

Date sent: 16 October 1554¹

Date received:

From [person]: James Haddon

To [person]: Frankfurt congregation

From [place]: Strasbourg

To [place]: Frankfurt

Original language: English

Transcript of Later copy

Ref: Denbighshire Record Office, Plas Power MSS, DD/PP/839 35 - 37

Other Versions: None

To my beloved in the Lorde the godlye assembled Engleshe men att Franckeforde

Dearlie beloved in the Lorde I have received your letters, whearin you shewe yow(re) good opinion of me, & good wylles towards me, for the whiche I give you most hartie thankes.² And as concerning your request that I shuld cume and be one of yow(re) ministers, & preache emongest yow: it is not unknown (I suppose) to sum(m)e of your assemble & cumpenie, that I am no minister. In England I did preache, but hit was bie expresse com(m)andement of the higher powers, & of the kyng himselffe, in which case you knoe I owghte to obei, nether was hit any offence given on my partie. And emongst you, if theare weare suche necessitie that you hadd no choise, then more were to be consydered. But thankes be to God, as I understand: you have & maye have choise of them, which have greate gyftes & be ministers

¹ Written earlier, see postscript of this letter, probably in response to call to ministry from Frankfurt congregation.

² Haddon's letter of invitation has not survived, though it probably followed the same lines as that to John Knox, 24 Sept 1554, DD/PP/839 32-3; *Troubles* xix-xx. Haddon's refusal is mentioned in *Troubles* xvi.

indeed. And yet is there another thing which dwelleth necessarily withholde me for comynge to you as yet, to any such purpose, the which thing wylleth me to forward my selfe whiles God geaveth me opportunitie, and I thinke you will be lothe to [p 36] hynder me therefrom when ye knowe it.

I have often thoughte with my selfe, how necessarie the knowledge of the tongues be at theis tymes speciallye the greke and the hebrew tonge. Many I thinke there be of ow(re) engleshe nation, which have indifferent good knowledge in the greke, but verie fewe that be substantially well learned in the hebrew, which tongue yet is most necessarie that sum(m) of us have exacte knowledge in. For thadversaries have & do often upbraid the translations of the most sacred bible, thoghe the sence doo not varie, yet sumtyme for the words. (I myself have entered in to the understanding of that tonge soo alreadie as I have good hoope, bie gods grace) to atteine to substantiall knowledge therein, if I may have tyme, & be not otherwise hyndered. I doo knowe fewe of ow(re) men (thowghe sum(m) I doo knowe) which I thinke doo mynde soo as I doo but very fewe, I meane for order in their studies, Sum(m) be past, for age, sum(m) have not hadd like occasion of enterance before time, sum(m) fynde hit not in themselves to be their calling & diverslie as please God bie his spirite to move & work, of them I meane which purpose not to pass forthe their tyme in idleness. And yet is hit most necessarie (for diverse causes) [1 Cor.13 - in margin] that sum(m) be moved that way. And also hit is rehersed for one of the gyftes & speciall notes of Godes churche. [Eph. 4 - in margin]. If I had respecte to myne owne private com(m)oditie, quietness, & ease: then cowlde I contente myselfe with that knowledge I have in the said tonge, & hit wolde sufficiently serve my turne, & so my studies mighte be lesse laboriowse. But when I consider further the com(m)oditie that maye be to others, & to the whole churche of God: then I thanke God I can verie well finde

in my harte to take [upon - crossed out] the more peines that waye which I thinke maye be most profitt. Yea hit is a singuler delichte to me & no peines, when I consider thende thereof. And hit hathe pleased God to gyve me good tyme thearto now, & shall please hym mahappes to continew hit paradventure not. I thynke it my parte thearfore & doo entend bie his grace, to take tyme whiles I maye have hit to his honow(re) & glorie, as hit shall after please hym best to appoint. My yeares also be not so manie, but I may verie well endewer the travayle in studies yet, as I have done. Now I thinke you wowlde not wylle me to chaunge this my purpose or to leave in this couurse of my studies, or to breake them clene of. And the rather I thinke yow will not now be an hynderance to this my purpose, because you have & may have them which be as sufficiente to serve your request, & meter, consyderinge that I cowlde not well satisfie yow(re) desier accordynge to yow(re) requeste, & as yow wolde looke for, yff I shuld cum(m)e to yow, becawse I am no ministre. And theis tymes (you see) be verie perellowse that yff a man shulde take upon him thoffice of a ministre publickly in such an assemble, beinge no ministre, & so known: [37] (as I am) hit wolde not onlie be occasion of obloqui to theadversarie partie: but also, hit wolde be offensive even to the godlie. Otherwise yff I wolde herkin to the fleshe, ye know, I may easlie consider, what a com(m)oditie hit mighte be to me to be emongest yow, who shewe yowre selves to beare me so miche good wylle & to thynke so well of me: that I do assure my self I cowlde lacke nothyng to doo me good, that any of yow have. But suche thynges in this cawse be not cheaflye or principally to be considered. But lyke as ye have of good zeale (assembled togethers in the trewe feare of god) shewed yow(re) selves to mynde y(a)t yow thyncke best, & most to his honour: so I thoughte hit my parte with the same zeale & mynde to lett yow understand what I iudge best & most to the furtherance of the same. Thus yow & I myndynge that we

iudge most for Godes honowre & the profitt of his church, shewe ow(re) selves to be moved with his spirite. By the whiche spirite, hys gyftes & graces be distributed as he knoweth best, according to the proportion & rule of faith, measureable in every member of the mystical bodie of ow(re) saviowre. And I beseche God to encrease his graces towardes his, whersoever thei be, & to gyve yow understandinge and wysdome to doo that shall be best & most to his honowre, & to preserve yow all and every one of you unblameable at the cum(m)inge of ow(re) Lord & Savioure Jesus Christe, Amen.

At Argentine the 16o Octob(er) 1554

youres in the Lorde

James Haddon

I made this answeare long before the present date, butt differred to send hit till I had a convenient messenger. This I say leste ye shulde thyncke any thyng in that hit is so long before you have answeare.