

For the Honourable Committee of Lancashire sitting at Manchester. (I desire the Commander of the Forces there to open this Letter if it come not to their hands.)

'Preston,' 17th August, 1648.

GENTLEMEN,

It hath pleased God, this day, to show His great power by making the Army successful against the common Enemy.

We lay last night at Mr. Sherburn's of Stonyhurst, nine miles from Preston, which was within three miles of the Scots quarters. We advanced betimes next morning towards Preston, with a desire to engage the Enemy; and by that time our Forlorn had engaged the Enemy, we were about four miles from Preston, and thereupon we advanced with the whole Army: and the Enemy being drawn out on a Moor betwixt us and the Town, the Armies on both sides engaged; and after a very sharp dispute, continuing for three or four hours, it pleased God to enable us to give them a defeat; which I hope we shall improve, by God's assistance, to their utter ruin: and in this service your countrymen have not the least share.

We cannot be particular, having not time to take account of the slain and prisoners; but we can assure you we have many prisoners, and many of those of quality; and many slain; and the Army so dissipated 'as I say.' The principal part whereof, with Duke Hamilton, is on south side Ribble and Darwen Bridge, and we lying with the greatest part of the Army close to them; nothing hindering the ruin of that part of the Enemy's Army but the night. It shall be our care that they shall not pass over any ford beneath the Bridge, to go Northward, or to come betwixt us and Whalley.

We understand Colonel-General Ashton's are at Whalley: we have seven troops of horse or dragoons that we believe lie at Clitheroe. This night I have sent order to them expressly to march to Whalley, to join to those companies; that so we may endeavour the ruin of this Enemy. You perceive by this Letter how things stand. By this means the Enemy is broken: and most of their Horse having gone Northwards, and we having sent a considerable party at the very heel of them; and the Enemy having lost almost all his ammunition, and near four-thousand arms, so that the greatest part of the Foot are naked; therefore, in order to perfecting this work, we desire you to raise your County; and to improve your forces to the total ruin of that Enemy, which way soever they go; and if you shall accordingly do your part, doubt not of their total ruin.

We thought fit to speed this to you; to the end you may not be troubled if they shall march towards you, but improve your interest as aforesaid, that you may give glory to God for this unspeakable mercy. This is all at present from,

Your very humble servant,  
OLIVER CROMWELL.