

*From Basilikon Doron, King James I, part 2.*

And as for the execution of good Lawes, whereat I left, remember that among the differences that I put betwixt the forms of the government of a good King and an usurping Tyrant; I show how a Tyrant would enter like a Saint while he found himself fast under-foot, and then would suffer his unruly affections to burst forth. Therefore be you contrary at your first entry to your Kingdome. . . in giving the Law full execution against all breakers thereof but [without] exception. For since you come not to your reign precariously, nor by conquest, but by right and due descent, fear no uproars for doing of Justice, since you may assure yourself, the most part of your people will ever naturally favor Justice: providing always, that you do it only for love to Justice, and not for satisfying any particular passions of yours, {anger+} under color thereof: otherwise, how justly that ever the offender deserve it, you are guilty of murder before God: For you must consider, that God ever looks to your inward intention in all your actions.

And when you have by the severity of Justice once settled your countries, and made them know that you can strike, then may you thereafter all the days of your life mix justice with Mercy, punishing or sparing, as you shall find the crime to have been willfully or rashly committed, and according to the by-past behavior of the committer. For if otherwise you give your clemency at the first, the offences would soon come to such heaps, and the contempt of you grow so great, that when you would fall to punish, the number of them to be punished would exceed the innocent; and you would be troubled to resolve whomat [at whom] to begin: and against your nature would be compelled then to wrack many, whom the chastisement of few in the beginning might have preserved. But in this, my over-dear bought experience may serve you for a sufficient lesson: For I confess, where I thought (by being gracious at the beginning) to win all men's hearts to a loving and willing obedience, I by the contrary found the disorder of the country and the loss of my thanks to be all my reward.

But as this severe Justice of yours upon all offenses would bee but for a time, (as I have already said) so are there some horrible crimes that you are bound in conscience never to forgive : such as Witchcraft, willful murder, Incest, (especially within the degrees of consanguinity) Sodomy, poisoning, and false coin. As for offenses against your own person and authority, since the fault concerns yourself, I remit to your own choice to punish or pardon therein, as your heart serves you, and according to the circumstances of the turn and the quality of the committer.

Here would I also eike [name] another crime to be unpardonable, if I should not be thought partial: but the fatherly love I bear you will make me break the bounds of shame in opening it unto you. It is then the false and irreverent writing or speaking of malicious men against your Parents and Predecessors: you know the command in God's law, Honor your Father and Mother: and consequently, since you are the lawful magistrate, suffer not both your Princes and your Parents to be dishonored by any; especially, since the example also touches yourself, in leaving thereby to your successors the measure of that which they shall mete out again to you in your like behalf. I grant we have all our faults, which, privately betwixt you and God, should serve you for examples to meditate upon and mend in your person; but should not be a matter of discourse to others whatsoever. And since you are come of [from] as honorable Predecessors as any Prince living, repress the insolence of such, as under pretense

to tax a vice in the person, seek craftily to stain the race, and to steal the affection of the people from their posterity: For how can they love you, that hated them whom-of you are come? Wherefore destroy men innocent young sucking Wolves and Foxes, but for the hatred they bear to their race? and why will a colt of a Courser of Naples give a greater price in a market then an Ass-colt, but for love of the race? It is therefore a thing monstrous, to see a man love the child and hate the Parents: as on the other part, the defaming and making odious of the parents is the readiest way to bring the son in contempt. And for conclusion of this point, I may also allege my own experience: For besides the judgments of God, that with my eyes I have seen fall upon all them that were chief traitors to my parents, I may justly affirm, I never found you [yet?] a constant biding by me in all my straits, by any that were of perfect age in my parents' days, but only by such as constantly bode by them; I mean specially by them that served the Queen my mother: for so that I discharge my conscience to you, my Son, in revealing to you the truth, I care not, what any traitor or treason-allower think of it.

And although the crime of oppression be not in this rank of unpardonable crimes, yet the over-common use of it in this nation, as if it were a virtue, especially by the greatest rank of subjects in the land, requires the King to be a sharp censurer thereof. Be diligent therefore to try, and awful to beat down the horns of proud oppressors: embrace the quarrel of the poor+ and distressed, as your own particular, thinking it your greatest honor to repress the oppressors: care for the pleasure of none, neither spare you any pains in your own person to see their wrongs redressed: and remember of the honorable stile given to my grand-father of worthy memory, in being called the poor man's King. And as the most part of a King's office stands in deciding that question of Meum and Tuum [Mine and Yours], among his subjects; so remember when you sit in judgment, that the Throne you sit on is God's, as Moses says, and sway neither to the right hand nor to the left; either loving the rich or pitying the poor. {compassion+} Justice+ should be blind and friendless: it is not there you should reward your friends or seek to cross your enemies.