

WORCESTERSHIRE

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), Lord Protector of England (1653–1658)
to the Worcestershire Justices of Peace

Whitehall, 25 March 1654

We doubt not but you have heard before this time of the hand of God going along with Us in defeating the late rebellious insurrection. And We hope that, through His blessing upon Our labours, an effectual course will be taken for the total disappointment of the whole design. Yet knowing the resolution of the common enemy to involve this nation in new calamities, We conceive Ourselves and all others entrusted with preserving the peace of the nation obliged to endeavour in their places to prevent and defeat the enemies' intentions.

And therefore as a measure specially conducing to that end, We do earnestly recommend to you to take order that diligent watches (such as the law has appointed) be daily kept for taking a strict account of all strangers in the County, which will not only be a means to suppress all loose and idle persons, but may probably cause some of those who come from abroad to kindle fires here to be apprehended and seized upon, especially if care be taken to secure all them that cannot give a good account of their business, and may also break all dangerous meetings and assemblies together.

Herein We do require and shall expect your effectual endeavours, knowing that if what by law ought to be done were done with diligence in this respect, the contrivance of such dangerous designs as these would be frustrated in their bud, or kept from growing to a maturity.

I rest your affectionate friend.

Rebecca Warner, ed. *Epistolary Curiosities, Series the First. Consisting of Unpublished Letters of the Seventeenth Century Illustrative of the Herbert Family* (Bath: Cruttwell, 1818):51–53.