

Speech 13 was to the Second Protectorate Parliament on 8th April 1657
Would state his doubts if there were opportunity given - if there were some
conference, or the like appointed.

MR. SPEAKER,

No man can put a greater value than I hope I do, and shall do, upon the
desires and advices of the Parliament. I could in my own heart aggravate,
both concerning the Persons advising and concerning the Advice;-readily
acknowledging that it is the Advice of the Parliament of these Three Nations.
And if a man could suppose it were not a Parliament to some; (Malignants
there are who have such notions)-yet doubtless it should be to me, and to us
all that are engaged in this common Cause wherein we have been engaged. I
say surely it ought to be a Parliament to us! Because it arises as a result of
those issues, and determinations of Settlement, that we have laboured to
arrive at! And therefore I do most readily acknowledge the weight of authority
'you have' in advising these things.

I can aggravate also to myself the general notion of the Things Advised-to; as
being things which tend to the settlement of the chiefest Interests that can fall
into the hearts of men to devise or endeavour-after. And at such a time, 'too;'
when truly, I may think the Nation is big with expectation of something that
may add to their 'security of' Being.-I therefore must needs put a very high
esteem 'upon' and have a very reverent opinion of anything that comes from
you.

And so I have had of this Instrument:-and, I hope, so I have expressed. And
what I have expressed, hath been,-if I flatter not myself,-from a very honest
heart towards the Parliament and the Public. I say not these things to
compliment you. For we are all past complimenting, and all considerations of
that kind! (Serious enough his Highness is, and we all are; the Nations and
the Ages, and indeed the MAKER of the Nations and the Ages, looking on us
here!) We must all be very real now, if ever we will be so!-

Now, howbeit your title and name you give to this Paper (Looking on the
Vellum) makes me think you intended "Advice;" and I should transgress
against all reason, should I make any other construction than that you did
intend Advice: 'yet'-!-(Still hesitates, then?)-I would not lay a burden on my
beast but I would consider his strength to bear it! And if you lay a burden
upon a man that is conscious of his own infirmity and disabilities, and doth
make some measure of counsels which may seem to come from Heaven,
counsels from the Word of God (who leaves room for charity, and for men to
consider their own strength),-I hope it will be no evil in me to measure your
"Advice" with my own Infirmities. And truly these will have some influence
upon conscience! Conscience in him that receives talents to know how he
may answer the trust of them. And such a conscience have I had 'in this
matter;' and still have; and therefore when I thought I had an opportunity to
make an Answer, I made that Answer. (The unemphatic Negative; truest
"Answer" your Highness then had:-can it not grow an Affirmative?)-and am a

person that have been, before and then and since, lifting up my heart to God, To know what might be my duty at such a time as this, and upon such an occasion and trial as this was to me! (Deep silence: Old Parliament casts down its eyes.)-

Truly, Mr. Speaker, it hath been heretofore, I think, a matter of philosophical discourse, That great places, great authority, are a great burden. I know it so. And I know a man that is convinced in his conscience, Nothing less will enable him to the discharge of it than Assistance from above. And it may very well require in such a one, so convinced and so persuaded, That he be right with the Lord in such an undertaking!-And therefore, to speak very clearly and plainly to you: I had, and I have my hesitations as to that individual thing. (Still negative, your Highness?) If I undertake anything not in Faith, I shall serve you in my own Unbelief;-and I shall then be the most unprofitable Servant that People or Nation ever had!

Give me leave, therefore, to ask counsel. I am ready to render a reason of my apprehensions; which haply may be overswayed by better apprehensions. I think, so far I have deserved no blame; nor do I take it you will lay any upon me. Only you mind me of the duty that is incumbent upon me. And truly the same answer I have as to the point of duty one way, the same consideration have I as to duty another way.-I would not urge to you the point of "Liberty." Surely you have provided for Liberty,-I have borne my witness to it,-Civil and Spiritual! The greatest provision that ever was made have you made, 'for Liberty' to all,-and I know that you do not intend to exclude me. The "Liberty" I ask is, To vent my own doubts, and my own fears, and my scruples. And though haply, in such cases as these are, the world hath judged that a man's conscience ought to know no scruples; yet surely mine doth, and I dare not dissemble. And therefore-!-

They that are knowing in the ground of their own Action will be best able to measure advice to others. (Will have us reason, In Free Conference, with him? There are many things in this 'Instrument of' Government besides that one of the Name and Title, that deserve much to be elucidated as to my judgment. It is you that can capacitate me to receive satisfaction in them! Otherwise, I say truly,-I must say, I am not persuaded to the performance of 'this' as my trust and duty, nor 'sufficiently' informed. 'Not persuaded or informed;' and so not actuated 'by a call of duty,' as I know you intend I should be,-and as every man in the Nation should be. You have provided for 'every one of' them as a Free Man, as a man that is to act possible, rationally and conscientiously!-And therefore I cannot tell what other return to make to you than this:

I am ready to give a reason, if you will, I say, capacitate me to do it; and 'capacitate' yourselves to receive it;-and to do what other things may inform me a little more particularly than this Vote which you have passed Yesterday, and which has now been read by you to me.

Truly I hope when 'once' I understand the ground of these things,-the whole being 'meant' neither for your good nor mine, but for the good of the Nation,-

there will be no doubt but we may, even in these particulars, find out what may answer our duty. Mine, and all our duties, to those whom we serve. And this is that that I do, with a great deal of affection and honour and respect, offer now to you.