

LETTER

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), Lord Protector (1653–1658)

to Louis XIV (1638–1715), King of France (1643–1715)

Westminster, 25 May 1654

The groans of the unhappy Protestants who inhabit Luzerne, Augrogna, and other Alpine valleys within the dominions of the Duke of Savoy¹ have reached Our ears. And the lamentable tidings of the bloody massacres which decimated them, and the spoliation and banishment of the survivors, have constrained Us to write this letter to Your Majesty, more particularly as it has been reported to us (with what truth has not yet been ascertained) that part of Your Majesty's troops joined with those of the Duke of Savoy in this carnage.

We have not, however, lightly believed this rumor, for such conduct appears to Us neither consistent with good government nor in accordance with the practices of Your Majesty's ancestors, who always esteemed it their interest, for the peace of their own kingdom as well as for that of all Christendom, to permit their subjects of the Reformed Religion to live secure from violence and attacks under their authority and protection. And this clemency it is which has often gained the Kings of France the useful and glorious support of their Protestant subjects, both in peace and war. Such an example persuaded the Dukes of Savoy to treat with similar benignity the inhabitants of the Alpine valleys, who, in return, were very submissive to their princes, and never stinted either life or fortune in their service.

We do not doubt but that the alliance of Your Majesty with the present Duke of Savoy, and the influence which your words must have with him, will enable you to obtain for these unfortunate creatures, by your intervention and open expression of good-will, peace and permission to return to their homes, and the restoration of their former liberty.

It will be an action worthy of your Majesty, and in accord with the wise examples of your most serene ancestors; and not only will those of your subjects who profess the Reformed Religion be thereby greatly confirmed in the belief that they have no such persecution to apprehend, but also the Protestant allies and confederates of Your Majesty will thereafter be bound to you by stronger ties of fidelity and friendship.

For Ourselves, all that Your Majesty may grant in this respect to your own subjects, or may obtain by your intervention for the subjects of other powers, will rank in Our gratitude equally and ever far above all the other great and numerous advantages that we promise Ourselves from Your Majesty's friendship.

M. Guizot, *History of Oliver Cromwell and the English Commonwealth* (London: Bentley, 1854), II:432–433.

¹ Charles Emmanuel II (1634–1675), Duke of Savoy (1638–1675)