

# PETITION OF RIGHT

Thomas Philpott

to Sir William Lenthall (1591–1662), Speaker of the House of Commons (1640–1655, 1659–1660)

24 February 1652

It will be a sad thing when a people shall be weary of their rulers; and doubtless a people will have just cause to be weary of their rulers when the rulers shall either refuse to hear the grievances of the people or, having received their grievances presented to them, will neither return no answer in writing to the people's written declaration nor apply any real remedy to their just complaints, which they might with ease do.

Far be it from me to say that the people of this nation are weary, or have just cause to be weary, of their present rulers; but this I may safely deliver to you in writing, which I shall now write.

Behold, the King is not. Behold, the House of Lords is not. Yea, behold, a great part of the House of Commons either is not, or at least for some time was not, permitted to be and to vote in Parliament, which to me is a strong demonstrative argument that a great part, or at least a considerable part, of the people were not well pleased with those Members of Parliament who were excluded, and who yet remain excluded.

As for me, my conscience bears me witness that during these civil distractions I have still been jealous of the Parliament's honor and dignity, as a son in his father's cause; and next unto the general welfare and safety of the people (for whom you are entrusted), I have ever been tender of your privileges and credit. Yea, my hearty desire for all the remaining Members of Parliament still is that you all may be justified and saved, not only in the world to come, but in this world also. Yea, and that you may be more precious in the eyes of the people at your voluntary dissolution than you were at your first sitting in Parliament.

And to that end, and for the performance of my former solemn vows and protestations, I have thought fit, with my own hand, here to commend to your especial care, before some chosen witnesses, this annexed petition of right in behalf of the whole nation; to be by you, as you hate to be unfaithful, in due time presented unto the Parliament, before I be rendered incapable of writing any more to the supreme authority of the nation, or you, Mr. Speaker, either be rendered incapable of voting and resolving this petition of right into an act of Parliament. The passing whereof (I am confident) will produce this effect, that all generations to come shall call the Parliament that shall pass it into an Act, blessed.

Henry Cary, *Memorials of the Great Civil War in England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), II:416–417.