

[GOVERNMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1708] [1]

[7 Anne]

**[Proclamation for encouraging virtue
and punishing immorality in Scotland]**

[1]

By the QUEEN,

A PROCLAMATION,

**For the Encouragement of Piety and Vir-
tue, and for the Preventing and Punishing
of Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality.**

ANNE R.

ANNE, by the Grace of God, Queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, To Our Lyon King at Arms, and his Brethren, Heralds, Pursevants, Messengers at Arms, Our Sheriffs in that part [2] conjunctly and severally specially Constitute, Greeting.

Forasmuch as We considering, That it is an indispensable Duty upon Us, to be careful above all other things to Preserve and Advance the Honour and Service of Almighty God, and to Discourage and Suppress all Vice, Profaneness, Debauchery, and Immorality, which are so highly Displeasing to God, so great a Reproach to Our Religion and Government, and (by the frequent ill Examples of the Practicers thereof) have so fatal a Tendency to the Corruption of many of Our Loving Subjects, otherwise Religiously and Virtuously Disposed, and which (if not timely remedied) may justly draw down the Divine Vengeance on Us and Our Dominions:

We also humbly Acknowledging, That We cannot expect the Blessing and Goodness of God (by whom Kings and Queens Reign) and on which We entirely Rely, to make Our Reign Happy and Prosperous to Our Self and People, nor hope for the Divine Assistance to Deliver Us from the great and imminent Dangers which Our Kingdoms, and the True Protestant Religion (Established among Us) are Threatened with, without a Religious Observance of God's Holy Laws:

To the intent therefore that Religion, Piety, and Good Manners may (according to Our most Hearty Desire) Flourish and Increase under Our

Administration and Government, We have thought fit (by the Advice of Our Privy-Council) to Issue this Our Royal Proclamation, and do hereby Declare Our Royal Purpose and Resolution to Discourage and Punish all manner of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality in all Persons of whatsoever Degree or Quality within Our Dominions;

And that for the greater Encouragement of Religion and Morality, We will, upon all Occasions, Distinguish Persons of Piety and Virtue by Marks of Our Royal Favour.

And We do Expect and Require that all Persons of Honour, or in Place of Authority, will give good Example, by their own Virtue and Piety, and to their utmost contribute to the Discouraging of Persons of Dissolute and Debauch'd Lives, that they being by these means reduced to Shame and Contempt, for their Loose and Evil Actions and Behaviour, may be thereby also Enforced the sooner to Reform their evil Habits and Practices; and that the Visible Displeasure of good Men towards them may, as far as is possible, Supply what the Laws probably cannot altogether Prevent.

And as We have formerly Issued forth Our Royal Proclamations concerning these Matters in *England*, and Dominions thereto belonging, so We now, for that Part of Our United Kingdom called *Scotland*, do hereby strictly Enjoin and Require all Lords of Council and Session, Sheriffs, and their Deputies, Stewarts and their Deputies, Bailies of Bailliaries and their Deputies, Magistrates of Burghs and Justices of Peace, within whose Bounds and Jurisdictions any of the Sins of Swearing, Cursing, Drunkenness, Fornication, Adultery, Profanation of the Lords Day, Mocking and Reproaching of Religion, and other Acts of Immorality and Profanity, shall happen to be Committed, to put all Laws and Acts of Parliament thereagainst to Exact and Punctual Execution at all times, and against Persons of Degrees, at the Instance of any Persons whatsoever who shall pursue

[1] *London Gazette*, no. 4464, 19 to 23 August, 1708. (Not in Steele)

[2] "that part" apparently meaning the part of the new United Kingdom of Great Britain that was formerly the separate Kingdom of Scotland.

the fame, Conform to a Proclamation, containing an Abbreviate of the said Laws, Issued out by Our late Dear Brother King *William*, of ever Bleffed Memory, and His Privy-Council, Dated at *Edinburgh*, the Five and twentieth Day of January, One thousand six hundred ninety eight, in all Points.

And further We Require all whom it Concerns, to Observe what is Enjoyed by the Eleventh Act of King *William*'s Parliament, Dated the One and thirtieth Day of *January*, One thousand seven hundred and one, Intituled *An Act against Profaneness*.

And particularly for the more Effectual Proceeding herein, We do Require and Command all Our Judges and Justices of Peace mention'd in that Act, to give all due Encouragement to Persons who Inform of the Breaches of Our good Laws against Vice and Immorality, and not to put such Informers or Witnesses to Long and Expensive Attendance in that Matter.

And Sheriffs and Stewards, and their Deputies, Magistrates of Burghs, and Justices of Peace, are Required to take Care,

that a fixed Time and Place, once every Month at least, in each Parish be Appointed for Holding Courts by themselves or their Deputies, or a Baillie to be Appointed according to the Act of Parliament, Dated the Ninth of *October*, One thousand six hundred ninety six; And

that Clerks Physcal and other Officers of Court be Nominated for Prosecuting of Persons Guilty of Immorality, and Ordain'd to Act their Parts in the Premisses, that all Concern'd may know when, where, and whom to Attend.

And Presbyteries, Ministers and Church Sessions are requir'd to Nominate fit Persons within their Bounds respectively, to take Notice of Vice and Immorality, and to Delate [3] and Prosecute those Guilty thereof.

And the Judges and Justices of Peace are hereby Ordained to Allow to the Persons who shall be Named for Prosecution [4], as above, out of the Fines, not only the whole Expences; but also such

further Rewards as the said Judges, or Justices of Peace shall think fit,

Certifying, That if any of the said Judges or Justices of Peace shall Refuse or Neglect to put the said Laws in Execution, upon the Application of any Minister, or any other Person Informing, or offering sufficient Probation, he shall be liable and subject *toties quoties* [5] to a Fine of One hundred Pounds *Scots*, for the Use of the Poor of the Parish where the Scandal happened, to be pursu'd for in the Terms in the said Act, as also Conform to the Twenty third Act of King *William*'s Parliament, dated the Twelfth of *June*, One thousand six hundred ninety three.

We Require all Magistrates, Judges and Officers of Justice, to give all due Assistance for making the Sentences and Censures of the Church and Judicatories thereof, to be Obeyed, or otherwise effectual, as accords against Scandalous and Contumacious Persons.

And to the End that all Vice and Debauchery may be prevented, and Religion and Virtue practis'd by all Officers, private Soldiers, Mariners, and others, We do hereby strictly Charge, Command and Require all the Commanders and Officers of Our Forces by Sea and Land, and others in Authority, That they do take Care to avoid all Profanity, Debauchery, and other Immoralities, and that by their Virtuous and Pious Lives and Conversations, they do set good Examples to all such as are under their Care and Authority; And likewise, That they take Care of, and Inspect the Behaviour of all such as are under them, and see that they attend Divine Worship duly upon the Lords-Day, and also submit to the Minister's Examination, and to Church-Discipline, and to punish all those who shall be Guilty of the Offences aforesaid, and do not Observe good Order.

And further We Command and Require the Judges Ordinary and Justices of Peace of the Bounds where any of Our Soldiers are Quartered, or Mariners lye, that upon Complaint by any of Our Lieges against the said Soldiers and Mariners for Immoralities, or other Disorders, the said Judges and Justices exemplarily Punish the said Mariners and Soldiers therefore:

[3] "delate"—Scots law, denounce or accuse.

[4] that is, named as witnesses for the prosecution.

[5] Latin, "so often as often", meaning as and when a matter arises.

And We Require their Officers to Cite them before the said Judges and Justices of Peace for that effect, according to the Ninth Act of the Parliament, One thousand six hundred ninety eight.

And all Our Subjects, whom it may concern, are Required to be very Vigilant and Strict in the Discovery, and the Effectual Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons who shall be Guilty of any of the Sins above-mentioned, or other Diffolute, Immoral or Disorderly Practices.

And lastly, We do hereby Direct and Command all the Judges above-mentioned, and Justices of Peace to give strict Charges at their respective Courts and other Meetings, for the due Prosecution and Punishment

of all Persons that shall presume to Offend in any the Kinds aforesaid, and

of all Persons that, contrary to their Duty, shall be Remiss or Negligent in putting the said Laws in Execution;

and that they do, once every Quarter of a Year, cause this Our Proclamation to be publicly read in Open Court immediately after Fencing [6] thereof.

And all Our Judges, Justices of Peace, and other Subjects, are hereby Required to Observe Our Laws and Acts of Parliament concerning the Premises, and to do their parts therein, as they will be answerable for the ill Consequences of their Neglect in that matter.

Our Will and Pleasure is, and We strictly Charge and Command, That incontinent [7], these Our Letters seen, ye [8] pass to the Mercat-Cross [9] of *Edinburgh*, and to the remanent Mercat-Crosses of the Head-Burghs of the several Shires and Stewartries of that part of Our United Kingdom called *Scotland*, and in Our Name and Authority make

Publication hereof, and of the said Abbreviate of Our Acts of Parliament against Profanity and Vice, that none may pretend Ignorance; and ordains these Presents, with the Abbreviate, to be Printed, and Our Solicitor to Dispatch Copies thereof to the Sheriffs of the several Shires, Stewarts of Stewartries, and their Deputies or Clerks, that they may cause

Publish the same at the Mercat-Crosses of the said Head-Burghs, upon the Receipt thereof, and immediately thereafter send a Copy to each Minister and Parish within the respective Jurisdictions, to the effect the same may be Read and Intimate in the Parish-Churches upon the Lords-Day following the aforesaid Publication at the Mercat-Crosses, and thereafter at such times as shall be found Needful by the Presbyteries or Synods of the Bounds.

Given at Our Court at *Kenfington* the Eighteenth Day of *August*, in the Seventh Year of Our Reign. [10]

God save the QUEEN.

[6] “fence . . . verb. . . . 2 SCOTS LAW. Open the proceedings of (a court of law, *Hist.* the Parliament) by the use of a form of words forbidding the unnecessary interruption or obstruction of the proceedings.”—*OED*.

[7] “incontinent”—At once, immediately, without delay.—*OED*.

[8] “ye”—the Scottish heraldic officials to whom this proclamation was addressed.

[9] “mercat cross”—the market cross, that is, the cross or other monument in the market or centre of every town and city in Scotland where public announcements were made.

[10] 1708. By modern calendar years the seventh regnal year of Queen Anne was 8 March 1708 to 7 March 1709.