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**O**LIVER CROMWELL, styled sometimes "the uncrowned King of England," and Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, was born at Huntingdon, England, April 25, 1599, and died at Whitehall, London, Sept. 3, 1658. Born of a good family, he was educated at Cambridge, but left it at his father's death to take the management of the paternal property. He entered Parliament in 1629 and represented Cambridge in 1640, during the sitting of the Long Parliament, and the initial years of the civil war. Charles I was meanwhile asked to consent that the militia of the country should be controlled by the national legislature. To this, however, he would not agree, and in 1642 the King, rallying some 10,000 men about him, set up the royal standard at Nottingham under Prince Rupert and the Earl of Lindsay, and defied Parliament. The Parliamentary army, about 15,000 strong, mustered at Northampton under the Earl of Essex; to this army, Cromwell, who had now become a prominent member of the Opposition in Parliament and the leader of the branch of the Puritan party called "Independents," brought his Puritan troopers, known as "Cromwell's Ironsides," whose stubborn valor and zeal for the Parliamentary cause against the King made them almost invincible. At the battle of Marston Moor Cromwell commanded the victorious left wing, and on the reorganization of the army he was made lieutenant-general and commanded also at Naseby in June, 1645. In June, 1647, the King, having been defeated, was seized by his orders and removed into the custody of the Independents, and in 1649 he was tried, condemned, and executed, Cromwell being a member of the court which pronounced the sentence. In 1649, acting as lord-lieutenant, he subdued Ireland, and on the proclamation of Charles II by the Scottish royalists he was appointed commander-in-chief, and marching into Scotland, defeated the Scots at Dunbar, Sept. 5, 1650. On the same day of the following year he defeated the army of Charles II at Worcester. In April, 1653, the Rump Parliament, as it was then styled, was forcibly dissolved by Cromwell, who summoned a new Parliament and assumed the title of Lord Protector. Cromwell's death occurred at London in 1658, on the anniversary of his victories at Dunbar and Worcester. His character has been the subject of endless discussions and of indiscriminate praise and blame, but a more dispassionate estimate of his greatness now prevails. Cromwell's home policy was just and liberal toward the mass of the people and conducive to the prosperity of the country; while his foreign policy was such as to secure to England a position among nations more commanding than she had ever before occupied. He grasped power, and dispensed with the formality of Parliaments, only because he sought to promote, in the speediest manner, the welfare, happiness, and prosperity of his native land.

### SPEECH AT OPENING OF FIRST PROTECTIVE PARLIAMENT

DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 4, 1654

**G**ENTLEMEN,—You are met here on the greatest occasion that, I believe, England ever saw; having upon your shoulders the interests of three great nations with the territories belonging to them; and truly, I believe I may say it without any hyperbole, you have upon

your shoulders the interest of all the Christian people in the world. And the expectation is that I should let you know, as far as I have cognizance of it, the occasion of your assembling together at this time.

It hath been very well hinted to you this day that you come hither to settle the interests above mentioned: for your work here, in the issue and consequences of it, will extend so far, even to all Christian people. In the way and manner of my speaking to you, I shall study plainness, and to speak to you what is truth, and what is upon my heart, and what will in some measure reach to these great concernments.

After so many changes and turnings which this nation hath labored under, to have such a day of hope as this is, and such a door of hope opened by God to us, truly I believe, some months since, would have been beyond all our thoughts! I confess it would have been worthy of such a meeting as this is, to have remembered that which was the rise of, and gave the first beginning to, all these troubles which have been upon this nation: and to have given you a series of the transactions, — not of men, but of the providence of God, all along unto our late changes: as also the ground of our first undertaking to oppose that usurpation and tyranny which was upon us, both in civils and spirituals; and the several grounds particularly applicable to the several changes that have been. But I have two or three reasons which divert me from such a way of proceeding at this time.

If I should have gone in that way, then that which lies upon my heart as to these things — which is so written there that if I would blot it out I could not — would itself have spent this day: the providences and dispensations of God have been so stupendous. As David said in the like case (Ps. xl, 5), "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which

thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." Truly, another reason, unexpected by me, you had to-day in the sermon: you had much recapitulation of Providence; much allusion to a state and dispensation in respect of discipline and correction, of mercies and deliverances, to a state and dispensation similar to ours, — to, in truth, the only parallel of God's dealing with us that I know in the world, which was largely and wisely held forth to you this day: to Israel's bringing-out of Egypt through a wilderness by many signs and wonders, toward a Place of Rest, — I say toward it. And that having been so well remonstrated to you this day is another argument why I shall not trouble you with a recapitulation of those things; though they are things which I hope will never be forgotten, because written in better Books than those of paper; — written, I am persuaded, in the heart of every good man!

But a third reason was this: What I judge to be the end of your meeting, the great end, which was likewise remembered to you this day; to wit, healing and settling. The remembering of transactions too particularly, perhaps instead of healing, — at least in the hearts of many of you, — might set the wound fresh a-bleeding. And I must profess this unto you, whatever thoughts pass upon me: That if this day, if this meeting, prove not healing, what shall we do! But, as I said before, I trust it is in the minds of you all, and much more in the mind of God, to cause healing. It must be first in His mind: and He being pleased to put it into yours, this will be a day indeed, and such a day as generations to come will bless you for! I say for this and the other reasons I have forborne to make a particular remembrance and enumeration of things, and of

the manner of the Lord's bringing us through so many changes and turnings as have passed upon us.

Howbeit I think it will be more than necessary to let you know, at least so well as I may, in what condition this nation, or rather these nations, were, when the present government was undertaken. And for order's sake: It's very natural to consider what our condition was, in civils; and then also in spirituals.

What was our condition! Every man's hand almost was against his brother; at least his heart was; little regarding anything that should cement, and might have a tendency in it to cause us to grow into one. All the dispensations of God; his terrible ones; when he met us in the way of his judgment in a ten-years' civil war, and his merciful ones: they did not, they did not work upon us! No. But we had our humors and interests; and indeed I fear our humors went for more with us than even our interests. Certainly, as it falls out in such cases, our passions were more than our judgments. Was not everything almost grown arbitrary? Who of us knew where or how to have right done him, without some obstruction or other intervening? Indeed we were almost grown arbitrary in everything.

What was the face that was upon our affairs as to the interest of the nation; as to the authority in the nation; to the magistracy; to the ranks and orders of men,—whereby England hath been known for hundreds of years? A nobleman, a gentleman, a yeoman; the distinction of these: that is a good interest of the nation, and a great one! The natural magistracy of the nation, was it not almost trampled under foot, under despite and contempt, by men of levelling principles? I beseech you, for the orders of men and ranks of men, did not that levelling principle tend to the reducing

of all to an equality? Did it consciously think to do so; or did it only unconsciously practise toward that for property and interest? At all events, what was the purport of it but to make the tenant as liberal a fortune as the landlord?—which, I think, if obtained, would not have lasted long! The men of that principle, after they had served their own turns, would then have cried up property and interest fast enough! This instance is instead of many. And that the thing did and might well extend far is manifest; because it was a pleasing voice to all poor men, and truly not unwelcome to all bad men. To my thinking, this is a consideration which, in your endeavors after settlement, you will be so well minded of that I might have spared it here: but let that pass.

Now as to spirituals. Indeed in spiritual things the case was more sad and deplorable still; and that was told to you this day eminently. The prodigious blasphemies; contempt of God and Christ, denying of him, contempt of him and his ordinances and of the Scriptures: a spirit visibly acting those things foretold by Peter and Jude; yea, those things spoken of by Paul to Timothy! Paul declaring some things to be worse than the Antichristian state (of which he had spoken in 1 Tim. iv, 1, 2, under the title of the Latter Times), tells us what should be the lot and portion of the *Last Times*. He says (2 Tim. iii, 2-4): "In the Last Days perilous times shall come; men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful," and so on. But in speaking of the Antichristian state he told us (1 Tim. iv, 1, 2), that "in the *latter days*" that state shall come in; not the *last days*, but the *latter*,—wherein "there shall be a departing from the faith, and a giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy," and so on. This is only his description of the

*latter* times, or those of Antichrist; and we are given to understand that there are *last* times coming, which will be worse! And surely it may be feared, these are *our* times. For when men forget all rules of law and nature, and break all the bonds that fallen man hath on him; obscuring the remainder of the image of God in their nature, which they cannot blot out, and yet shall endeavor to blot out, "having a form of godliness without the power,"—surely these are sad tokens of the last times!

And indeed the character wherewith this spirit and principle is described in that place of Scripture is so legible and visible that he who runs may read it to be among us. For by such "the grace of God is turned into wantonness," and Christ and the Spirit of God made a cloak for all villainy and spurious apprehensions. And though nobody will own these things publicly as to practice, the things being so abominable and odious; yet the consideration how this principle extends itself, and whence it had its rise, makes me think of a second sort of men, tending in the same direction; who, it is true, as I said, will not practice or own these things, yet can tell the magistrate "that he hath nothing to do with men holding such notions: these, forsooth, are matters of conscience and opinion: they are matters of religion; what hath the magistrate to do with these things? He is to look to the outward man, not to the inward,"—and so forth. And truly it so happens that though these things do break out visibly to all, yet the principle wherewith these things are carried on so forbids the magistrate to meddle with them that it hath hitherto kept the offenders from punishment.

Such considerations, and pretensions to "liberty of conscience," what are they leading us toward? Liberty of conscience, and liberty of the subject,—two as glorious things to

be contended for as any that God hath given us; yet both these abused for the patronizing of villainies! insomuch that it hath been an ordinary thing to say, and in dispute to affirm, "that the restraining of such pernicious notions was not in the magistrate's power; he had nothing to do with it. Not so much as the printing of a Bible in the nation for the use of the people was competent to the magistrate, lest it should be imposed upon the consciences of men,"—for "they would receive the same traditionally and implicitly from the magistrate if it were thus received!" The afore-mentioned abominations did thus swell to this height among us.

So likewise the axe was laid to the root of the ministry. It was Antichristian, it was Babylonish, said they. It suffered under such a judgment that the truth is, as the extremity was great according to the former system, I wish it prove not as great according to this. The former extremity we suffered under was, that no man, though he had never so good a testimony, though he had received gifts from Christ, might preach, unless ordained. So now I think we are at the other extremity, when many affirm that he who is ordained hath a nullity, or Anti-Christianism, stamped thereby upon his calling; so that he ought not to preach, or not be heard. I wish it may not be too justly said that there was severity and sharpness in our old system! yea, too much of an imposing spirit in matters of conscience; a spirit unchristian enough in any times, most unfit for these times; denying liberty of conscience to men who have earned it with their blood; who have earned civil liberty, and religious also, for those who would thus impose upon them!

We may reckon among these our spiritual evils an evil that hath more refinedness in it, more color for it, and hath deceived more people of integrity than the rest have done; for

few have been caught by the former mistakes except such as have apostatized from their holy profession, such as, being corrupt in their consciences, have been forsaken by God and left to such noisome opinions. But, I say, there is another error of more refined sort, which many honest people whose hearts are sincere, many of them belonging to God, have fallen into; and that is the mistaken notion of the Fifth Monarchy.

Fifth Monarchy. A thing pretending more spirituality than anything else. A notion I hope we all honor, and wait, and hope for the fulfilment of: That Jesus Christ will have a time to set up his reign in our hearts, by subduing those corruptions and lusts and evils that are there, which now reign more in the world than, I hope, in due time they shall do. And when more fulness of the Spirit is poured forth to subdue iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness, then will the approach of that glory be. The carnal divisions and contentions among Christians, so common, are not the symptoms of that kingdom! But for men, on this principle, to betitle themselves that they are the only men to rule kingdoms, govern nations, and give laws to people, and determine of property and liberty and everything else,—upon such a pretension as this is: truly they had need to give clear manifestations of God's presence with them before wise men will receive or submit to their conclusions! Nevertheless, as many of these men have good meanings, which I hope in my soul they have, it will be the wisdom of all knowing and experienced Christians to do as Jude saith. Jude, when he reckoned up those horrible things, done upon pretences, and haply by some upon mistakes: "Of some," says he, "have compassion, making a difference;" others save "with fear, pulling them out of the fire." I fear they will give too often opportunity for this exercise! But I hope the same will be for their good. If

men do but so much as pretend for justice and righteousness, and be of peaceable spirits, and will manifest this, let them be the subjects of the magistrate's encouragement. And if the magistrate, by punishing visible miscarriages, save them by that discipline, God having ordained him for that end, I hope it will evidence love and not hatred, so to punish where there is cause.

Indeed this is that which doth most declare the danger of that spirit. For if these were but notions,—I mean these instances I have given you of dangerous doctrines both in civil things and spiritual; if, I say, they were but notions, they were best let alone. Notions will hurt none but those that have them. But when they come to such practices as telling us, for instance, that liberty and property are not the badges of the kingdom of Christ; when they tell us, not that we are to regulate law, but that law is to be abrogated, indeed subverted; and perhaps wish to bring in the Judaical Law, instead of our known laws settled among us: this is worthy of every magistrate's consideration, especially where every stone is turned to bring in confusion. I think, I say, this will be worthy of the magistrate's consideration.

Whilst these things were in the midst of us; and whilst the nation was rent and torn in spirit and principle from one end to the other, after this sort and manner I have now told you; family against family, husband against wife, parents against children; and nothing in the hearts and minds of men but "Overturn, overturn, overturn!" (a Scripture phrase very much abused, and applied to justify unpeaceable practices by all men of discontented spirits),—the common enemy sleeps not: our adversaries in civil and religious respects did take advantage of these distractions and divisions, and did practise accordingly in the three nations of England, Scotland and Ire-