

125.

**WILLIAM [PRINCE] OF ORANGE,
to the DUTCH CHURCHES in ENGLAND.**

Delft, Thursday, 26 February 1573*.

§ 1. *I trust that hitherto you have sufficiently been able to observe my desire to restore liberty to your poor fatherland, in political as well as religious matters, and how I have suffered innumerable difficulties and even risked my life to attain this end. 2. If my power were as great as my good will I should be content to take the whole burden upon my shoulders, without troubling anyone in any way (which you may have noticed from my not having troubled you much ere this), insomuch that I should desire, at the risk, if possible, of my own life, to redeem the country or to deliver it from the slavery in which its property, its bodies and souls are held, without expense to anybody. 3. But as my wish and my own power are not sufficient for such a task, I am forced to ask help, if not from all true Christians whom this matter undoubtedly concerns, at least from those whom it seems to concern particularly, as being of one and the same country, and especially from you who, by God's grace, have gone to a place of peace and quietude. You all see and know that the need is very great. 4. You have seen how I had restored liberty to a great part of Holland, Zeland and Guelderland and many places of Brabant, and afterwards been forced to abandon a great deal of it, on account of the treachery and murder in France, and through want of soldiers who in consequence of the same treachery failed to join me. In short, you see that I am reduced to such distress, that if the necessary help is refused to me, I shall be forced to abandon all that yet remains in my hands. 5. On the other hand, if you timely and earnestly assist me, as you have on many occasions promised to do, I hope, with God's help, to retain Holland and Zeland this winter easily, and next summer to harass the enemy more than ever. 6. The States of Holland have shown their good will towards this cause, not only by the great burdens which they have hitherto borne, but by those contributions which they lately volunteered to grant, promising to pay a certain number of soldiers, as long as it should be required, nay, freely offering their own persons, as indeed a third of the population arm themselves for the protection of the liberty gained. 7. But as there is no reason why this small country should bear the entire weight, seeing the burden, misery and loss which it suffers from other quarters, I do not doubt that you will feel ashamed of seeing the Hollanders more inclined to this cause than yourselves. Nay, I feel sure that you would not wish to return to the country if you had not assisted in its invasion with all your*

* On the day following the Prince wrote a short Letter to the Dutch communities of Norwich, Thetford and Ipswich, complaining of the little zeal which they showed in assisting their co-religionists of the Netherlands, exhorting them to greater charity and asking them to believe Lieven Calvaert, the bearer of the Letter. It is printed, from the original preserved in the Archives at Ypres, in *Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne, Prince d'Orange*, par M. Gachard, iii. 73.

power. 8. I know that many among you will, perhaps, excuse themselves from doing their duty by pretending to live in peace and freedom of conscience and, therefore, considering it unnecessary to show themselves liberal in the above matters. But, if such persons are not moved by Christian charity, which seeks the welfare of neighbours rather than one's own, I ask them to consider whether the war is waged solely against the Protestants of the Netherlands, or against all Protestants in general. And if it is waged against all, as they will be forced to acknowledge, and as is proved by various treacheries in France against the Reformed, do they think that they will remain in peace, because they are far away from the blows? 9. Again, if the country's gate were opened to them, through the labour of another person, I am persuaded that they would wish to return to their houses and other advantages which they had left. And would they not feel ashamed to eat their share of what others had bought with their own lives, without having contributed something of their own property? 10. David did not act in this way when he, longing for water from the well at Bethlehem, refused it in his great thirst, because three of his pious men had fetched it, at the risk of their lives, from the midst of the army of the Philistines. Far be it from me, he said, to drink the blood of these men. And would not you scruple to return to a country redeemed from slavery at the peril of your brethren; that is to say with David, to drink their blood? 11. Therefore, do not say, when you have contributed according to your duty and your means, that you have been liberal towards me and others, because you open your purses for yourselves and it is no liberality so to do. For no one, being a slave, will be considered liberal, if he buys himself free with a large sum of money. 12. If, then, you love your brethren, nay, if you love yourselves; it is now the season and the time to show it, the convenient time being once lost, is not easily found again. You will tell me that your will to help me is good, but that you have not the power and the means to do so. I will not rate anyone in this affair; let each consider what he is able to do, not like so many who wish to pass as rich the whole year round, but as poor when there is question of contributing something. 13. But as reasonable appraisers of the goods and riches which God has given you, you may deceive men, but not God who sees everything, and well knows what He has given you, and will justly punish you even in your goods, if you refuse to lend Him what you have before received from Him. You ought to cut off something from your abundance, your luxuries and the costliness of your food and clothing. 14. I know indeed that your commerce has not so flourished lately as it used to do, and that instead of gaining you have occasionally lost through the naval army which often indiscriminately attacked both parties. But pray, what do they gain who expose their goods, pledge their wives and children and risk, nay daily lose their own lives? 15. What do the Hollanders gain, whose trade is not at all better than yours, and who yet sustain the war and are often injured (to my great sorrow) by friends as well as by enemies? What does the poor soldier gain who is badly paid, fed and clothed, and is moreover every day in battle and in the cold? 16. I doubt not that if your heart is really stirred, and if there is any love and piety in you, ample means will be found to help me. The people of Israel, though very stiffnecked, when it was represented to them that something should be done to erect a tabernacle, without being asked showed themselves so ready, that in a few days everyone having contributed more than was required, it was necessary to sound the trumpet and to forbid more to be brought. 17. Nay, even when the golden calf was cast, everybody contributed his jewels, earrings &c. And we have seen that for a papal crusade pothandles and tankards were sold. In short you see how liberal superstitious people are towards their gods. And shall we permit superstition to surpass the true religion, Christ to have less influence with you than Antichrist with his followers; will you not be equally ready to give to God, who has given you everything, to reëstablish His Church, even if it were not for everyone and everywhere, but only for yourselves and your fatherland? 18. I should do you an injustice if I said more. I would rather have you examine yourselves, and consider yourselves not as wishing to give and contribute, but as receiving back a hundredfold, not as distributing,

to others, but as sowing for yourselves. And if anyone measures himself and considers to whom and why he gives, I doubt not that everything needful and necessary will be found. 19. You are requested to fit out, at your expense, a certain number of soldiers to serve the church under my government, and to pay them yourselves in order to avoid all suspicion. But if you disregard my admonition and intend not to do what you are bound to do, I declare before God and His Angels that I have done what I could, and that I have been abandoned by those who ought to have assisted me. 20. What I have written above will be more fully explained by the minister Lieven Calwaert. I pray the Almighty that He will prosper my efforts for the reestablishment of His church.

Copie.

Myn heeren Ic duncke dat tot noch toe ghy hebt moghen ¹ ghenouchsaemlick bekennen den goeden wille die my Godt ghegheuen heeft, om Vlieder arme vaderlant in vryheyt te stellen zo wel in tgene dat angaet de¹ politie¹ desselfs, als de religie ende hoe dat Ick verdraghen hebbe ontellicke moyelic- heden, dat Ic selfs myn eyghen leuen ghewaecht hebbe om tot desen ende te commen. Waert dat Ic zowel de macht² ² ende mogentheit hadde, als den goeden wille, Ick³ ware te vreden³ alle het last vp myn schouderen te nemen, sonder yemant eenichsins daer mede te bezwaren⁴. tWelck ghy hebt moghen verstaen⁵ vutedien dat Ic vlieden hier te vooren⁶ niet seer beswaert hebbe, Insulckerwys dat Ic soude begheeren ten coste van myn eighen leuen (waertmy moghelick) tlant vuttecoopen ofte verlossen van de slauernye⁷ der goederen, lichamen, ende zielen daer in het is, sonder dattet yemant yet costen soude. Maer vlieden ghemerct dat mynen wensch niet ³ en baet, ende dat myn eighen macht⁸ niet ghenouchsaem is⁹ voor zulcken last, Ic ben bedwonghen helpe te begheeren eyst¹⁰ niet an alle waere Christenen dien onghetwifelt dese zake belanct, ten minsten an die guene¹¹, den welcken (ghemerct sy van een lant zyn) de sake schynt naerder an te gaen. Ende namelick tot vlieden die vut sonderlicke weldaet gods zyt vertrocken in een plaetse der ruste ende stilheyt. Dat den noot zeer groot zy ziet ghy,

¹ Some corrector has underlined a good many words in the MS., and substituted others above the line. The latter are here printed in the text, and the replaced words recorded in footnotes. Ex. gr. in this case *den staet* is replaced by *de politie*.

² cracht.

³ Ic soude geraden vinden.

⁴ belasten.

⁵ erkennen.

⁶ voormaels.

⁷ diensbaerheyt.

⁸ crachten.

⁹ zyn.

¹⁰ so.

¹¹ Added above the line by the corrector.

ende daer es niemant onder V diess onwetende. Ghy¹² hebt 4
ghezien hoe dat ick¹³ een groot deel van Hollant, Zeelant, ende
Ghelderlant met vele plaetsen van Brabant tot¹⁴ liberteyt ghe-
bracht hadde, ende daernaer¹⁵ bedwonghen hebbe¹¹ gheweest een
groot deel daer¹¹ van¹⁴ te verlaten om de verraderie ende moort
in Vrancryc geschiet, ende duer het ghebrec des voetvolx twelc
my ter oorsaecken derzeluer¹⁶ verraderie ontbleuen is¹⁶. In
summa ghy siet dat Ic gebracht ben in zulcken vutersten
noot, dat so men my ontsecht de nootsakelicke assistentie, Ic
sal bedwonghen syn, tot mynen grooten verdriete te verlaten
al tgene dat my¹⁶ noch¹⁶ zeker end vaste in¹⁷ handen bleuen¹⁷
es. Ter contrarien so ghy naer vlieder middelen ende beloften 5
die ghy hier voor tyden¹⁸ ten vele stonden ghedaen hebt, my
bystaet in tyts, end met ernst, Ic hope duer de hulpe Gods,
dat Ick lichtelick zal connen¹⁹ Hollant ende Zeelant²⁰ desen
winter houden¹⁸, ende den naesten zomer den vyant meer dan
oyt benauwen. De Staten van Hollant hebben getoocht haren 6
goeden wille die zy hebben tot dese zake, zo wel inde groote
lasten die zy hier vooren hebben ghedraghen, als in de ghene
die zy nieuwelick van selfs sonder vermaent te syn, gheaccor-
deert hebben, belouende²¹ een zeker ghetal van crysluyden te²²
betalen alsolanghe alst den noodt verheysschen zal²². Ja pre-
senterende vrielick haere persoonen, ghelyc als nv inder daet
het derde deel des volx hem wapent om de beschermynge
der verworuen vryheyt. Maer ghelyc het gheen reden es dat 7
dit cleen lant al den last draghe ghemerct selfs den last, com-
mer, end verlies dat het lydt van ander canten, zo en twyfele
ic oock niet of ghy en sout vlieden schamen te sien dat de

¹² Ghy ziet, hoe dat ic hebbende onder myn beschuttynge
ghebracht, ende in vryheit bewaert.

¹³ tot—daernaer added in the margin by the corrector.

¹⁴ MS. dien after van, but crossed out.

¹⁵ MS. es toecommen, but crossed out and der—is written above it.

¹⁶ my noch ouerblyft van dat.

¹⁷ in—bleuen added above the line by the corrector.

¹⁸ Added by the corrector above the line.

¹⁹ MS. hanthouden an after connen, but crossed out.

²⁰ MS. all after Zeelant, but crossed out.

²¹ belouende souldie te gheuen. ²² so langhe alst noot syn sal.

Hollanders meer ghemoet zyn tot dese sake dan ghylieden. Ja ick ben versekert dat ghy nyet en soudet willen in het lant wederkeeren zonder met alle vlieder macht oock²³ gheholpen te hebben om daer²⁴ inbrueke²⁴ te doene. Ic weet wel ⁸ datter vele onder vlieden zullen gheuonden werden die mueghelick om haer te ontschuldeghen van haer deuoir, zullen voorwenden de ruste ende vryheit der conscientie waer in sy leuen, ende dat sy het daeromme onnoodich zullen achten, hen milde te bewysen in tgone alsbouden, Maer angaende de selue, eyst sake dat de Christelicke liefde, die eer souct tweluaren²⁵ haers²⁵ naesten dan haer²⁶ eyghen, hen niet beweecht, Ic bidde haer datse by henseluen oordeelen of de orloghe alleen gheschiet teghen²⁷ de Protestanten des Nederlants, of wel teghen²⁸ alle int ghemeene, nv so sy teghen²⁸ alle gheschiet ghelyc zy bedwonghen syn te bekennen, ende als deversche verraderie in Vrancryck vutgherecht teghen die vander religie, dat bewyst, dyncken sy altyts in ruste blyuen, om datse nv verre vande slaghen zyn? Voorder, indien de poorte des lants also geopent ⁹ wierde door eens anders aerbeyt, datse daer sekerlick mochten incommen, Ic vraghe haer ofse niet gheerne en souden wederkeeren in hare huysen ende ander prouffytten die zy verlaten hebben aldaer, te dyncke zy en zoudent niet loochenen. Zouden zy dan niet schaemroot werden also haer deel te willen eten van tgene dat d'ander souden ghecocht hebben met prys haers eighen leuens, sonder ten minsten daer vooren gestelt thebben een weinich van haeren²⁹ goeds²⁹? In deser wyse en ¹⁰ dede Dauid niet, de welcke begeerich zynde des waters vande put te Bethlehem, en wilde daervan³⁰ niet dryncken in synen grooten dorst, om dat drie van syne vrome mannen^{30a} tselue waren gaen halen duer tmiddel des leghers der Philistynen met gheuaerlicheyt haers leuens. Verre zy van my (zeit hy) dat Ic drincke tbloet deser mannen. En soudet ghylieden dan gheen conscientie maken weder te keeren int lant dat vande slauernie vutgecocht es met tpericle uwer broederen? Dat es te segghen haer bloet te drincken als Dauid zeit, ende hare

²³ Added above the line.²⁴ daer in den inval.²⁵ tgoet syns.²⁶ zyn. ²⁷ om.²⁸ tot.²⁹ haer goed.³⁰ dies.^{30a} 2 Sam. xxiii. 14—17.

smerten te ghenieten zonder die in eeneghen deele onderstant noch hulpe te willen doene? Daerom en dynct niet, als ghy zult ¹¹ ghegheuen hebben dat twelc v schuldeghe plicht heyscht, ende de macht toelaet, te zegghen dat ghy liberal zyt tot my ende anderen, ghy opent uwe bursen voor v selfs, ende ten es gheen liberaelheit dus te doen. Want men zal niet liberal noemen dien, die een slaue zynde, hem vutcoopt met een groote somme van pennynghen. Indien ghy dan lief hebt uwe broederen, Indien ¹² ghy segge ic v zeluen lief hebt, het es nv het saisoen ende den tyt dat te tooghen, Den bequamen tyt eens verloren zynde, en wort niet lichtelick wederom vonden. Ghy zult³¹ my segghen dat *vlieder* wille goet es my onderstant te doene, maer datter de macht ende middelen ghebreken, Ic en wil niemant schatten in dese zake, het staet by *V Liederen* te gaen in v zeluen, ende te bedencken wat ghy cont doen, niet ghelyc vele die willen alle het Jaer duer³² ryc geacht zyn ende³² alst comt wat te contribuieren dan³² willense voor aerme³³ anghezien zyn ende als³³ gheenen middel hebbende. Maer als billicke schat- ¹³ ters der goederen ende Rycdommen die v God ghegheuen heeft, Ghy muecht den menschen bedrieghen, maer niet God die alle dynghen siet, ende weet wel wat hy v heeft ghegheuen, ende die v rechuerdelic straffen sal in v goederen selfs, eyst dat ghy hem weighert te leenen tgene dat ghy te vooren van hem hebt ontfanghen. ghy behoort wat af te sniden van *vlieder* ouerdaet, wellusten, ende costelicheden so inder spyse als in de cleedren. In summa ghy moetet den wellusten benemen om tot *vlieder* prouffyte te bestellen, Ic weet oock wel dat ¹⁴ *vlieder* coophandel dese Jaeren zulcken train³⁴ niet gehat heeft als hy pleecht, ja dat inde stede van te winnen ghy muecht somtyts verlus vonden hebben omme d'armye ter see, die dicwils zonder onderscheet angetast heeft zo wel deen als dander *partie*. Maer Ic bid v wat winnen doch de ghene die in dese zake alle³⁵ haere goederen bystellen³⁵ wyf ende kindren te³⁷ pande³⁷

³¹ MS. *tot after zult*, but marked for erasure.

³² Added above the line.

³³ eenen dach ouerreden datse.

³⁴ *trec*.

³⁵ voorstellen.

³⁶ te pande stellen.

³⁷ Added above the line by the corrector.

setten³⁷ ende waghē haer eighen lyf³⁸, ja verliesent dagelick.
 Wat winnen die van Hollant wiens handelynghe[n] niet met ¹⁵
 allen beter es dan de uwe, die de orloghe onderhouden ende
 dicwils vele lyden (ten mynen grooten verdriete) zo wel van
 vrienden³⁹ als van vyanden⁴⁰. Wat wint den armen souldart,
 qualick betaelt, qualick ghevoet, qualick ghecleet, zynde daer
 en tusschen alle daghe inde slaghe[n] ende inde coude. Ic twi- ¹⁶
 fele niet, eyst dat vlieder herte waerlick geroert es, so daer
 in vlieden es eeneghe liefde, ja zo daer es een droppel godsa-
 licheyt in v, of daer en wort middel ghenouch gheuonden om
 te volbrenghe[n] myn zeer billicke begheerte. Het volck Israels
 hoe hartneckich het was als men hem voorleide wat³⁷ te brynghe[n]⁴¹
 tot oprechten des tabernacles⁴² heeft sonder versocht te zyn
 van selfs hem getoocht zo gereet dat in corte daghe[n] een
 yeder hebbende ghebracht meer dan dattet noodich was⁴³ van
 noode was³⁷ de trompette te slaen om te verbieden datmen
 niet meer brynghe[n]⁴⁴ zoude⁴⁴. Maer wat segghe Ic hier af selfs ¹⁷
 alst was ghecommen datmen zoude ghieten tgulden calf, daer
 was nyemant die niet⁴⁵ en brachte zyn juweelen, zyn oorspan-
 selen etc. Wy hebben gesien datmen om⁴⁶ een Pauwsche cruus-
 vaert⁴⁶ vercocht heeft³⁷ potysers ende kannen⁴⁷. Cortelick ghy siet
 hoe liberael de superstitieuse menschen zyn tot hare goden. Ende
 zullen wy toelaten dat de superstitie soude te bouen gaen de
 waere religie, dat Christus min zoude vermoghe[n] in v dan den
 Antichrist in de zyne. Zult ghy niet zo ghereet syn als sy
 om⁴⁸ gode te gheuen diet v al ghegheuen heeft om zyn kercke
 wederop te richten! Al eyst niet voor alle ende alomme ten
 minsten voor vlieden⁴⁹ ende⁴⁹ vlieder Vaderlant. Ick soude v ¹⁸

³⁸ leuen.³⁹ deen.⁴⁰ dander.⁴¹ MS. *wat dat* after *brynghe[n]*, but marked for erasion.⁴² MS. *dienden* after *tabernacles*, but marked for erasion.⁴³ MS. *dattet noodich was*, *het was van noode*, but *het was* marked for erasion, and *was* added above the line, after *noode*.⁴⁴ brochte.⁴⁵ MS. *niet*, but crossed out and *hy* written above it, a correction which seems to be wrong.⁴⁶ int Pausdom voor een cruuske.⁴⁷ MS. *ende ander dynghen* after *cannen*, but crossed out.⁴⁸ MS. *tot* after *om*, but crossed out.⁴⁹ in.

duncken onrecht te doen so ic meer zeide, Ic heb lieuer dat een yeder onder v hen ondersoucke ende hem achte niet als willende wat gheuen maer ontfanghen, niet als contribuerende maer als hondertfout wederontfanghende, nyet als vutdeelende tot een ander, maer als zayende voor henzeluen. Ende eyst dat hem een yegelick ondersouct ende metet, Indien segghe Ic een yeghelick behoorlick ouerlecht tot wien ende waerom hy geeft, Ick en twifele niet, of het en zy licht te vinden tgene dat behouftich ende zeer noodich is. Het es in summa 19 myn heeren dat ghy wilt toesien op te maken tot vlieder coste een zeker ghetal van knechten⁵⁰ om de kercke te dienen onder myn gouuernement⁵¹. De welcke om alle vpspraecke⁵² te schuwene⁵³, zullen door uwe handen betaelt zyn. Dit es tgene daerom ic v bidde voor v zeluen, ende voor uwe broederen⁵⁴. Maer eyst dat ghy als hier te vooren veracht myn vermanynghe, ende nyet voorghenomen hebt te doen als ghy schuldich zyt, Ic betughe van nv voorts voor God ende zynen Enghelen dat Ick⁵⁵ voor myn deel⁵⁶ ghedaen hebbe⁵⁶ in alles ende oueral⁵⁷ (Ic spreke voor den menschen) tgene dat Ick⁵⁸ hebbe connen doen⁵⁸. Ja een yeder als Ic achte zal bekenen dat Ic onachtsaemlick verlaten ben⁵⁹ gheweest van die der⁵⁹ welcker getrauwicheit my behoorde ghedient thebben tot bystant ende hulpe.

Siet hier myn Heeren tgene dat Ic vlieden wel hebbe 20 willen scryuen also vlieden tselue zal breeder verclaert werden met den stant der zaken van alhier by Meester Lieuen Calwaert** Dienaere des Goddelicken Worts. Hiermede⁶⁰ zal ick⁶⁰ den Almoghenden Heere bidden dat Hy⁶⁰ wil⁶⁰ voorspoedich maken mynen voornemen tot⁶¹ wederoprechtinghe van zyn

⁵⁰ mannen.

⁵¹ last.

⁵² verwyte.

⁵³ weeren.

⁵⁴ MS. broedereren.

⁵⁵ Added above the line by the corrector.

⁵⁶ Ic hebbe ghedaen van desen huere.

⁵⁷ by alle weggen.

⁵⁸ van my mochte comen.

⁵⁹ MS. hebben altered to ben.

** Lieven (or Livinus) Calwaert (Calvart, Calabart) was first Protestant minister at Delft, but became afterwards Secretary to the Council of State, and was frequently employed in missions and important negotiations; see Van der Aa, *Biographisch Woordenboek*.

⁶⁰ Ic zal in dese zake.

⁶¹ voor de.

ghemeente, ende⁶² gheuen yeghelick van v deyuere ende liefde die Hy gebiet, ende die zulcke eene goede zake verheyscht⁶³. Van Delft desen 26 dach Februarij 1573.

V Lieder goede Vrient Guillaume van Nassau.

Bouen stont geschreuen Aende Dienaeren Ouderlinghen²¹ ende Diaconen der gemeenten van Londen Norwits⁶⁴ Sandwits Medston⁶⁴ Colchester Ypswich ende Tetfort.

⁶² Hy wille.

⁶³ begheert.

⁶⁴ *Norwits—Medston* added in the margin.

