

Speech 6 was to the Second Protectorate Parliament on 23rd January 1656
(Note English calendar - New Year 1657 did not start until 25th March)
Thanks to their Congratulation on the failure of Sindercomb's Plot.

MR. SPEAKER,

I confess with much respect, that you have put this trouble on yourselves upon this occasion:-but I perceive there be two things that fill me full of sense. One is, The mercy on a poor unworthy creature; the second is, This great and, as I said, unexpected kindness of Parliament, in manifesting such a sense thereof as this is which you have now expressed. I speak not this with compliment! That which detracts from the thing, in some sense, is the inconsiderableness and unworthiness of the person that hath been the object and subject of this deliverance, to wit, myself. I confess ingenuously to you, I do lie under the daily sense of my unworthiness and unprofitableness, as I have expressed to you: and if there be, as I most readily acknowledge there is, a mercy in it to me, I wish I may never reckon it on any other account than this, That the life that is lengthened, may be spent and improved to His honour who hath vouchsafed the mercy, and to the service of you, and those you represent.

I do not know, nor did I think it would be very seasonable for me, to say much to you upon this occasion; being a thing that ariseth from yourselves. Yet, methinks, the kindness you bear should kindle a little desire in me; even at this present, to make a short return. And, as you have been disposed hither by the Providence of God, to congratulate my mercy; so give me leave, in a very word or two, to congratulate with you. (Rusty, but sincere.)

Congratulations are ever conversant about good, bestowed upon men, or possessed by them. Truly, I shall in a word or two congratulate you with good you are in possession of, and in some respect, I also with you. God hath bestowed upon you, and you are in possession of it, Three Nations, and all that appertains to them. Which in either a geographical, or topical consideration, are Nations. (Indisputably!) In which also there are places of honour and consideration, not inferior to any in the known world,-without vanity it may be spoken. Truly God hath not made so much soil, furnished with so many blessings, in vain! (Here is an idea of one's own.) But it is a goodly sight, if a man behold it uno intuitu. And therefore this is a possession of yours, worthy of congratulation.

This is furnished,-give me leave to say, for I believe it is true,-with the best People in the world, possessing so much soil. A People in civil rights,-in respect of their rights and privileges,-very ancient and honourable. And in this People, in the midst of this People, 'you have, what is still more precious,' a People (I know every one will hear 'and acknowledge' it) that are to God "as the apple of His eye,"-and He says so of them be they many, or be they few! But they are many. A People of the blessing of God; a People under His safety and protection. A People calling upon the Name of the Lord; which the Heathen do not. A People knowing God; and a People (according to the

ordinary expressions) fearing God. (We hope so!) And you have of this no parallel; no, not in all the world! You have in the midst of you glorious things.

Glorious things: for you have Laws and statutes, and ordinances, which, though not all of them so conformable as were to be wished, to the Law of God, yet, on all hands, pretend not to be long rested in farther than as they are conformable to the just and righteous Laws of God. Therefore, I am persuaded, there is a heart and spirit in every good man to wish they did all of them answer the Pattern. (Yea!) I cannot doubt but that which is in the heart will in due time break forth. (And we shall actually have just Laws, your Highness thinks?) That endeavours will be 'made' that way, is another of your good things, with which in my heart 'I think' you are worthily to be congratulated. And you have a Magistracy; which in outward profession in pretence, in endeavour, doth desire to put life into these Laws. And I am confident that among you will rest the true desire to promote every desire in others, and every endeavour, that hath tended or shall tend to the putting of these Laws in execution.

I do 'also' for this congratulate you: You have a Gospel Ministry among you. That have you! Such a one as,-without vanity I shall speak it; or without caring at all for any favour or respect from them save what I have upon an account above flattery, or good words,-such an one as hath excelled itself; and, I am persuaded,-to speak with confidence before the Lord, is the most growing blessing (one of the most growing blessings) on the face of this Nation.

You have a good Eye 'to watch over you,'-and in that I will share with your good favours. A good God; a God that hath watched over you and us. A God that hath visited these Nations with a stretched-out arm: and borne His witness against the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, against those that 'would' have abused such Nations,-such mercies throughout, as I have reckoned up unto you! A God that hath not only withstood such to the face; but a God that hath abundantly blessed you with the evidence of His goodness and presence. And He "hath done things wonderful amongst us," "by terrible things in righteousness." He hath visited us by "wonderful things!" (A Time of Miracle; as indeed all "Times" are, your Highness, when there are MEN alive in them!) In mercy and compassion hath He given us this day of freedom, and liberty to speak this, one to another: and to speak of His mercies, as He hath been pleased to put into our hearts. (Where now are the Starchambers, High Commissions, Council-Chambers; pitiless oppressors of God's Gospel in this land? The Hangmen with their whips and red-hot branding-irons, with their Three blood-sprinkled Pillories in Old Palaceyard, and Four clean Surplices at Allhallowtide,-where are they? Vanished. Much has vanished; fled from us like the Phantasms of a Nightmare Dream!)

Truly, this word in conclusion. If these things be so, give me leave to remember you but one word; which I offered to you with great love and affection the first day of meeting with you, this Parliament. It pleased God to put into my heart then to mention a Scripture to you, which would be a good conclusion of my Speech now at this time to you. It was, That we being met

to seek the good of so great an Interest, as I have mentioned, and the glory of that God who is both yours and mine, how could we better do it than by thinking of such words as these, "His salvation is nigh them that fear Him," "that glory may dwell in our land!" I would not comment upon it. I hope I fear Him; and let us more fear him! If this 'present' mercy at all doth concern you, as I see it doth,-let me, and I hope you will with me, labour more to fear Him! (Amen!) Then we have done, 'that includes all;' seeing such a blessing as His salvation "is nigh them that fear Him,"-seeing we are all of us representatives of all the good of all these lands, 'to endeavour with our whole strength' "that glory may dwell in our land."

'Yes,' if it be so, "Mercy and Truth shall meet together, Righteousness and Peace shall kiss each other." We shall know, you, and I as the father of this family, how to dispose our mercies to God's glory; and how to dispose our severity. How to distinguish between obedient and rebellious children;-and not to do as Eli did, who told his sons "he did not hear well of them," when perhaps he saw ill by them. And we know the severity of that. And, therefore, let me say,-though I will not descant upon the words,-that Mercy must be joined with Truth: Truth, in that respect, that we think it our duty to exercise a just severity, as well as to apply kindness and mercy. And, truly, Righteousness and Mercy must kiss each other. If we will have Peace without a worm in it, lay we foundations of justice and Righteousness. (Hear this Lord Protector!) And if it shall please God so to move you, as that you marry this redoubtable Couple together, Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace,-you will, if I may be free to say so, be blessed whether you will or no! And that you and I may, for the time the Lord shall continue us together, set our hearts upon this, shall be my daily prayer. And I heartily and humbly acknowledge my thankfulness to you.