

Date sent: 19 July 1555

Date received:

Writer: Richard Chambers

Recipient: Richard Cox

Location of origin: Zürich

Destination: Frankfurt

Original language: English

Ref: Denbighshire Record Office, Plas Power MSS, DD/PP/839 52-53

Transcript of Later copy

Other Versions: None

Viro Doctissimo D. Doctori Coxo suo singulari amico Francofordicae

S(i)r

Albeit I hade litell to write to you at this time, yet I colde not but of dutye rendre most hartie thanks for yo(u)r paynes taken & imployed to the helping of the congregation, & that you were in soche willing redines when as the present necessitie of the churche most required, trusting that he which hath begon y(a)t worke in you will perfect it to the supplying of yo(u)r aforsaid necessitie to the great comfort of our contreyemen, & to the alluring of many out of our miserable afflicted contree to enioy the freedome of y(a)t church there, y(a)t by the meanes of your good advise & other your helpers for this laudable minsterie thanks may be geven to God of many of yo(u)r behalf for the gift geven unto you.¹ For to warne you I nede not, for y(a)t you know it better then I, of what necessitie discipline is in every congregation which is as it were the bandes &

¹ Chambers indulging in some fulsome thanks to Cox for coming to the rescue of the Frankfurt church. This does support the theory that there was a co-ordinated effort to take over at Frankfurt and that Chambers played an important part in persuading Cox to come.

sinews² holding together the ioyntes of all com(m)on wealths, but how requisite it is in Christes com(m)onwealth Paul to his Corinthians maketh playne, who to sett all things in an order is in that Epistle most diligent (as you well knowe) teaching us that god is not the auctor of discorde but of peace³; as thogh the want of discipline dissolveth peace & bringeth in confusion. I dout not therefore but by yo(u)r wisdom you will so provide y(a)t *omnia decenter fiant et secundum ordinem*, that ther be non suche ther emonges you of whom Paul complayneth, willing his Thessalonians to beware of them, yea & that in the name of our Lord Jesu Christe they sholde withdrawe themselves from every brother that behaveth himself inordinatly;⁴ which thing I dout not you both can & will moche better consider then I can meane, so that as touching such as cometh thither under the pretence of religion, I mistrust not but you will follow S. Paules rule that none be idell, yat if any wolde not worke the same sholde not eate,⁵ providing allways that ther be non emonges you herde of *versantes inordinate, nihil operis facientes, sed curiose agentes*, purging yo(u)r congregation of them, but moste specially forseing that ther be non suche as by false doctrine may pervert the truth of Christe, but such be advoyded and banished the congregation after thadvertisment of S. Paul which sayeth, *haereticum hominen post unam atque alteram admonitionem devita*, which thinges I dout not by your wholsom counsell and advise shalbe deuly consydered, and remedie provided accordingly.⁶ As touching your preacher Mr Alvey,⁷ if ether through adge(sic) or other troubles his memory be so broken y(a)t he shall seme to you in teaching not so well to content the congregation,

² 'Sinews' was the standard metaphor employed by Calvin to describe discipline.

³ 1 Corinths? A very interesting warning about imposing discipline on the congregation.

⁴ Thess

⁵ Bib ref Chambers was involved in the financial support of exiles who had few resources of their own and this might be a reference to the conditions for the distribution of funds.

⁶ Bib ref from Vulgate? and link with excommunication. Chambers appears to be implying the shunning of the remnant of 'Knoxian' supporters who remained at Frankfurt.

⁷ Richard Alvey, Garrett 71-2; ODNB.

I suppose it were not amise (under yo(u)r correction) to call as an helper & an easer of his age Maister Nowell⁸ whose knowledge & other giftes in this behalf, as they be best knowen to you, so wolde thei do good service in that kynde of minsterye, howbeit this thing must be done with iudgement & discretion as you know better then I can tell you, so that it be not to the discouraging of Mr Alvey either altogether his discharge, but yet that he might be put to it more seldome, as it shall beste seme to you with the rest of the Elders.⁹ As touchinge Mr Knoxe, one thing I wolde wishe yat some [p53] way may be taken yat he by rashe and inconsiderat writing do in no wise molest, and trouble the church,¹⁰ for the remedy wherof if you think it so met, no wayes were better then to be in hande either with Mr A Lasco, or Mr Martyr to ware him therof,¹¹ who shall by Godes grace prevaile with him in suche sorte y(a)t in this matter he be more circumspect, and less subiect to his owne wilfull affections, & I distrust in neithers goodwill in this behalf, nor yet of yo(u)r wisdom & diligence in the furthering both of this & other thinges. Following in S. Pauls steps to do what you can to ware all men, to teach all men in all wisdom making all men perfect in Christ Jesu,¹² wherin I trust you also labour & stryve even as far forth as his strength worketh in you mightely, which I pray God effectly to work yo(u)r owne soles helth, the edifyeing of the church, the promoting of his honour & glory, Amen. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be ever more with you. Amen. I pray you S(i)r do my hartie com(m)endations to Maistres Coxe unto whom and unto us all I wishe the peace of

⁸ Both Alexander and his brother Lawrence Nowell were in exile, Garrett 237-8; 238-9; ODNB. Alexander is probably meant here, he was in Strasbourg and probably came to Frankfurt earlier than has previously been thought.

⁹ Chambers was suggesting a pastoral strategy to assist the failing Alvey without making him feel redundant. He appears to be using 'elders' to mean the ministerial group who were running the Frankfurt congregation at this stage and who had signed the 5 April letter to Calvin.

¹⁰ Although not named in the notes of 15 March 1555, Chambers seems to have been closely involved in the charges of treason against John Knox. He remains deeply concerned that the intemperate language of Knox's writings was damaging the exile cause.

¹¹ Chambers' solution to the Knox problem was to ask John A'Lasco and Peter Martyr to warn the Scot to moderate his language.

¹² Bib ref

conscience in Christ. Amen. From Zurich the 19^o of July 1555 with the rude hand of
yours assuredly to com(m)ande

Richard Chambers¹³

The 13th of July Mr Mackbray¹⁴ came to me with Mr Sorbie¹⁵ to declare the cause
wherfore he had said before, that he hated me most extremely excusing his wordes yat
he meant my faultes, which were contentious perturbation, disdaigne, *temerarium*
iudicium, presumption. To whom I answered, that he had transgressed the rule of
Godes worde for not admonishinge me therof,¹⁶ & therfor it was an evident signe he
hated the person for as moche as he endeavoured(sic) not to amende the vices.

Conclusion was that except I wolde reconcile my self to the congregation in being
sorey for my faultes he wolde stande no otherwais my frende. Moreover he opened
another grudge which was y(a)t I hindered his studies the last wynter,¹⁷ and also had
lost Mr Knoxe his good name.¹⁸ To whome I said I colde not reconcile my self to the
congregation excepte I wolde play the hypocrite for as much as I had not offended, &
as touching the other towne I neither troubled his studies y(a)t I remembred, and as for
Mr Knoxe ther is no man whom I have & do esteem more, therefore it semed to me he
declared but his fantasies & dremes.¹⁹ He added forther in talke that one of the
magistrats said, yat I had done enough as touching Mr Knoxe to losse my head.²⁰

¹³ The copyist made this look like a signature which possibly means he had the original in front of him.

¹⁴ John Mackbriar Garrett 223-4; find Durkan ref

¹⁵ Thomas Sorbie, Garrett 291.

¹⁶ Matt 15? check

¹⁷ Possibly a reference to Chambers' role as the distributor of funds.

¹⁸ Chambers' involvement in the treason charge.

¹⁹ In view of Chambers' remarks about Knox earlier in the letter this seems disingenuous.

²⁰ A revealing anecdote.