

# Letter - to King Charles II

by Isaac Penington

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*Isaac Penington's letter urges King Charles II to govern with humility and seek God's guidance to ensure a righteous reign.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 33:12, Proverbs 16:12, Proverbs 21:1, Micah 6:8, 1 Peter 5:5

**Topics:** "Christian Leadership", "Godly Governance"

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## Description

Isaac Penington preaches a message to the king, urging him to govern with purity, peace, and righteousness, seeking guidance from God to avoid further shaking and dissettling of the nation. He warns against pride, forgetting the Lord in times of prosperity, and the dangers of governing without God's counsel. Penington emphasizes the importance of humility, obedience to God's will, and seeking after love, meekness, and righteousness in leadership. He encourages the king to eschew worldly pleasures, avoid unnecessary yokes over people's consciences, and to walk in the path of self-denial and mortification for eternal blessings.

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## Transcript

O KING,

The Lord God of heaven and earth is mighty, who hath often and greatly shaken this nation already: and this I have observed, that the seeming settlements, which hitherto have been, since the Lord began to shake, have been but preparative to a further shaking and dissettling. O! happy wert thou, if thou couldst wait for, and receive, such a guidance from God, as that thy government might be so pure, peaceable, and righteous, as it might need no further shaking by his hand.

God sometimes raiseth man from a low estate, and exalteth him; but if he forget the Lord, and his heart be lifted up, He is able to bring him down again. O! fear the Lord in the days of thy prosperity, and let thy heart be abased before Him, and sensible of the need of his preservation. Indeed, it is a hard matter to govern these kingdoms aright, as the state now stands. Thou mayst easily err and dash upon the rocks. O that the pure eye were open in thee: whereby thou mightest see that as thou didst not gain these kingdoms by policy or strength; so neither canst thou retain them by those means, but only by the good pleasure of Him who hath all the earth at his dispose!

I beseech thee, in that tender love I bear to thee, take heed of going about to plant what the Lord hath plucked up; or of endeavouring to pluck up what the Lord hath planted. If thou lookest with man's eye, thou

canst not see what God is doing in the world; and so mayst easily run a course contrary to his will, and eternal counsel: and O how hazardous must this needs be to thee! The eternal peace of thy soul with God for ever, and thy prosperity, depend upon thy knowing the counsel of the Lord, and upon thy obedience thereunto.

Oh! retire from this world's baits, snares, temptations, allurements, and vanities; which draw out and defile the mind; and retreat inward, that the Lord may teach thee his fear, and preserve thee from those lusts and desires of the fleshly mind, which, being hearkened to and followed, are very dangerous to the soul, and may prove perilous outwardly also. What shall my love say to thee? O that the Lord would speak to thee in spirit, and give thee an ear to hear, that thou mightest be happy now and for ever!

Often have my bowels rolled over thee exceedingly, even in the day of thy adversity, and since thy prosperity. O that thou couldest remember God daily, and forget this world! Remember the years of thy affliction; and make use of the present day with an humble heart, and with a broken spirit. O! do nothing to provoke the Lord against thee; for surely his eye is upon thee, and his heart pondereth all thy ways. And bow before him for his counsel, that thou mayest not arise against thy Maker, as the foregoing powers have done: for if He rise up in battle against thee, thou wilt no more be able to stand before Him than they were.

Nay, the stronger thou art outwardly settled, the greater will the glory of his name be in overturning thee. O that thou mightest rule under God, and for God! and not with that wisdom, and with those self-ends, and interests, which are not of Him, and cannot but be against Him. I cannot but desire thy good; yea, the very breathings of my heart to the Lord have been often for thee: and upon that account singly do I write thus to thee; beseeching the Lord, if it be his pleasure, that when that work which is necessary to be done is finished, thine eyes may be opened to see the way of righteous government in the true light.

From one who mourns over the misery of mankind, longing for the redemption of those that go astray, and a true lover of thy soul.

I. P.

Aylesbury prison, where I am visiting some of my dear

Friends in God's eternal truth, 17th 7th mo. 1661

#### POSTSCRIPT

Let thy government be like unto God's: even a yoke to the unjust, but liberty to the just. O, when shall the cry of the innocent cease, throughout all thy borders? Restore unto the Lord his dominion over men's consciences, while it is in the power of thine hand to do it -- O! seek after love, meekness, righteousness, tenderness, towards all thy subjects: which hath God's blessing with it, and is the way to win all their hearts towards thee. And do not harden multitudes of them against thee, by unnecessary yokes over their consciences: which they that do not eye God in all, and in lowliness of spirit bow before Him, may be apt to kick against and strive to throw off. -- And I beseech thee, take heed of this world's pleasures and vanities; which steal away the heart from God, and make it thick and gross, that it cannot hear his voice or know his counsel. I am satisfied with what the Lord shall do; but it is the earnest desire of my heart, that thou mightest be spared in the day of God's visitation, which is coming upon this nation. -- This is my desire for thee, that thy heart might be brought into, and kept in, that frame which God loves and delights

to be present with, and to instruct, and [that] all such things might be eschewed and avoided by thee, which may prove dangerous to thy soul for ever, and to thy government here. For though thou beest a great king here, yet, if thou wilt obtain the blessing and inheritance of eternal life, and escape eternal misery and destruction, thou must take up the cross to thy lusts, and walk in the same path of mortification and self-denial, which God, who is no respecter of persons, hath chalked out to the meanest of thy subjects. Hear, O king, turn towards the Lord, bow before Him in soul and spirit, in thy whole conversation. It is a greater honour to be a subject to Him, than to reign over men.

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