom it is a great Loss they want Letters.

It had been still a Question with me if you indeed apprehended any Danger to your Church from these Men, if your Insinuation of a Comparison

parison to *Julian*, that infamous Apostate, he
 not betrayed your inward Fear or Inclination
 to fill others with the greatest Fear of Danger
 from that Airth; that all, whom your Compar-
 son may touch, may be abhorred as Haters of
Zion, and that none, who would be recko-
 ned Lovers of *Zion*, may join Issue with any
 whom you have been able to class with
 that infamous Apostate. That this good End
 may be reached, you take care to make the
Julian no better than he was. You say, the
 Devil learn'd *Julian* to take away the Main-
 tenance of Ministers, and put down the
 Schools of Learning; that he was guilty of ro-
 bing of Ministers and Schools of Learning of
 their Maintenance and Revenues; and hereupon
 you agree with the Observe of your Fathers and
 Predecessors, that he did more Mischief to the
 Church and her Ministers than the bloody *Diocle-
 sian*; and you give this Reason for it, That here-
 by he hindred a Succession of able Ministers in
 the Church, while, when *Dioclesian* took many
 eminent Men away, there still arose others
 in their stead. The Inference must be, that
 the Church is in greater Danger from the Sect
 that you represent as joining Issue with the
Julian, than from the most bloody Persecutor.
 This ancient Observe, and the Reason you
 bring to support it, comes very natively from
 Clergymen; but you must excuse People of any
 other Character, if they cannot perceive the
 Justness of it. For they cannot think, that the
 Church and her Ministers enjoy'd any of their
 Things by *Dioclesian*, whereof you say *Julian*
 robbed them; and if the taking away the Main-
 tenance

nance that they had not under *Dioclesian*;
 and a Succession of able Ministers in the
 Time of *Julian*, which the taking away of
 their Lives also could not hinder in the Time
 of *Dioclesian*; it must be infer'd, that these who
 desired the Office of the Ministry in *Julian's* Time
 were Men of a very different Sort from these
 that desired it in the Time of *Dioclesian*. It
 may be a Question, if *Julian* deprived the
 Christian Ministry of any Thing the Gospel
 require of them; and it has been also observed, that
Constantine did more Harm to the Church
 than *Julian* and *Dioclesian* were capable to do
 by their different Ways of Opposition to it:
 for that which ambitious covetous Ministers
 reckon to be their Interest, is not the Interest
 of the Profession of the Name of Christ. It is
 certain, no true Clergyman will join Issue so
 with *Julian*, as to declare these Things un-
 necessary for them, of which he deprived them;
 but no Lover of *Zion* or the true Church, if not
 abused by the Clergy, can be offended, that their
 covetousness and Ambition is not gratified.
 Your Sort of Men applaud *Constantine*, whose
 moral Character is as disagreeable to the Rules
 of the Gospel as *Julian's*; and *Jovian*, a de-
 bauch'd Man, but a firm Friend to that Sort
 of Christianity and Christian Ministry that was
 in those Days, is as famous among you as *Julian*
 is infamous.

Because it may tend to your Instruction, I shall
 take the Trouble to transcribe a Passage concern-
 ing *Julian* from an Author, for whom I own
 have a great Regard: Because I think he
 employ'd his Letters to better Purpose a-
 gainst

gainst Infidelity, and less to the Prejudice of Christianity, than any Writer I have seen in this Age; but he is no Clergyman. The Passage is as follows.

— When Emperors were once become Christians, the Clergy received such Power and other worldly Comfort from their Authority, that they could not think of living without, and therefore lost all Patience when *Julian* was advanced to the Empire. They did and said against him every Thing that Rage and Hatred could inspire, and fix'd upon him the Surname of Apostate, to render him odious, which he stuck by him to this Day. *Julian* had been differently educated as well at Pagan as Christian Universities, and at one Time had Heathens, and at another Christians for his Tutors: But I never saw it prov'd that he adher'd to Christianity, at a Time he might with Safety have refused it. It must be confessed that as soon as he was Master of his Choice he made the worst, and unfortunately embraced Paganism, because it was the Religion of his Ancestors.

But let him be called Heathen or Apostate or what the Clergy pleases, to judge of him impartially from History, we must own, that he was a virtuous and gallant Prince, endued with Wit and Humanity, and more Steadiness and Moderation than any of his Christian Predecessors. In his Letters he appears to have been altogether to his People, and one of them I will take Leave to insert here, which will make us perfectly well acquainted with the tolerating Temper of that Prince, and at the same Time point

the real Cause of the Clergy's Animosities
against him.'

Julian to the Bostrens.

Should have thought, indeed, that the Galilean Leaders would have esteem'd themselves more indebted to me than to him, who preceded me in the Administration of the Empire: In his Time many of them suffered Exile, Persecution and Imprisonment, Multitudes of those whom in their Religion they term Heretics, were put to the Sword; insomuch, that Samosata, Cyzicum, Paphlagonia, Bythia, Galatia, and many other Countries, whose Walls were levelled with the Earth. The just Reverse of this has been observed in my Time. The Exiles have been recalled, and the Prohibited restored to the lawful Possessions of their Estates: But to that Height of Fury and Destruction are this People arrived, that being no longer contented the Privilege to tyrannize over one another, or persecute either their own Sectaries, or the Religions of the lawful Church, they fill all with Rage, and leave no Stone unturned, no Opportunity unemploy'd, of raising Tumult and Sedition. So little Regard have they to true Piety, so little Obedience to our Laws and Constitutions; however humane and tolerating. For still do we determine and steadily resolve never to suffer one of them involuntarily to be drawn unto our Altars. *** As for the People indeed, they appear driven to these

these Riots and Seditious by these among
 them whom they call Clericks; who are
 enrag'd to find themselves restrain'd in the
 of their former Power and intemperate R
 *** They can no longer act the Magistrate,
 civil Judge, nor assume Authority to m
 People's Wills, supplant Relations, possess the
 selves of other Men's Patrimonies, by spec
 Pretences, transfer all into their own Possess
 For this Reason I have thought fit, by t
 publick Edict, to forewarn the People of t
 Sort, that they raise no more Commotions,
 gather in a riotous Manner about their se
 tious Clericks, in Defiance of the Magistra
 who has been insulted, and in Danger of be
 ston'd by these incited Rabbles. In their Cong
 gations they may notwithstanding assemble as t
 please, and crowd about their Leaders perfo
 ing Worship, receiving Doctrine, and pray
 according as they are by them taught and
 ducted; but if with any Tendency to Sedit
 let them beware, how they hearken or
 Assent, and remember 'tis at their Peril,
 by these Means they are secretly wrought
 to Muriny and Insurrection. *** Live there
 in Peace and Quietness! Neither spitefully
 posing or injuriously treating one another.
 misguided People of the new Way, beware
 your Side! And you of the ancient establis
 Church, injure not your Neighbours and Fel
 citizens, who are enthusiastically led a
 in Ignorance and Mistake, rather than with
 sign or Malice! 'Tis by Discourse and Rea
 not by Blows, Insults, or Violence, that
 are to be informed of Truth, and convinc'd

error. Again therefore, and again, I enjoin and charge the zealous Followers of the true Religion, no ways to injure, molest or affront the Galilean People.

'These were the Sentiments of this Emperor, whom the Clergy make such a Monster, and whose every Clemency they make a Handle of, for Slander; Complaining, that by his Mildness and unlimited Toleration, he had done more Prejudice to the Church than others with Persecution. He was a 'politick Prince, yet the Clergy proved too hard for him, and never ceased plotting against him, till at last, to the great Joy of the Orthodox, he was assassinated by one of his own Christian Soldiers.'

Thus far my Author. And as his Story tells, if the Devil was teaching *Julian* this Method with the Christians of those Days, you may see he was not his only Scholar at that Time: For, according to the Scripture-account of the Devil's Teaching and Influence, the Heathens, whom *Julian* was restraining from injuring, molesting or affronting the Christians, and not they only but the Christian Clergy, especially, seem to have been very good Proficients at his School, for the Time they had been at it, and *Julian* did not think they deserved to be so treated by their fellow Disciples of another Class. The Mystery of Iniquity began to work, even among the illiterate Men that were set apart to the Office of the Ministry, in the Days of the Apostles; but when they got these Things from *Constantine*, that *Julian* took from them, you see how they behaved.

Your Warning of the Danger of an illiterate Ministry begins with an Advice to your Brethren, to be as the well furnished Scribe, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure Things new and old. Where you point to our Lord's saying to his Disciples, after he had been instructing them in the Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven by Parables, and enquiring if they understood them *Mat. xiii. 51, 52.* When they answered that they did, he says to them, *Therefore every Scribe, which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a Man which is an Householder, which bringeth forth out of his Treasure Things new and old.* You give us some Explication of this Text, so far as you quote it; the Scribes Treasure you say, is Stock of necessary and useful Knowledge, out of which Variety of Provision may be brought for the Entertainment of Peoples Souls: *The Priest's Lips should preserve Knowledge.* But this Explication is more general, and less clear than the Text it self, as it stands in Connexion with the Context: The Text says, *Therefore every Scribe which is instructed (or taught) unto the Kingdom of Heaven.* And you also go about to enlarge the Text of the *Old Testament* that you cite in Confirmation of your Gloss, by forbearing to mention the latter Part of it, which, as it stands in that Context, *Malachi ii. Chap.* would have told what Knowledge it is that the *Priest's Lips should preserve.* If by the Law there you will not understand only *the Law of Truth, the Law of the Lord;* but will extend it to signify the Law of the *Roman Empire,* and the municipal Laws of the Nations, then you ought

ought to have given that Law a place among the Sciences, your Hand-maids to Scripture Knowledge : And I am sure it deserved a place in your Catalogue as well as any of them. Next, for an Explication of *Things New and Old*, you have a Variety of Provision for the Entertainment of Peoples Souls, which Variety you distribute under two Heads. 1. Their Souls must be entertained with Scripture-knowledge, the Knowledge of God, his Perfections, the Mystery of the Trinity and of Jesus Christ our Mercy and Sacrifice. Here you are a little more particular, but take care never to mention *the Kingdom of Heaven*, of which the Text speaks. The Peoples Souls must be entertained with the Knowledge of humane Arts and Sciences, and of the Languages, especially these in which the Bible was first written. And here again you are more copious than on the first Head ; you have a great Variety here of Provision for the Entertainment of Peoples Souls ; History, Philosophy, Mathematicks, Geography, Astronomy and Polemick Divinity. And thus we see your Sense of *the Things New and Old*, which serves to shew that illiterate Men cannot be *the Scribes*, of whom the Lord there speaks. But after all you have said, the illiterate may find you very lame, both in quoting and explaining the Words of this Text, that you have wrested this Scripture in a manner as to bring a Sort of *Scribes* out that was never in it. The *Scribe*, of whom the Text speaks, is a *Scribe instructed in or of the Kingdom of Heaven* ; but this is not

once mentioned in the *Instruction* of your Scribe
The Things New and Old that the Text speak
of, are the Things of *the Kingdom of Heaven*
which *began to be spoken by the Lord himself*
and were preached by his Apostles to the Na-
tions, and committed to writing in the Books of
the New Testament. These were the Scribes
whom Christ told the Jews he would send to
them, Mat. xxiii. 34, 35. And when they came
to them, their Doctors perceived that they were
unlearned and ignorant Men, but took Know-
ledge of them, that they had been with Jesus
Acts iv. 13. as the Jews before marvelled
when they heard himself teach, how he knew
the Scriptures (*γραμματα* comp. 2 Tim. iii. 15)
being unlearned, John vii. 15. They know
could read the Scriptures as other Jews did
the Synagogues, but how could the Son of
Carpenter, without the Education of the Scribes
take upon him to do their Office; or, in a
modern Stile, jump from his Trade into
Pulpit? Now these Scribes, whom he first
instructed and sent forth to make out the New
Testament Revelation, and commit it to writ-
ing, said none other Things than these words
the Prophets and Moses did say should come
Acts xxvi. 22. And thus the Things brought
forth out of the Treasure committed to the
Earthen Vessels were New, and they were
These Scribes brought forth the Knowledge
the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ
that had been of old shewed thro' a Vain
Moses and the Prophets. These Stewards
the Mysteries of God, spake the Wisdom of God
that was hid in Mystery, and not the Wis-

of this World, nor of the Princes of this World
who knew not the Wisdom of God that was
hid in Mystery; which Wisdom these Scribes
spake, not in the Words which Mans Wisdom
teacheth; but with great Plainness and Sim-
plicity took the Words of the Holy Ghost in
the Old Testament, from a Translation then
in common Use, and applied them to the Things
of the Kingdom of Heaven in the New Testa-
ment, according to the prime Intent of these
Words, which was revealed to them by the Ho-
ly Ghost that endited them. The Lord spake
by Figures concerning the Kingdom of Heaven,
and explained these to his Scribes; and the
New Testament Revelation, which he gave
them to bring forth to the World, is the plain
Declaration of the same Things that had been
foreshewed of Old in the dark Prophecies and
Figures of the Old Testament: Wherefore he
says, Every Scribe instructed unto the King-
dom of Heaven, bringeth forth out of his Trea-
sure Things New and Old. Whosoever is skil-
led in this Wisdom, that's taught in the New
Testament, so as to be able to teach it to others,
is now the Christian Scribe; and what a Dif-
ference is there betwixt this and the Know-
ledge of your Scribe? Which is the Wisdom
of Words, the Wisdom of this World, the
Wisdom of the Jewish Scribe, and of the Dis-
puter of this World, and Mans Wisdom, which
is Foolishness with God, and was manifested by
him to be Foolishness, before he brought forth his
Wisdom that was hid in Mystery, to the View of
the World, in that teaching, which was a stum-
pling Block to the Jewish Scribe, and Foolishness to
the

the *Grecian* Disputers and Orators; but unto all whom he called, the *Wisdom of God* and the *Power of God*. Whatever Difference the Scriptures make betwixt these two kinds of Wisdom, you still affirm the *Wisdom of the Jewish Scribe* and the *Wisdom of the Disputer of this World*, is a good Hand-maid to Scripture Knowledge, and serves to promote the Wellfare of your Church. Your Reason is as wide as the Explication of your Text. For, say you, an ignorant Ministry is a Reproach to any Church. If you be punning on the Word *Ignorant*, and punning be reasoning, you have hit it; but if you indeed say, that Ignorance of the humane Arts and Sciences before mentioned is a Reproach to any Church; this will need another Reason to confirm it. I hope you do not mean, that the Man *Christ Jesus* (suffer the Expression because 'tis Scripture) the Head of his Body the Church, (without which he could not be its Head) is a Reproach to that Church, because he never was taught nor did teach in his Church, these Arts and Sciences taught in your Schools, where in you would have your Expectants to be trained for Scripture Knowledge. Neither can I persuade my self, that you think the *Fishermen of Galilee*, who were not skill'd in these Sciences, were a Reproach to the Church that built on their Doctrine, or *Paul* a Jewish Scribe, but a *Babler* at *Athens*, where *Jesus* sent him, when he did not allow him to stay and preach in *Jerusalem*, the Place where his Learning would have serv'd him best, and who came not with Excellency of Speech.

of Man's Wisdom, declaring the Testimony of
 God; yea, whatever Force was in his inspired
 Writings, some that were Christians and Teach-
 ers in his Day, reckoned *his bodily Presence*
weak, and his Speech contemptible. By your
 Skill in ecclesiastick History, you can tell us, if
 the Ministers, that the Apostles left behind
 them in the Churches, and who lived in the
 Age next to them, were generally Men skill'd
 in the Arts and Sciences, of which you give
 us a Catalogue; and if they were not for the
 most Part knowing in those Sciences, I have
 Reason to think you will not call them a Re-
 proach to the Church. Neither can I believe
 that you think it a Reproach to the Christian
 Law-giver, that, in condescending on the parti-
 cular Qualifications of that Ministry, which he
 instituted to continue to the End of the World,
 he does not so much as mention the Knowledge
 of these Arts and Sciences, the Ignorance of
 which, you say, is a Reproach to any Church.
 And therefore I must reckon you mean,
 Churches have been reproach'd with this Ig-
 norance of their Ministers. This is true in
 fact; the *Disputers of the World* laugh'd at
 the preaching of the Gospel, till there came
 up a philosophical Ministry; but then they de-
 parted from the *Simplicity that is in Christ, and*
corrupted the Gospel, and so they gain'd that
 Esteem in the World, which they could not
 have till *the Glory departed* from them. If it
 be your Mind, that your Expectants should
 avoid the old Reproach, and seek that Esteem
 which has come in Place of it, by qualifying them-
 selves for the Ministry with these Sciences; it

is my Mind on the other Hand, that these illiterate Ministers should be content it be perceived they are unlearned and ignorant Men, and to be called Bablers, that God's Name may be excellent, in ordaining Strength out of the Mouth of Babes, while he confounds the Wisdom of the wise, and by the Foolishness of preaching saves them that believe.

After all that you have said of the Necessity of these Sciences, are you well skil'd in them your self? And if you be, is it not a great Neglect in you, that the Souls of your People are not entertain'd with that Knowledge? I only wonder, that when you commend so many Arts, wherein you have not instructed your People, and wherein few have perceiv'd you to be very knowing, you have not mentioned the *Politicks*, or rather that which by it self possesses the Name, *Art*? I plead for a Room to this in your Catalogue of Sciences; because it is, at least, as necessary to a Governior of your Church as any of them: For at no Time was it govern'd without it; yea, you know how useful it is to you in the Conduct of your Flock in *Dundee*. All your Collections from your orthodox Books, in the Disputes you have had with Episcopalians and Independents, and your Collections from practical Writers and the Sermons of your Brethren, will not manifest you to be so far above the illiterate in the Knowledge of humane Arts and Sciences, as you are in *Art*. The very Rise of that Sect, of which you now complain, was owing to your *Art*, as one Mean in the Hand of holy Providence, and after an Application of all your *Art* in the

Rise of that Sect, your Silence and Forbearance of open Opposition to it, was a Piece of *Art* that, for ought I know, you learn'd from *Julian*: For no Man will believe it was intended for the Prosperity of that Sect, any more than his Forbearance to the Sect that differ'd from his establish'd Church, was intended for the Prosperity of that Sect. And now that you have broke Silence again, there is certainly *Art* in that also. There is more *Art* than reasoning in what you say against the illiterate Ministers; and I fear it is not so much your Meaning, that the People's Souls should be entertain'd with the Sciences, of which you speak, as that they should be fed with the Fancy that you have them, and so are only capable to teach them Scripture-knowledge; and that, being ignorant of those mighty Sciences, they may not dare to differ from your Glosses on the Scripture, nor hearken to illiterate Men, who, for Want of the Sciences, cannot explain the Scriptures. These illiterate Ministers, if Letters could do their Business, have far more need of them than you, who are already in the Esteem of the Multitude far wiser than you really are, and who, according to your own Principles, can never have much Use for Philosophy and Criticism in confuting Hereticks: For you know you have no more to do, but to sit down in a Presbytery or Synod, and vote against Heresy, and then call on the Magistrate to *Extirpate it*, or root out the Hereticks; whereas the Illiterate have nothing but the Word of God, and if they cannot manage that as it is *mighty thro' God*, and not thro' the Sciences, they

they can do nothing. Yet if they prevail in the least against Error, God will have more Honour than in those that need less Dependence on him, and use Means to keep themselves off from that Dependence; and if the *Fruits* of their Ministry in *Angus*, and the *Works* of their Disciples be compared with yours, it may possibly appear, that the Word of God alone is *the Power of God to Salvation*, and that there is no Reason to be *ashamed of it*, without your Sciences.

You tell us, that for acquiring these Arts and Sciences there ought to be Schools of Learning, as there were Schools of the Prophets of old. But were these Arts and Sciences taught in the Schools of the Prophets of old? And do you imagine that your Expectants and young Preachers are the Successors of the young Prophets, and you, or the Teachers of the Sciences, the Successors of the old ones? And if Pastors and Teachers be to be trained up in Schools, as were the Prophets, what Schools do you read of for them in the *New Testament*, but the Churches of the Saints? The pure *Word of God sounded out* at first from the Churches; but the first Heresies came in from the Schools of the *Jewish Scribes*, and from the Schools of the Heathen Philosophers, and the first Christian School at *Alexandria* produced *Arianism*. When the Ministry of the Gospel came to be attended with worldly Honour and Gain, all that sought to be employ'd in it for the sake of these, were not fitted by Jesus Christ to be *Pastors and Teachers*, and his *Gift* alone, tho' sufficient for its End, was not sufficient to bear them out in the Figure they behoved to make in the World, as
the

e Successors of the heathen Priests: And therefore they behoved to have such Qualifications, as could be attained the same way that Men attain Qualifications for other worldly Employments. Thus Men came to be Ministers of the Gospel, as they came to be Lawiers and Physicians. The Heathens at first ridiculed Christianity; but as it grew upon them, in spite of all the Methods it use to be taken with such as are not to be reasoned with, they began to exercise their skill in disputing against it. This proved a temptation to such Christians as had Letters, they lay aside the old *Weapons*, that were mighty thro' God for casting down *Imaginations*, and every high *Thought* exalting it self against the *Knowledge of Christ*, and contend with carnal *Weapons*, or oppose the *Wisdom of Words*, and defend the Gospel against it, by *the Wisdom of Words*. But instead of maintaining the Cause of the Gospel this Way, they in Effect gave it up, and corrupted the Doctrine of Christ, by an endeavour to reconcile it as much as might be by *the Wisdom of the Disputer of this World*. Thus the Gospel became a Science, instead of a *Word of Faith*, and the old Difference between these two, stated by the Apostle 1 Cor. and ii. Chapters, was in a great Measure done away. And thus, as *Satan beguiled Eve thro' Subtility*, their Minds were corrupted from *Simplicity that is in Christ*. This went on and continues to this Day under all the various Shapes of the Profession of Christianity, we ever Expectants, as you call them, instead of holding fast *the faithful Word in Teaching*, they may be able by sound *Doctrine* both

to exhort and convince the Gainsayers, Professors of Oppositions of Science falsely called, or of Polemick Divinity.

When you have stated the Opinion Practice of the Sect lately risen among us, make a Supposition, that the Devil should up *Arians, Socinians* and *Deists*, to attack holy Religion. This Supposition may be lowed; for it is Matter of Fact, Books written by Men of Letters against the Faith of Son of God, and against the Truth of Christianity, are in the Hands of your People, and being with them; Infidelity is growing and spreading apace; and the Course of the World that has been in the Channel of Superstition under the Christian Name, to the great Honour of that Name (from the Days of *Constantine*, but especially from the Time *Clergy* came up as the *eighth Head* of the *Roman Empire*, and *the ten Kings gave the Power to the Beast to make one Opinion*) now turning into the Channel of Infidelity, the great Grief of the Clergy of all Sorts; cause it shakes their Throne, and fills their Kingdom with Darkness. When you have laid down your Supposition, you propose your Argument in a Question; *What could such Men do defend it?* And they'll perhaps enquire again seeing your temporal Interest and your Authority in the World lies at the Stake, *what are you doing to defend it?* Men of Letters both in the Church of *England* and your Church have been writing Defences; but what has any of your Sect in this Church offered that is worth the Reading? You can in your *Manner*

and fault with the Writers for Christianity, and
 charge them with betraying the Cause, while
 you cannot say 'tis thro' their Want of Letters.
 you contend for the Evidence that the Testi-
 mony of God in the Gospel carries in it self, and
 is beheld by them whose Understandings he o-
 pens to understand the Scriptures, and behold
 that Evidence in them; and you do well.
 Is that Evidence to be seen only in the
 original *Hebrew* and *Greek* Text? Or could
 they at *Rome* perceive it, where I suppose *Paul*
 spoke it in *Latin* to the *Romans*, as they of
Athens did, to whom I suppose he spoke *Greek*?
 And could the *Greeks* perceive any Evidence in
 the References to the Old Testament, which
 were cited to them in *Greek*, as did these to
 whom he spoke in the *Hebrew* Tongue? Next
 let us, is this Evidence that the Word of God
 in the Scriptures carries in it self, to be per-
 ceiv'd only by the *Scribes and Disputers* of
 this World; the Criticks, Philosophers, Astro-
 nomers, Mathematicians, Polemick Divines,
 Geographers, Historians? &c. Or also by the
 great, the foolish, base Things of this World?
 And is it to be communicated to others by the
 Obscurity of Words, or in that plain simple Man-
 ner wherein it is declared in the Scriptures?
 Can let us understand what Advantage you
 can here with your Letters beyond the illite-
 rate? We are still at a Loss to know what
 you can do to defend the Christian Doctrine by
 your Letters against the Adversaries. What Ad-
 versary have you baffled? Or whom have you
 converted by the Power of your Learning or o-
 therwise, from *Socinianism*, *Arianism* or *De-
 ism*?

ism ? You have had Infidels to deal with *Dundee*; but what did you, beyond raising Use of Lamentation in the Pulpit, and telling them in private, that they should be hang'd? An illiterate Man would have taken another Course he would have plainly told them the Evidence that he himself saw in the Gospel, and how the Atheism and Infidelity of his own Heart was quelled by the Word of God; and if he prevailed not, he would pray for them, and shew the Truth of Christianity in his Life, and exert in Deeds of Good-will to them; while at the same Time he would suffer no Member of a Christian Society, wherein he is concerned, to lead a Life of Contradiction to any Part of the Gospel but *take heed to himself, and the whole Flo* to have a Conversation becoming the Gospel. This is the Sect lately risen, against which you seem so much displeas'd; but why should it displease you, that, while there are so many of you train'd up in Letters, and well hired to defend your Gospel, a Set of People should engage in this Way of the Defence of Christianity against their worldly Interest? Or what kind of Men are ye, that neither defend Christianity yourselves, nor suffer the Defence, that either *literate or illiterate* are offering to it?

Next, you enquire how they would do with *Jesuits*; to which they'll readily answer, the same they do with you, while you subvert the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven by many Instances, and mislead the People by little Stories and your Arguings in the Mouths of your Agents, come to their Hearings. They see thro' your Arts and Disguises

they discover the Fallacies of your Arguings by the Word of God, they maintain the Truth of that Word, and set some of your misled People Right; so would they do with *Jesuits*. You put their Answer to your Questions in the Shape of an Objection. O, say they, we have the Word to oppose them, which is not ill said. But what is your Answer to this Objection?

Had there not, say you, been Men of Learning before you to have translated it, you even would not had that. Well they have it; and I hope you do not grudge them this, as your Fathers of the *Roman* Church did, when the Lord in his marvelous Providence brought the Scriptures to Light in the Languages of the Nations. The Illiterate adore the Wisdom, Goodness and Power of God in this, as they do in the first Publication of the Gospel by the Gift of Tongues. before it was written. and likewise in the writting of it. And from this Saying of yours they have Reason to think, that if you had been a Clergyman, when it began to be translated into the modern Languages, you had at least refused to use your Learning that Way, for Fear of the Consequence and the Danger that might come to the Church thereby. The Sect of which you complain do not, as you here insinuate, decry the Knowledge of the Languages that's necessary for translating the Bible, as they do not decry the Art of Printing, without which, you Men of Letters would have laboured under a vast Disadvantage; but as they will not say that no Man but a Printer can be a Minister, neither dare they affirm, that none

but a Translator is fit for that Office. They suppose a Man may be capable to translate the Bible, and yet not qualify'd for the Ministry, as the Word of God directs, as another may be qualify'd for that Office according to the Scriptures, and yet know the Word of God only in his own native Language. The Reading of the Scriptures was much attended to in the first Churches, and they could not all hear or know them, without being read to them; so they had Readers, who were not Ministers, fitter for that than for the Ministry; yea, and perhaps fitter for reading than the Ministers themselves: For no doubt you can inform us, by your Skill in History, if there were not Ministers in the first Churches that could neither read nor write. But do you in earnest affirm, that none are fit for the Ministry but such as are capable to translate the Bible? And if you do, are you perswaded that your self is a Minister, or many more with you, who content themselves with as much Knowledge of the *Hebrew* for ordinary, as carries them thro' their Trials? I remember of a Letter that came to your Presbytery from one, for whose Ministry you had not a great Regard, but he was a noble *Hebrean*. He insulted the reverend Presbytery, by writting to them the Words of a Language which they were supposed to know, and he understood they knew not, and that was the *Hebrew*. This was a Reflection upon them, full as severe, as any you have made on the Men that are willing it be perceiv'd they are unlearned and ignorant Men. Further, you know how many of you are
rustled

cast as to the little Knowledge you had of the *Greek* Testament when you came off the Irons. And are your Consciences so far seared, as not to give you the least Uneasiness; when you make your People believe, that others cannot be Ministers for the Want of that Knowledge of the sacred Languages, which you yourselves least of all study?

Then you enquire what they would answer a *Jesuit*, when he says, the Passage is not justly translated? For it seems, tho' they have unhappily got that Weapon, the Word of God, in their Hands, you still hope they have not Skill to use it, and your Hope is founded in what you propose by Way of Question to them. But how would you, tho' well skill'd in the Languages, defend your People against that *Jesuit*, that have not Letters, and are not capable to judge of what is said of the Justness of the Translation by the Knowledge of the Language? What could you answer him to the Satisfaction of your People's Consciences, that an illiterate Man could not answer? And seeing you have taken up the *Jesuitical* Argument, for the Honour of the Church and the Clergy, against these illiterate Men, and their *English* Bible; could you blame any of your People that should go off to the *Roman* Church, because they know not if the Translation be just; and when the Question came, whether they should believe you or the learned *Jesuit*, a Clergyman of a more ancient Church, in the Knowledge of Letters, with a Pretence of Infalibility, they choos'd to believe the *Jesuit*? You know the strongest Thing you have to say in this Case

against the *Jesuit*, is what the illiterate may say as well as you. Or, are you indeed for the People's believing in your Church, instead of the *English Bible*? Or perhaps you'll come next to a Question, if a Man can be saved without Skill in the sacred Languages, yea, without the original Manuscripts? And Clergymen have play'd the like of this to keep Souls in Dependence on their Authority.

But if these illiterate Leaders be so ignorant of the Word of God, their only Weapon, and unable to use it, why do not you Men of Letters, by your Ability to handle the Word against them, reduce the People, that are misled by them, to your Obedience? And if you be not able to do that, why do you proclaim your own Shame, by saying your Church is in Danger from Men that want Letters?

Your Description of the *New Testament* Minister comes not well in immediately after your Discourse of the Necessity of the Arts and Sciences to the Ministry of the Gospel: For it will agree full as well to the illiterate as to Men of Letters. It is true, your Description is deficient as to a main Part of the Character of such a Minister, which cannot be declared without having an Understanding of the Difference betwixt the *Old Testament* and the *New*, as you might learn from the illiterate Men, the Preachers of the Kingdom of Heaven. You speak of a *New Testament* Minister, his making Christ All, and self Nothing; and yet you train up your young Christians, by the Questions you put to them, in the way of Self: For an illiterate Man would

easily see him, that could readily answer them
 as they are proposed, to be a self-righteous *Pha-*
risee, and leaning, thro' Self-conceit, on the
 good Dispositions expressed in your Questions,
 instead of the good Pleasure of God's Goodness,
 and setting up to be a Christian, in the Confi-
 dence of a good Disposition toward it that he
 finds in his Heart. You propose a great many
 Things to your Catechumen, who may be igno-
 rant of the Fundamentals of Christianity, which
 are but supposed in your Questions, and yet an-
 swer these Questions; which he may also do
 without having the Word of God for the only
 Rule of his Christianity. And yet these Que-
 stions contain a Covenant, which you say he must
 make with God. And who are you that would
 give us another Covenant, and another Ministry
 than that we have in the Scriptures of the *New*
Testament?

It is not my Province to point out the Incon-
 sistencies of your Sermon in the Things you of-
 fer against your Brethren; that belongs to them,
 if they think it worth their while to take any
 Notice of you. But if no other regard you, I
 hope you'll accept of this as a Piece of Service
 done to you, and the Truth which you op-
 pose, by,

SIR,

Your Well-wisher,
 and humble Servant,

Edinburgh, Jan.
 8. 1734.

JOHN GLAS.

POS.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Take the following Copy of a Summons from the Session of one of your Brethren, as an Evidence of the Success of your Preaching to them against illiterate Ministers. You need not question if it be the Effect of your Warning, when you consider how much Ear he gave to your first Warning, and how active he was upon it in the Rise of that Sect, which to your great Grief is lately risen among you. And you see him as sensible of his own Call and Mission, and of the Necessity of human Arts and Sciences in the Mission to the Office of the Ministry, as you can desire, and as far from joyning Issue with Julian as you could wish.

Ketirs the sixteenth Day of *December*
One thousand Seven hundred and
thirty three Years.

THE said Day the Kirk Session considering That by the wholesome Constitutions of the National Church, and by the Word of God itself, no Man ought to intrude into the sacred Office of the Ministry, without being called, and sent of God: Nor ought they to be received into Christian Houses, nor bid God Speed. It is of Verity, that you Alexander Morice Weaver in the Gask in this Parish, upon the
Thir

thirty Day of November, have invited welcomed to your House, and bidden God speed to Don and Cant pretended teachers, and encouraged them to make a way of Preaching, upon one or other of the Days of this present Month, in the Barn of Patrick Richie in Paty, and this Parish, as common we goes. For which, if found true, you ought to be censured according to the Demerit of your scandal. Extracted by,

ROB. CHRISTIE Sess. Clerk.

James Watson Officer, by Warrant from the above Kirk Session, summon you Alexander Rice, to compear before the Kirk-Session Sabbath next, the Thirtieth Instant, to answer the Points of the above Libel, with Certification. This, I give you December 21. 1733.
I. W.

F I N I S.

