

LETTER

TO THE

Reverend Mr. MICHAEL POTTER
Minister of the Gospel at *Kippen*;

AS AN

ANSWER of his Letter, lately sent
by him to the Reverend Mr. EBENEZER
ERSKINE Minister of the Gospel at *Stirling*,
upon Occasion of that slanderous Reproach
that doth go thro' this Land on his Name,
that he doth yearly receive Money from
Rome to work unhappy Divisions in the
Church of CHRIST in this Land.

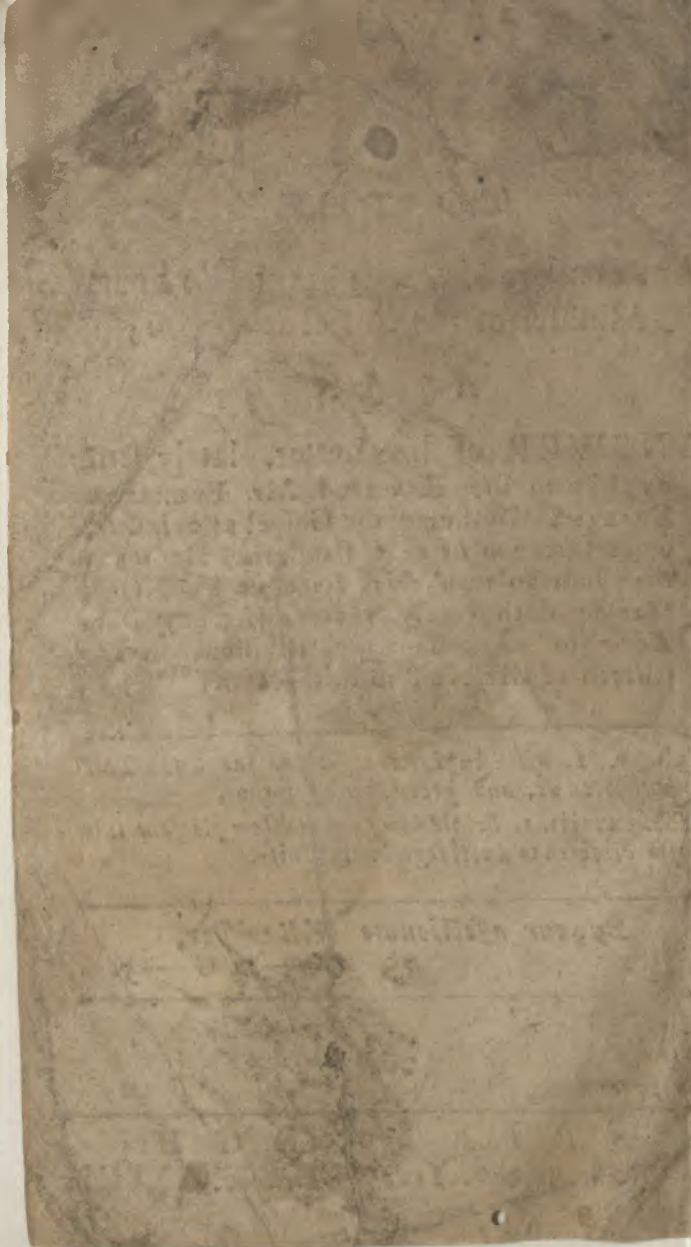
Eph. v. 2. *Walk in Love together, as CHRIST
hath loved us, and given himself for us.*

Pfal. cxxxiii. 1. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is
for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.*

*By your affectionate Well-wisher,
W—m G—y.*



E D I N B U R G H:
Printed in the Year M. D. CC. XXXVIII.





A LETTER, &c.

Lanark, April 28. 1738.

Reverend SIR,



HAVE lately seen a letter of yours, directed by you to Mr. *Erskine* minister of the gospel in *Stirling*, as an answer to his letter sent lately by him to you, upon occasion of that slanderous reproach that doth go through this land on his name, that he doth yearly receive money or bills from *Rome* to work unhappy division in the church of CHRIST in this land, which I am loath to believe that he does, or any of his dear brethren associate together with him for the exercise of church government in a presbyterial capacity: in order to bring about a covenanted work of reformation in this land, which is well known to all serious christians, both ministers and people, who will let their consciences speak the truth from their heart, upon examination of the laws and constitutions of this our reformed church from the year 1638 to 1650, they will see how far we are departed from the way of our worthy
 ancel-

ancestors, who gave testimony to the world, that the testimony they held, was the testimony of our Lord JESUS CRIST, and many of them sealed the same with their blood before GOD, angels and men, and ventured their souls everlasting salvation upon the faith of the same, which blood, I fear, hath a loud cry to heaven against many families in *Scotland* to this day; for as *Abel's* blood cried to heaven for vengeance on *Cain*, so, I fear, the blood of these worthies in *Scotland* doth cry aloud for vengeance on the shedders of it and their posterity, *Exod. xxxiv. 7. I will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.* Where was it ever seen or heard that such great iniquities, such as the blood-shed of our worthy ancestors, or the burning of these solemn covenants in several places of *Scotland*, was put in as causes in our fast-days as the ground of GOD's wrath against this land? Alas! it is little repented of to this day, for which GOD seems, in his just displeasure, to be contending with us; for instead of repentance and humiliation for these Sins, and our own daily backslidings, we are daily going backward to greater and greater iniquities, and homologating what our persecuting fore-fathers did. There seems to be a persecuting spirit raging in the hearts of both ministers and professors in this church at this day; for tho', blessed be GOD, the civil government does not as yet favour them with their assistance, to take away the lives of these who are contending for the rights and privileges of our reformed church, yet they bite and devour as much as possible they can, by casting evil reproaches upon their name and reputation,

tation, in order to stop the success of the gospel in their hands, which is an evident token to every serious soul, that the cause they have taken in hand, is the cause of CHRIST, because the Devil and the men of the world are so much opposing it, and doing all in their power to suppress it; *John xv. 19. If ye were of this world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you; and ver. 20. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; but for my part, whatever the world and reproachful tongues may advance against them, I think I see more than an ordinary measure of the Spirit of GOD assisting them in their ministerial labours, and I am verily persuaded their labours are not without success in several corners in Scotland; and it is strange to me, or any well thinking soul, how that the Pope or his emissaries should make use of such an instrument to advance his kingdom of darkness, for I truly think, if there be any enemies to his kingdom in this land, they are; and how that the Pope can think to enlarge his kingdom by these brethren, is a great deep for any well thinking soul to comprehend. Our Lord JESUS says expressly *Math. xii. 25. And JESUS knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every house or city divided against itself shall not stand; ver. 26. And if Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself, how then shall his kingdom stand?**

But now to give a more particular answer to the reverend Mr. Potter; Mr. Erskine does not say, that you did take in hand to prove that

he received money or bills from *Rome*, but that it was only told him by a private person, whom he did not name, that you said it, and only wanted you to clear your self in a private letter to him; but I cannot find any thing in your answer that favours any thing of a gospel spirit, which ought to be in every minister of the gospel of the meek and lowly JESUS, *Matt. xi. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. See 1 Pet. ii. 23. Who, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* See likewise the example of the holy Apostle Paul, *1 Cor. iv. 12. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it* But I cannot find in the whole of your letter any thing of the least favour of such a spirit; but on the other hand, to express yourself by way of banter, in such foolish like discourse, as lays both yourself and him open to the carnal world to laugh and jeer at you; it puts a object in their Hands to mock and ridicule religion, and lays a stumbling block in the way of the righteous. It is much to be lamented that there is so much mocking at religion and those that worship GOD, altho' those that are ministers of the gospel give no occasion to such an abounding sin. But now what I would say to you, and all others, both ministers and people that entertain such reproaches on his name, whom I, for my part, take to be faithful in the cause of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and as labouring with all his might to maintain the rights and royal prerogatives of our great King of *Zion*. Now if you know that to be a truth that is laid to his charge, why do you not, for the love that you ought to have

have to your lord and master, whom you profess to serve, and the love you ought to have for the souls of poor sinners, who adhere to their testimony which they have sent out to the world, now I challenge you and all others, for the Lord JESUS Sake, if you know that to be a truth, which you, and many others in *Scotland*, lay to his charge, to bring him forth from under that mask of covetousness, that it may be known to the world whether or not he be a pensioner of *Rome*, or one of his missionaries sent forth to deceive that poor unthinking part of mankind, as you call them that adhere to their way; for sure I am, if you did think right, and considered your great duty, you would not be still telling such wild stories in a mocking way, but on the other hand, would be lamenting the same, and bewailing the sad State many poor souls are in that are taken captive by that way; and you would be as busy in setting apart fasting and humiliation days for prayer and supplication to GOD, that he in his holy providence may bring him from behind that curtain of hypocrisy, and undeceive that small remnant that you say are led away by him to no less than ruining principles, as he and the rest of his brethren are busy in setting apart fasting and humiliation days in several corners of this land to deceive them, as you call it. My friends, it is not matter of small moment to see so many poor souls ruining themselves, and you to stand afar off, and not put to your hand to help them; for sure I am, if that were known to be a truth that is laid to his charge, whatever he has built upon that foundation would soon be thrown down: But really it appears to the eyes of every serious soul, that it is nothing but an abominable

bominable reproach of the Devil and wicked men's contriving to put a stop to the success of the gospel in their hands, and mar their designs for carrying on a work of reformation in poor harlot *Scotland*, who hath wickedly departed from GOD and that glorious work of reformation that our worthy ancestors brought about in thisland under the conduct of our glorious king of *Zion*.

You say again in your letter, that his letter is not good grammar. It is much to be lamented that there is so much studying of learning at this day, and so little studying the doctrine of a crucified CHRIST: Alas! for it is much to be lamented that the great part of our preachers of the gospel are more busied in studying a nice and well connected sermon, to set forth the brightness of their parts in a fine stile and dialect to rickle the ears of their hearers, than they are to awaken the consciences of carnal secure sleepy sinners: The doctrine of a crucified CHRIST seems as if it were an offence to many at this day; a sermon of heathen morality seems to take much better with many, than a sermon of repentance towards GOD, and faith towards our Lord JESUS CHRIST; not that I am to condemn morality, for sure it is that none can pretend to be true followers of the lamb that do not observe all the precepts of the moral law, as well as the precepts of the gospel; but as sure it is, that where the doctrine of morality hath converted its thousands, the doctrine of a crucified CHRIST hath converted its ten thousands: *Acts ii. 37.* when *Peter* was preaching a sermon of a crucified CHRIST, it is said, *When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said*

to Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? And immediately it follows in ver. 41. That the same day there were added to the church about three thousand souls. Paul says Rom. i. 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST; for it is the power of GOD unto salvation. 1 Cor. i. 18. For the preaching of the cross is unto them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of GOD. But, alas! many of our preachers at this day seem as if they were ashamed of a crucified JESUS; but what is it in him you are ashamed of? Are you ashamed of his mean and low birth? Or are you ashamed of his low and humble conversation in the World? Or is it because his conversation was most with the meanest and most despised set of people among the Jews, such as poor fisher-men, publicans and sinners, not like many of the ministers of the gospel at this day, whose conversations are most with the great ones in the land, while they overlook the the meaner rank of mankind as not to be so much regarded? It were heartily to be wished that you could gain them to CHRIST by your conversation with them, and drive them from their impious lives, and engage them to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy, and wait upon the ordinances of the gospel, and set up the worship of GOD in their Families; this would tend much to the glory of GOD, and the good of this poor land; but, alas! the Sabbath is little regarded by a great part of them; many of our great ones in this land, whom our church judicatories hath invested with power to plant congregations with pastors, gives little or no countenance to ordinances themselves; yea many

of

of them do not observe the morality of the Sabbath, but in open contempt of the authority of GOD, are as busy about their pastimes that day as on other days of the week; and even some of them, who are not so openly profane and give some small attendance on ordinances, the greatest length that they come to is to attend the afternoon; and alas! many of their carriages and behaviour, when they look rather as if they were attending balls and play-houses than attending on the GOD of ordinances, *Eccl. v. and 1. Keep thy foot when thou goest unto the house of GOD, and to be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools.* Little do many believe, that we must all appear before the awful bar of GOD's judgment-seat, *2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Now let Church judicatories judge and see whether or not such men can be fit for chusing of faithful ministers to take care of the poor flock of CHRIST, to feed them with knowledge and understanding: They cannot endure the strictness of religion themselves, as little can they endure to hear faithful ministers press home such things upon them. But pray tell me what is it our church judicatories hath now in their view in planting congregations? Is it the glory of our great king of Zion; and to get sons and daughters born unto him, that it may be said of this and the other congregation, *that this man and that man was born there,* *Psal. lxxxvii. 5.* But alas! this seems little to be the designs of our church judicatories at
 this

his day ; but on the contrary they seem to have nothing in their view but to get bread to this and the other preacher, that is recommended to them by this and the other lord and laird through the land, whatever may be their other qualifications ; and them you will please, tho' you run the risque of the displeasure of GOD, by putting a stop to the success of the gospel in many congregations through this land, and making many to groan under soul oppression.

O Sirs! Is bread to this and the other man to be laid in the ballance with the bread of life that is to be dispersed to the souls of the hearers of the gospel ?

Our Lord JESUS thought his dear blood worthy to be shed for the redemption of perishing sinners ; he spared not himself for their sakes, but came travelling in the greatness of his strength over all difficulties, to ransom them from the power of hell and death : But our church judicatories seem at this day not to be sparing of the flock, but by force and cruelty to rule over them, like those shepherds reproved by the prophet, *Ezek. xxxiv. 4.* O that they would consider how they must answer for their management of the flock to the great shepherd of the flock, at the great day of his appearance, when he will require the flock at their hands : They will not then be allowed advocates to plead for them at the bar of GOD's justice, as they have now allowed by our church judicatories before our ecclesiastick courts. O that they would think upon that awful reproof, *Ezek. xxxiv. 2.* *Wo to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves, should they not feed the flock. Ver. 2.* Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am a-
gainst

gainst the shepherds, and will require the
 flock at their hands.

It is the great duty of ministers of the go-
 pel of the blessed JESUS, to set the trumpet
 to their mouth, when they see wrath coming upon
 a land, and warn them of their danger, *Isa.*
xlvi. 1. Cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy
voice like a trumpet, shew my people their
transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sin.
 tell the great as well as the small, tell them of
 their Sabbath-breaking, tell them of their con-
 tempt of the ordinances of the gospel, and ne-
 glecting of family and secret prayer, tell them
 of their prophane balls and clubs, and their a-
 bominable night assemblies; tell them of the
 precious time that they spend in excessive drink-
 ing; tell them of their horrid cursing and swear-
 ing and profaning the holy name of GOD, let
 you bring the blood of their souls upon your
 heads: Better warn them in time, however ill
 they may take it than to hear them cursing you
 in hell, when it is too late, and there can be
 no recovery for them.

For my part, whatever be the reproaches
 that you or any others cast at those men, whom
 you so much bear down; call them what you
 will, it is evidently to be seen that the LORD
 hath sent them forth with more than an ordinary
 measure of the spirit to this poor church at this
 day; however their hearts may be with GOD
 that is what only belongs to the searcher of all
 hearts, who will ere long bring the secrets of
 all hearts to light before angels and men at the
 great day: But sure it is to the eyes of every
 one that knows the constitutions and laws of our
 reformed church, which we in this land have
 wick

vickedly departed from ; yea, your own consciences knows it, if you would let them speak the truth, that what they are acting at this day is most agreeable to the word of GOD and testimony of JESUS CHRIST, and the standards of our religion, contained in the holy scriptures of truth, the *Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms*, and *Books of Discipline*, to which we in these lands are solemnly bound by the oath of the great GOD, with uplifted hands to heaven before GOD, angels and men.

Yea, it is well known, that they are doing nothing but what is their duty, to supply the oppressed heritage of GOD through the land, that is groaning under your oppression in many corners in *Scotland*, by thrusting in Intruders upon them, over the belly of all the good laws and constitutions of our reformed church, which GOD in his holy providence was pleased to settle among us in this land ; but indeed to speak the truth, we need not lay the blame of our oppression so much upon patrons, as upon presbyteries and presentees ; for no sooner is a presentee presented to a parish, but as soon the presbyteries gives all the assistance possible that they can to please that and the other laird and lord in the land, however displeasing it may be to GOD and hurtful to the souls of the people in that place : And it is evidently seen by the bitter fruits of such violent settlements in this land, that you mar the very designs of the gospel.

And now when these men were using the freedom of faithful ministers of the blessed JESUS, and testifying against these and the like corruptions of the day and time we live in, you and
the

the rest of your brethren thrust them out
 your communion in a most violent way a
 manner, as the like parallel was never known
 the church of *Scotland*, that one part of pro-
 fessing *Presbyterian* ministers thrust out the other
 part for nothing that could be laid to their
 charge, but that they were faithful to the
 Lord and master's cause, and testifying against
 the great wrongs that hath been done to our gre-
 king of *Zion* and head of his church. Bless-
 be GOD the father, who hath laid the govern-
 ment upon his shoulders, and will reign king
Zion in spite of all the malice of men and
 powers of hell to the end of the world, though
 he may be provoked, for the great back-sliding
 and defection of the day, the abounding of e-
 ror, vice and prophanity, and the abounding
 sin and abominable wickedness, not to be named
 amongst christians in a professing land, such
 horrid cursing and swearing, profaning the ho-
 name of GOD in a most fearful manner, drunk-
 enness and all manner of uncleanness, lying and
 stealing, injustice betwixt man and man, false
 swearing, unlawful oaths and acts, that the
 church and land hath gone into of late, pro-
 phanation of the Lord's day, abuse of the cer-
 monies of the gospel, neglect of family and
 secret prayer, self-examination, mortification
 sin, crucifying the flesh with the affections and
 lusts, breach of solemn vows and engagements
 both national and personal, for which our land
 become guilty of the highest of perjury; for the
 above mentioned and like sins awful judgments
 are threatned, *Lev.* xxvi. 16, 17, 25. *Deut.*
 xxviii. 23, 24, 25. *Pf.* lxxviii. 9. 10. *Isa.* xxxi.
 5, 6. *Jer.* xi. 9, 10. *Hos.* viii. 1. *Rev.* ii. 5.

Now, *Reverend Sir*, If you and the rest of your brethren were duly considering this, and laying them to heart, you would see causes enough as well as those associate brethren, to set apart fasting and humiliation days for prayer and supplication to GOD, that GOD in his mercy may be pleased to ward off the stroaks of his threatened judgments and dispel these clouds of darkness that are hovering over our heads at this day, and not be imployed so much in contriving all the plots possible you can to suppress these men from doing their necessary duty, which GOD in his holy providence is calling them forth to at this day; it is evidently seen by the small success that the gospel hath at this day in this land, that GOD hath in a great measure withdrawn his holy spirit from both ministers and people. Little is to be seen among the professors at this day but deadness, formality and hypocrisy; a spirit of slumber hath seized our hearts: So that the Lord may be provoked in his just displeasure to give his church up to the hands of her enemies for the trial of their faith, and to separate the chaff from the principal wheat; for it evidently appears that the judicatories of this church are doing all that they can to bring this poor church again under supreme tyranny, if the civil government would assist them; for if there were as much of a persecuting spirit in the civil government as appears to be in the ecclesiastick government, our streets would have been running with blood ere now, which we hope that the Lord in his mercy shall prevent, and yet dispel these clouds of darkness that are spreading over this land, and send glorious days of his power, that religion and sincere

holiness, love to *GOD* and love to one another may yet thrive and flourish in this land. Let us therefore pray for the peace of *Jerusalem*, that peace may be within her walls and joy within her palaces; that the glory of *GOD* may shine in a bright manner in this land to lasting generations.

Now, *Reverend Sir*, if what I have said be not grammar, I hope you will not blame me for I never was taught it. So farewell. I rest
your Well-wisher,

W. . . . m G. . . . y

