

To the Mayor of Newcastle: To be communicated to the Aldermen and others whom it doth concern.

Whitehall, 18th December, 1656.

GENTLEMEN AND MY VERY GOOD FRIENDS,

My Lord Strickland, who is one of our Council, did impart to us a Letter written from yourselves to him, according to your desire therein expressed; which occasions this return from us to you.

As nothing that may reflect to the prejudice of your outward Good, either Personal or as you are a Civil Government, shall easily pass with us; so, much less what shall tend to your discouragement, as you are Saints, to your Congregations, gathered in that way of fellowship commonly known by the name of Independents, whether of one judgment or other:-'this' shall be far from being actually discountenanced, or passively 'left to' suffer damage, by any applying themselves to me. I do, once for all, give you to understand, that I should thereby destroy and disappoint one of the main ends for which God hath planted me in the station I am in.

Wherefore I desire you in that matter to rest secure. True it is that two Ministers, one Mr. Cole and one Mr. Pye, did present to me a Letter in the name of divers Ministers of Newcastle, the Bishoprick of Durham and Northumberland; of an honest and Christian purpose: the sum whereof I extracted, and returned an Answer thereunto;-a true Copy whereof I send you here enclosed. By which I think it will easily appear, that the consideration of my kindness is well deserved by them; provided they observe the condition 'there' expressed; which in charity I am bound to believe they will; and without which their own consciences and the world will know how to judge of them.

Having said this, I or rather the Lord, require of you, That you walk in all peaceableness and gentleness, inoffensiveness, truth and love towards them, as becomes the Servants and Churches of Christ. Knowing well that Jesus Christ, of whose diocese both they and you are, expects it. Who, when He comes to gather His People, and to make Himself "a name and praise amongst all the people of the earth,"-He "will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and will get them praise and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame." And such "lame ones" and "driven out ones" were not the Independents only, `and Presbyterians, a few years since, by the Popish and Prelatical Party in these Nations; but such are and have been the Protestants in all lands,-persecuted, and faring alike with you, in all the Reformed Churches. And therefore, knowing your charity to be as large as all the flock of Christ who are of the same Hope and Faith of the Gospel with you; I thought fit to commend these few words to you;-being well assured it is written in your heart, So to do with this that I shall stand by you in the maintaining of all your just privileges to the uttermost.

And committing you to the blessing of the Lord, I rest,  
Your loving friend,

OLIVER P.