

A POLITICAL PRÉCISE

Josiah Berners, Member of Parliament for Middlesex (1654–1655)

to John Hobart (1605–1683), Member of Parliament for Norwich (1654–1659)

30 November 1657

I received your letter and have conferred with divers secluded Members, and others, and find them in a manner all to-seeke and irresolved what to do. Some apprehend danger in the £1.000 penalty, though not guilty. Some think they shall be necessitated to build (if they go in) upon that unrighteous foundation already laid; others think that if they go in they must either countenance by their presence and silence or else inflame by opposition, that therefore the best way is to keep out and let them heighten him as high as they will, and that it will make him fall the sooner. The truth is he is generally feared but not beloved, and men are grown wary.

The writs for the Other House go out next week, which House is (by their negative voice) to be a screen for him whatever the temper of the House of Commons be or shall be. If you all could agree to go in at first (which I cannot hope) you might then outvote that party or faction which receive of the public more than they pay to it, and so perhaps make him to dissolve you, which is the best we can expect at present as things stand, men observing the powers now as some heathen worship Satan, not for good but that he may not hurt them. I asked one of the party what good the Protector had done since his reign; he instanced in the ordinance for triers, and what good there is in that the enclosed will partly tell you.

The Protector has warmed Fairfax by attendance to no purpose and, searching still for Buckingham. The Protector may voluntarily marry his two daughters in a week to the sons of two cavaliers, and Fairfax must be blamed for marrying one daughter to please his wife more than himself.

The Act about new buildings does not bring in the tenth of what was expected. Mardicke will cost money and blood to maintain, and the allies of Sweden and Portugal grow low and Holland high, and money must be had to help them and to buy a Crown, too, for home. The soldiers are angry, but dare not trust one another.

The Lord has promised all things shall work together for the best for them that love Him. To His blessed guidance and protection I commit you, with the tender of my own and my wife's best respects to yourself and worthy Lady.

C.H. Firth, "Letters Concerning the Dissolution of Cromwell's Last Parliament," *English Historical Review* 3 (1892):104.