





- 906 Letter from the Nobility, Barons and Commons of Scotland directed to Pope John wherein they declare their firm Resolutions to adhere to their king Robert the Bruce, *Edinb.* 1703—History of Mr. J. Welsh, Minister of the Gospel at Aire, *ib.* 1703—Appendix to the History of the Church of Scotland, 1677—C(unningham) (J.) Essay upon the Inscription of Macduff's Crosse at Fyfe, *Edinb.* 1678—Tarbot (G. Vist.) Vindication of Robert III from the Imputation of Bastardy, *ib.* 1695—[Sibbaldi (R.)] *Phalainologia Nova*, *ib.* 1692—Dalrymple (Sir J.) Some Authentick Writers and Records, 1567-1572—Account of the wicked and terrible Confederacy of Betty Laing, *Edinb.* 1704—Relation of the Witches at Pittenweem, *ib.* 1704; and several other exceedingly scarce pieces, *MS. notes by R. Wodrow* in 1 vol. sm. 4to.
- * * * "Collected by Wodrow. Purchased at C. K. Sharpe's sale."
—*MS. notes by Mr. Gibson Craig.*



- Kent, *portrait, russia gilt, leather joints, g. e. by R. Payne*, 17
* * Scarce, only 150 copies having been printed.
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A N
OVERTURE

FOR
Founding & Maintaining
of

BIBLIOTHECKS

In every Paroch through-
out this

KINGDOM:

*Humbly Offered to the Consi-
deration of this present
Assembly.*

*An Overture for Establishing of
Bibliotheks in every Paroch
throughout this Kingdom.*

IT is as essential to the nature of Mankind to be desirous of Knowledge, as it is for them to be rational Creatures, for we see no other end or use for our Reason, but to seek out and search for the Knowledge of all these things of which we are Ignorant. For *this sore travel hath God given to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith.* That being born Naked, Indigent and Ignorant, we should be forced to enquire by the help of Reason, into the Nature and Knowledge of all these things which are about us, and to Invent and Perfect all such Arts and Manufactories, as are necessary for the support of our Lives. All which things are so numerous, and the ways of attaining to the Knowledge of them so difficult, longsome and uncertain that it would be but a very small Degree, even of the meanest Art or Science, which any man could attain unto by his own particular Study and Observation, if he were destitute of all these Helps we receive from others, by Word and Writing.

Therefore to facilitate this sore Travel, God hath endued Mankind with a Faculty of Speech, whereby they may Teach and Communicat to one another, all such Knowledges and Observations as shall be found out by any one of them; that so every one studying a part, and contributing the small Mite of his Observations into the publick Stock, they might at length advance Knowledge and Learning to that Degree, which Humane Na-

ture in this lapsed Estate is capable of, And that there might be some considerable Progress made in this Work at first; God did bestow upon the first Men long Lives, with vigorous Imaginations and solid Judgments, that thereby they might both Acquire great Stocks of Knowledge and Observations, and might convey them, or communicat them to many Degrees of their Posterity.

But Men abusing this Blessing of long Life, and exercising their Thoughts only upon Evil and that continually: God in his Justice, was provoked to shorten their Lives, and to confound their Languages, whereby this way of conveying Knowledge by Word of Mouth, and Tradition became very imperfect, and lyable to many Inconveniencies: and therefore that these Means of encreasing Knowledge, and of searching out all the Works of God might be still continued amongst Men; God in his Infinite Mercy, was graciously pleased to teach Men a new Way of communicating their Thoughts and Words, by Writing, which he did when he did write the Law with his own Finger, upon the two Tables of Stone in Mount *Sinai*, that thereby Men might more easily and universallly communicat their Observations to all the rest of Mankind, and might more certainly preserve them to all Posterity.

By this Art of Writing, Knowledge and Learning were very much advanced; till Books became so numerous, and the way of writing with a Pen being both dear and slow, Students could acquire only a small number of them, whereby many Books were neglected and lost, and Learning came to a stand, and then at length fell into a great Decay, for Men turned their Wits and Studies, rather to collect and understand the Writings and Opinions of the Ancients, than to enquire into the Nature of the things themselves, in so much that all Philosophy was turned into the Opinions of *Aristotle*, and *Plato*; and all Theology was lodged in the Opinion of the Church, or in the Popes Infallibility. Yea, Ignorance prevailed to that Degree, that it was encouraged and preached up, as the Mother of Devotion. But at length

length Printing, which is a more easy, speedy and cheap way than Writing, was Invented; which remedied all these Inconveniencies of Writing, and so recovered Learning at its last Gasp, out of its long continued and almost fatal Decay. Since which time, Learning hath taken on as it were a new growth; and though it be not as yet recovered in several Parts, yet many Arts and Sciences are advanced to a far greater Degree, than what they had attained unto amongst the Ancients. From all which Course of Providence, we may clearly perceive, that it is the Will and Design of our Lord and Maker, that by sore Travel, we should search out and know all his wonderful Works, that we may Admire and Adore his Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and other Perfections in them. As also, we may perceive that a full and universal communicating of our Thoughts and Observations to one another, is the necessary and ordinary Means appointed by God, whereby we may Attain unto this natural Knowledge; so that whatsoever Inconveniencies do obstruct this free and universal communicating our Thoughts and Instructions to one another, or do hinder Students from Attaining the Knowledge of all that hath been Discovered before them, must of necessity much retard the Advancement of Learning, and hinder the Increase of Knowledge amongst us; and therefore do deserve our serious Thoughts, and utmost Endeavours to remove them. Some of these Inconveniencies are, 1. Books are so vastly multiplied, and do so increase dayly, that most part of Students either want Money to buy any moderate Collection of them; or 2ly, they want Convenience to keep them, for Books are very troublesome to Transport from place to place; or 3ly, they have them not in due time, while they are young and free from Cares; for after a Man is settled in the World, then the Cares of his Family, and the Affairs of his Calling, do so take up his Mind, that he can have no time nor heart to study. 4. The Money that is bestowed upon Books must be looked upon as lost; and this certainly is a great Discouragement. 5. Many Books which a Student shall happen to

buy will after perusal, be found little worth, at least for his purpose, whereby he is lamentably disappointed, and loseth both his Money and time. 6. We live at much distance from these famous Towns where most part of Books are Printed, that there are many useful new Books Printed which we never hear of, and these we hear of, cannot be brought home to us without great Expences and Trouble. 7. Although a Student had all the Advantages that can be reasonably expected in one man, yet he cannot Acquire all the Books in the World, that may relate to the Subject he studies; and so he will still be uneasy and suspicious, that there may be something worth his Knowledge in these Books he wants. And it is not to be expected, that any man can advance or improve any Art or Science to a full Degree, till first he have a full and comprehensive Knowledge of all that hath been written and discovered of that Subject before him: and therefore compleat and free Libraries are absolutely necessary for the Improving of Arts and Sciences, and for Advancing of Learning amongst us.

For effectuating of this, and for remedying all the fore-named Inconveniencies, it is modestly conceived with submission to better Judgments, that the Founding and Maintaining of Bibliotheks in every Paroch within this Kingdom, will be a most effectual means, for thereby a Student will have compleat Libraries within a few Miles of the place where he shall happen to reside, out of which he may easily furnish himself from time to time, of all sorts of Books fit for his purpose without Money, and that in his youth, while he hath health and strength to Study, and is free from the cares of the World, neither can he be troubled with useles Books, seeing he may presently return them to the Bibliothek and take others; and Lastly, These Libraries in a few years, will be full and compleat, being furnished, not only with all the valuable and usefull Old Books in any Art or Science, but also with all the valuable New Books, so soon as ever they are heard of or seen in the World, as will clearly be demonstrat afterwards.

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The Method and particulars which I think necessary for this Founding and Maintaining of Bibliotheks in every Paroch throughout this Kingdom, are these.

1st. A convenient place in every Paroch must be set a part, and fitted for keeping of Books.

2^{ly}. Every present Minister must give in all his Books, to the Bibliothek of his own Paroch, at the sight of the Heretors of the Paroch, who shall cause rank them conform to their volumns, and shall cause take exact Alphabetical Catalogues of them, with the place where, and the time when they are Printed, of which Catalogues, there must be four principal Coppies subscribed by the Minister and Heretors of each Paroch; whereof one Copy shall be kept by the Minister, as an obligation upon the Paroch till he be payed for his Books, another shall be kept by the Heretors in a little Chist in the Bibliothek, that it may be an obligation upon the Keeper of the Bibliothek, to be answerable for all these Books; the third must be kept in the Bibliothek openly, that any Heretor of the Paroch, or Minister of the Presbyterie may get a double of it when they please; and the fourth Copy shall be sent to the principal Library at *Edinburgh*, to kept there for several uses.

3^{ly}. For avoiding all debates and difficulties, that may arise between Heretors and Ministers in valuing these Books, it will be fit that some Ministers and Heretors be appointed to draw out a general Catalogue of all the Books in the Kingdom, out of those particular Catalogues that shall be sent in to *Edinburgh* from every Paroch; and to set a certain price upon each Book; which general Catalogues with the price affixed to each Book, shall be Printed and distributed through every Paroch of the Kingdom, conform to which Catalogue, the Books in every Paroch shall be valued: or there may be laid down some general rules for valuing of Books at so much *per Sheet*, and so much for Binding.

4^{ly}. When any Minister shall die, or be removed from one Kirk to an other, then he or his Heirs or Assignes, shall have
right

right to all the Stipends of that Paroch to which he gave in his Books, ay and while he be payed of their full value conform to the Catalogue : and the Ministers of the Presbytery shall supply that Kirk during that time, but if the Paroch cannot conveniently want a Minister so long, then the succeeding Minister shall want such a proportional part of the Stipend as shall be thought fit, which shall be payed yearly to the first Minister, his Heirs or assigneys, till the full value of his Books be payed.

5thly. Where the Kirks are vacant, the Ministers of the Presbyterie with the Heretors of the Paroch, shall have power to bestow all the vacant Sipends of that Kirk, upon such Books as they shall think most fit and necessary for the Bibleotheck of that Kirk.

6thly. Each Presbyterie shall endeavour to be a compleat Library within it self, that is, they shall endeavour to have one Copy at least, of every valuable Book extant in some one Bibliothek or other within their bounds; wherefore it will be necessary that all the Ministers in one Presbyterie, compare their Catalogues, and consider of what Books they have more Coppies then are needful amongst them, and what Books they think useful; of which they have no Coppies at all, that they may exchange the Books they have for these they want, conform to the value set on each Book by the general Catalogue;

7thly. The keeper of the Bibleothek, who may be the Reader or School-master of the Paroch, must find caution to the Minister and Heretors, to be faithful in keeping the Books, and in preserving them from all inconveniencies; and he shall not lend out any Book but to an Heretor of the Paroch, or to a Minister of the Presbyterie, or to such persons residing within the Paroch as shall find sufficient caution for all the Books they get out of the Library, and he shall take obligations from them all, that they shall restore the Books in good condition, and within such a set time as may be sufficient for reading the Book, but within one Moneth at farthest; that so an Heretor may not defraud the rest of the

the use of any Book. - And for preventing the imbazling the Books of thir Libraries, it is fit there be a note written upon the reverse of the Title page, and on the last leaf of each Book Subscribed by the Minister, declaring that the Book belongeth to the Bibleothek of such a Paroch, so that wherever any Book shall be found wanting the Title page and the last leaf, it may be suspected to be stollen from the Libraries, and so may be confiscat to their use.

8thly. It will be convenient that there be a Book binder in every Presbyterie, to bind all the Books that belong to that Presbyterie, for which end he must be provided with a House, and all the Instruments fit for his Trade, and with some small Stipend yearly to maintain him; and then whatsoever Books he shall bind he shall be payed only for the matererials, but nothing for his work; or the keepers of the Bibleothek or Ministers Servants may be taught to bind Books, and may easely bind all the new Books that shall be given in to that Library in Sheets

9thly. It will be convenient that all the Bibliothicks in the Kingdom observe the same method of ranking and placing their Books: which method may be to rank the Books according to their name and number, in the general Catalogue, which name and number must be written upon a piece of paper, and battered to the back of the Book, or to some leaf of it, that it may be easely seen and read, by any person that comes into the Bibliothick, that so Ministers or Students, when they shall happen to remove from one Paroch or Bibliothick to another, they may not be at a loss where to find any Book, for by this method they will presently know in what place every Book should stand.

These are all the particulars which I think necessary for the present for founding of Bibliothicks in every Paroch, but for the maintaining and promoting these it will be necessary further, that

10thly. One Moneths Cels to be payed yearly, to be settled as a Fond for buying and Printing, all such Books New or Old, as shall be judged valuable and usefull. to be distributed through
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the Kingdom, and every Bibliothek in the Kingdom shall get a Copy of every Book that shall be printed: the one half of this Moneths Ges. must be payed by the Heretors conform to their Valuations, the other hal by the Ministers conform to the proportions of their S ipends.

11thly. This Money or Fond must be entrusted to some honest Person or Persons, who shall therewith Erect a Printing-House, and Paper Manufactory, and shall settle and maintain a Correspondence with all the Printing presses abroad throughout *Europe*, and shall bring home some Coppies of all the Books that shall be Printed, as soon as possible, and shall Re-print all such Books whether New or Old, as shall be judged fitting, or worthy to be distributed through the Kingdom, and they shall be obliged to give up Acc mpts how the Money is bestowed, from time to time to such Ministers and others, as shall be appointed to receive, and examine the same.

12thly, A Commission of the General Assembly must be appointed, to Revise all the New Books that are brought home from time to time, and to give some short Account of them in Print, or to employ such persons as they shall judge most fit for that Work: and to Revise all the Old Books, and to determine what Books shall be Printed every Moneth, and to receive and examine the Printers Accompts.

This is a Method which I think will be both easie and effectual for establishing, and promoting of Bibliotheks in every Paroch throughout this Kingdom; neither do I foresee any material Objection, that can be made against any particular Article of it.

For it shall be Objected against the second Article, by some of the present Ministers, that if they shall happen hereafter to be removed from their paroch to another, they will be at a great loss for want of these Books, with which they have been accustomed of a long time.

This is easily answered, for when a Minister is removed from one paroch to another, he will immediatly have a right to all,

or at least a part of the Stipends of that paroch, till he be payed for his Books, and then with that Money he may buy what Books he thinks most necessary for himself, and give in to the Library of that other paroch to which he shal be Transplanted, and be payed for them after his removal.

It may be further Objected by the Ministers, that when the publick is Debitor, it is sometimes difficult to get payment; but this Objection is groundless here for in this case the publick is not Debitor, but every privat man is Debitor for his proportion of the vacant Stipends, to the Minister himself, or his Heirs and Assignes, ay and while he be payed for all the Books he gave in to the Bibliothek of that paroch.

But that which should move the Ministers to comply willing with this Article is, that thereby they both retain the use of their Books, and also secure the value of them, to themselves or their Heirs, whereas otherwise they might be lost or Sold for very little.

It may be Objected by others against the tenth Article, that one Moneths Cess, which amounts to 72000 pounds *Scots* by year, will be too great a Fond for buying and printing of Books yearly.

To this I answer, that if it be too great it must be so, either in respect of the Books it will buy and print, or in respect of the Persons that may pay it; but it is not too great in respect of the Books it will buy and print, but rather too little, for the printing of an large Book as the five volums of *Pools Criticks* upon the Bible, will more than exhaust all, and then what shal bring home New Books and Re-print them, and what shall maintain the Correspondence with all the printing places in *Europe*.

Neither is it too great in respect of the Persons that must pay it, for the half of it which is to be payed by the Heretors, is only the 120 part of their valued Rent, and their valued Rent is ordinarily but the third part of their real Rent, so that an Heretor of one thousand and two hundred pounds *Scots* of valued Rent which is commonly 3600 pounds of real Rent, shall pay only ten pounds *Scots* yearly, for maintaining and promoting of these Bibliothek.

Bibliotheks. And certainly it would be very unworthy of any Gentleman of such a Rent, to grudge the paying of ten pound *Scots* yearly, when for it, he, his Children and Tennents may have the free use of a well furnished Library, and of all the new Books & Gazets so soon as ever they are Printed. And I believe most part of Gentlemen bestow more than this Proportion of their Rents upon Books yearly, & yet are but very insufficiently provided. Yea, many Noblemen and Gentlemen bestow more upon News; so that this half Months Cels will be no new Burden upon them, but a more effectual and profitable way of bestowing that Money upon Books and News, which now is Expended to little or no purpose.

As for the other half Months Cels which is to be payed by the Ministers, certainly none of them will grudge at it, seing any Ministers Share of it (even although it were divided amongst them by equal Parts) will amount only to 36 pounds *Scots*, which is not so much as the yearly Annualrent of that Sum, which now a Minister must necessarily be supposed to bestow upon Books, before he can be any way tolerably furnished for his Studies. For supposing there be 1000 Ministers in *Scotland* that shall have Libraries for their own use; then each Ministers Share of this 36000 pounds *Scots*, will be only 36 pound, which is only the Annualrent of 600 pound *Scots*: and I believe there are few present Ministers, but have bestowed more than this Sum upon Books; so that the half Months Cels upon them, is not to be looked upon as a Burthen, but as a way to preservetheir Money; seing by this Method, the yearly Annualrent of a small Sum of Money, will furnish them with a compleat Library, and incomparably more Books, than both the Stock and Annualrent of a far greater Sum can do otherways.

But further, there are several other Considerations which may make the Ministers willing condescend to this Article; for either they may prevail with the king & parliament to ordain this half Months Cels to be payed out of the Bishops Rents, or to lay it on upon the Teinds of the Kingdom, which do justly belong

to the Maintainance of the Worship of God, or some honest hearted Patron Titular of the Teinds, may Gift or Mortifie as much as may free his Minister of his Proportion of it, But though none of these should succeed at present, yet the Tacks of the Teinds must run out at length, and then the Kirk will be sufficiently provided, not only to pay this half Months Cess, but even to pay the WHOLE, and free the Heretors of their SHARE of it.

It may be objected by others, that the Fond will be too little, and the Work will be but small and contemptible. But it is answered, That though it may be small at the beginning, yet it will not be despicable. for we know that *Rome* was not all built in one day, and it is demonstrable, that these Libraries will by this Fond in a few years become very great and considerable, so that the very meanest of them may compare with the most famous Libraries in the World; for this Fond will Print nine or ten Sheets of Paper dayly, which is enough for any man to read, and this 10 Sheets dayly, will be 3000 Sheets yearly, which will be ten large Volumns of 300 Sheets to each Volumn; so that in 100 years, this will be 1000 large Volumns, consisting of three hundred thousand Sheets of Paper; which with the Books that will be given in to the Libraries from time to time, by the Ministers and Heretors, may do much to comprehend all the valuable Books extant.

But further, this Degree of Perfection in these Libraries, may be much sooner attained, if the King and Parliament shall think fit to Augment this Cess upon the Heretors for some years, or for Printing of some select Books; or if a more easie and speedy way of Printing can be Invented than what is now in use, which I am perswaded may be done, if men of Sense were encouraged to apply themselves unto it.

Lastly, it may be objected that the different Perswasions amongst Ministers may mar all this Work; But it is answered, That though the different Perswasions amongst Ministers, may obstruct the free borrowing and lending of Books amongst them, yet that needs be no hinderance to the settling and increasing of the Biliotheks in every Paroch, or to the paying of their Shares for maintaining

of the Printing House, and for Printing such Books as shall be thought most necessary.

What hath been said, I hope is sufficient to convince any man, that there is no difficulty in this Work, if we be willing to set about it. Therefore I shall in the next place, lay before you some Considerations taken, 1. From the Advantageousness of the Work. 2. From the Honourableness of it. And 3. From the Duty that lies upon us to provide our Ministers in all things necessary for their Ministry, which may serve for Arguments to persuade all persons willingly and cordially to set about this Work.

1. This Establishing of Bibliotheks in every Paroch, will not only remedy the forementioned Inconveniencies and Difficulties of Students, but it will be several ways Advantageous to the Countrey, For 1. It will be a considerable Manufactory, and will Maintain many People at Work. 2. It will keep all that Money in the Kingdom, which now goes out for buying of Books and Paper. 3. It will encourage young Men to follow their Studies in their owne Countrey, and thereby prevent their spending their Fortunes Abroad, and many other considerable Inconveniencies that young Men are exposed unto in strange Countreys. 4. It will allure and provoke Gentlemen to bestow their spare Hours in reading of new Books, which may prove a good Means to restrain them from Gaming and Drinking, by preventing that uneasie and wearisome Idleness of Mind, which is the Parent of these, and many other Enormities. 5. It will in a short time, carry away the whole Trade of Printing from all the rest of Europe.

But 2. As this Establishing of Bibliotheks in every Paroch will be Advantageous, so it will be very Honourable to this Countrey. For 1. We shall not only be the first and the only Nation for a while, that shall have this regular and useful plenty of Books. But 2. Hereby all sorts of Learning will mightily encrease and flourish amongst us, and though we be not a great or a rich People, yet we may be a wise and a learned People. Yea further, these Libraries in two or three hundred years will be so full and compleat, that the most Famous and Magnificent Libraries

ries in the World, shal not outdo the meanest Library in any Pa-
 roch of this Kingdom, for numbers of valuable and useful Books,
 as hath been already demonstrat.

3. If it be our Duty to provide our Ministers with all things
 necessary for them as a competent Stipend, Manse and Gleib, that
 they being free from worldly Cares, may have time to study and
 Instruct their People. Then certainly it must much more be our
 Duty, to provide them with competent Libraries of the most
 useful Books, seing without these they cannot study, nor be fit-
 ted sufficiently for Instructing their People in the Truths of their
 Religion.

4^{thly}. Seing God hath made all men by nature desirous of
 Knowledge, undoubtedly the satisfying of this desire, must be
 a considerable part of our natural felicity; for the only delight
 of our Souls, which are our better part, in which the Body
 doth not partake, is the delight She taketh in Knowledge and
 Contemplation. And seing God hath so ordered it, that the
 most part of our Knowledge should be communicat to us from our
 Fore-fathers, and Contemporaries, especially by their Books and
 Writings, It doth necessarily follow, that the establishing and pro-
 moting of Libraries in every Paroch, whereby the use of all sorts
 of Books may be rendered most free and universal, and may be
 perfectly secured to all our posterity, will be a very effectual
 means of increasing Knowledge and Learning amongst us, and of
 helping us, and our posterity to search out all the Works of our
 God, that we may admire and adore his Infinit Wisdom and Good-
 ness, in making them such, and in so wouderfully disposing of
 them for his own purposes and Glory, which seems to be one
 principal end, for which our Blessed Maker hath made us ratic-
 ual Creatures.

These things being duely considered, I hope what hath been
 said will be sufficient, to perswade all lovers, and encouragers of
 Learning, that this founding and promoting of Bibliotheks in
 every Paroch throughout this Kingdom, is both necessary and
 easie, advantagious and honourable, our Interest and our Duty.

F I N I S.





