

Papae Rom.  
CLEMENT. VII. IO.Archiep. Cant.  
THO. CRANMER I.Anno Christi  
1533.Reg. Angliae  
HENRIC. VIII. 25.

*Letter of king Henry the VIII. to the clergy of the province of York, anno M.D. XXXIII. touching his title of supreme head of the church of England. Ex Cabala p. 244. seqq.*

**R**IGHT reverend father in God, right trusty and well beloved, we greet you well, and have received your letters dated at York the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, containing a long discourse of your mind and opinion concerning such words as have passed the clergy of the province of Canterbury, in the proeme of their grant made unto us, the like whereof should now pass in that province. Albeit ye interlace such words of submission of your judgment and discharge of your duty towards us, with humble fashion and behaviour, as we cannot conceive displeasure, nor be discontent with you, considering what you have said to us in times past in other matters, and what ye confess in your letters your selves to have heard and known, noting also the effect of the same; we cannot but marvel at sundry points and articles, which we shall open unto you, as hereafter followeth.

First, ye have heard (as ye say ye have) the said words to have passed in the convocation of Canterbury, where were present so many learned in divinity and law, as the bishops of Rochester, London, S. Asaph, abbots of Hyde, S. Bennets, and many other; and in the law, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the bishop of Bath; and in the lower house of the clergy so many notable and great clerks, whose persons and learning you know well enough. Why do ye not, in this case, with your self, as you willed us in our great matter, conform your conscience to the conscience and opinion of a great number?—Such was your advice to us in the same (our great matter) which now we perceive ye take for no sure counsel; for ye search the grounds, not regarding their sayings. Nevertheless, forasmuch as ye examine their grounds, causes, and reasons; in doing whereof ye seem rather to seek and examine that thing which might disprove their doings, then that which might maintain the same; we shall answer you briefly, without long discourse, to the chief points of your said letters. Wherein taking for a ground, that words were ordained to signify things, and cannot therefore by sinister interpretation alter the truth of them, but onely in the wits of perverse persons that would blinde or colour the same; by reason whereof, to good men, they signify that they mean onely doing their office; and to men of worse sort, they serve for maintenance of such meaning as they would imagine: so in using words, we ought onely to regard and consider the expression of the truth in convenient speech and sentences, without overmuch scruple of superperverse interpretations, as the malice of men may ex-

cogitate; wherein both overmuch negligence is not to be commended, and too much diligence is not onely by daily experience in mens writings and laws shewed frustrate and void; insomuch as nothing can be so cleerly and plainly written, spoken, and ordered, but that subtile wit hath been able to subvert the same; but also the Spirit of God, which in his Scripture taught us the contrary, as in the places which ye bring in and rehearse:—If the Holy Ghost had had regard to that which might have been perversly construed of these words, “Pater major me est,” and the other, “Ego et Pater unum sumus,” there should have been added to the first “humanitas,” to the second “substantia.” And wherefore doth the Scripture call Christ “Primogenitum?” whereupon, and the Adverb “donec,” was maintained the error “Contra perpetuam virginitatem Mariae.” Why have we in the church S. Paul’s epistle, which S. Peter writeth to have been the occasion of errors? Why did Christ speak many words, which the Jews drew “ad calumniam,” and yet reformed them not? as when he said, “Destruite templum hoc, etc.” meaning of his body; where “templum” with them had another signification; and such other like? There is none other cause but this, “Omnia quae scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt.” And by that learning, we ought to apply and draw words to the truth, and so to understand them, as they may signify truth, and not so to wrest them, as they should maintain a lie. For otherwise, as hereticks have done with the holy Scripture, so shall all men do with familiar speech; and if all things shall be brought into familiar disputation, he that shall call us “Supremum et unicum dominum,” by that means, and as goeth your argument, might be reproved: For Christ is indeed “unicus Dominus et supremus,” as we confess him in the church daily; and now it is in opinion, that “Sancti” be not mediators; the contrary whereof ye affirm in your letters, because of the text of S. Paul, “Unus est mediator inter Deum et hominem.” And after that manner of reason which ye use in the entry, if any man should say, This land is mine own, and none hath right in it but I; he might be reproved by the Psalm, “Domini est terra.” For why should a man call “terram aliquam” onely his, whereof God is the chief Lord and owner? Why is it admitted in familiar speech to call a man dead, of whom the soul, which is the chief and best part, yet liveth? How is it that we say, this man or that man to be founder of this church, seeing that in one respect God is only founder?

We

We say likewise, that he is a good man to the church, a special benefactor of the church; and that the church is fallen down, when the stones be fallen down, the people preserved and living; and in all this manner of speech, when we hear them, it is not accustomed nor used to do, as ye do, that is to say, to draw the word "Church" to that sense, wherein the speech may be a lie, but to take it in that wherein it signifieth truth. Which accustomed manner if ye had followed, you should not have needed to have laboured so much in the declaration of the word "Ecclesia", in that signification wherein it is most rarely taken, and cannot, without maintenance of too manifest a lie, be applied to any man. For, taking "Ecclesia" in that sense ye take it, S. Paul wrote amiss writing to the Corinthians, saying, "Ecclesia Dei quae est Corinthi;" for by your definition "non circumscribitur loco ecclesia," in the Gospel, where Christ said, "Dic ecclesiae," must needs have another interpretation and definition then ye make "de ecclesia" in your said letters; or else it were hard to make complaint to all Christendom, as the case in the Gospel requireth. "Sed est candidi pectoris verba veritati accommodare, ut ipsam referre, quod eorum officium est, non corrumpere videantur." Furthermore, the lawyers that write how "Ecclesia fallit, et fallitur," what blasphemy do they affirm, if that definition should be given to "Ecclesia" which you write in your letters? wherein albeit ye write the truth for so far, yet forasmuch as ye draw that to the words spoken of us to the reprobation of them, yet ye shew your selves contrary to the teaching of Scripture, rather inclined, by applying a divers definition, to make that a lie which is truly spoken, then "genuino sensu addita et candida interpretatione" to verifie the same. It were "nimis absurdum," for us to be called "Caput ecclesiae representans corpus Christi mysticum, et ecclesiae, quae sine ruga est et macula, quam Christus sibi sponsam elegit, illius partem vel oblatam accipere vel arrogare." And therefore albeit "Ecclesia" is spoken of in these words touched in the proeme, yet there is added, "et cleri Anglicani," which words conjoined restrain, by way of interpretation, the word "Ecclesiam" and is as much as to say the church, that is to say, the clergy of England. Which manner of speaking in the law ye have professed, ye many times find, and likewise in many other places.

But proceeding in your said letter, ye have shewed Christ to be "Caput ecclesiae," ye go about to shew how he divided his power in earth after the distinction "Temporalium et spiritualium;" whereof the one, ye say, he committed to princes, the other "Sacerdotibus:" for princes ye alledge texts which shew and prove obedience due to princes of all men, without distinction, be he priest, clerk, bishop, or layman, who make together the church; and albeit your own words make mention of temporal things, wherein ye say they should

be obeyed, yet the texts of Scripture which ye alledge having the general words "Obedite, et subditi estote," contain no such words where-by spiritual things should be excluded; but whatsoever appertaineth to the tranquillity of man's life, is of necessity included, as the words plainly import; as ye also confess; wherefore "Gladium portat princeps," not only against them that break his commandment and laws, but against him also that in any wise breaketh God's laws; for we may not more regard our law then God, nor punish the breach of our laws, and leave the transgression of God's laws unreformed; so as all spiritual things, by reason whereof may arise bodily trouble and inquietation, be necessarily included in princes power; and so proveth the text of Scripture by you alledged, and also the doctors by you brought in, confirm the same.

After that ye intend to prove, which no man will deny, the ministration of spiritual things to have been by Christ committed to priests, to preach and minister the sacraments, them to be as physicians to mens souls; but in these Scriptures, neither by spiritual things so far extended, as under colour of that vocabule be now adays; nor it proveth not, that their office being never so excellent, yet their persons, acts, and deeds should not be under the power of their prince by God assigned, whom they should acknowledge as their head; the excellency of the matter of the office doth not always in all points extoll the dignity of the minister. Christ, who did most perfectly use the office of a priest, "et nihil aliud quam vere curavit animas," gainesaid not the authority of Pilate upon that ground; and S. Paul executing the office of a priest, said, "Ad tribunal Caesaris sto, ubi me judicari oportet;" and commanded likewise, indistinctly, all others to obey princes; and yet unto those priests, being as members executing that office, princes do honour, for so is Gods pleasure and commandment: wherefore, howsoever ye take the words in the proeme, we indeed do shew and declare, that priests and bishops preaching the word of God, ministring the sacraments according to Christ's laws, and refreshing our people with ghostly and spiritual food, we not only succour and defend them for tranquillity of their life, but also with our presence; and otherwise do honour them, as the case requireth, for so is God's pleasure; like as the husband, although he be head of the wife, yet, saith S. Paul, "Non habet vir potestatem sui corporis, sed mulier," and so is, in that respect, under her. And having our mother in our realm, by the commandment of God we shall honour her; and yet they, for respect of our dignity, shall honour us by God's commandment likewise. And the minister is not always the better man, "sed cui ministratur;" the physician is not better than the prince, because he can do that the prince cannot, viz. "curare morbum." In consecration of archbishops, do not bishops give more dignity by their ministration then they have themselves? The doctors

ctors ye bring in, takeing for their theme to extol priefthood, prefer it to the dignity of a prince; after which manner of reasoning it may be called "Dignius imperare affectibus, quam populis;" and so every good man in consideration of every dignity to excel a king, not living so perfectly as he doth. And why is a bishop better than a priest, seeing and considering, in the matter of their office, "Episcopus, etiam si administrat plura, non tamen administrat majora." Emperours and princes obey bishops and priests as doers of the message of Christ, and his ambassadours for that purpose; which done, "statim fiunt privati," and in order and quietness of living, acknowledge princes as head. For what meant "Justinian" the emperour to make laws "De episcopis et clericis," and such other spiritual matters, if he had not been perswaded "Illi esse curam ecclesiae a Deo mandatam? This is true, that princes be "Filii ecclesiae, that is to say, "ilius ecclesiae" which ye define; wherewith it may agree, that they be nevertheless "Suprema capita" of the congregations of christian men in their countries; like as in smaller number of christian men, "Non est absurdum vocare superiores capita," as they be called indeed, and may be called "Primi et supremi," in respect of those countries. And why else doth the pope suffer any other besides himself to be called archbishop, seeing that he himself indeed challengeth to be "Princeps apostolorum et episcoporum" in Peter's stead, which the name of an archbishop utterly denieth; but by addition of the country they save the sense: whereunto in us to be called "Ecclesiae Anglicanae" yet at the last agree, so that there were added "in temporalibus;" which addition were superfluous, considering that men being here themselves earthly and temporal, cannot be head and governour to things eternal, nor yet spiritual; takeing that word spiritual, not as the common speech abuseth it, but as it signifieth indeed: For "Quae spiritu aguntur, nulla lege astringuntur," as the Scripture saith, "Quae spiritu Dei aguntur, libera sunt." And if you take "Spiritualibus" for spiritual men, that is to say, priests, clerks, their good acts and deeds worldly; in all this both we and all other princes be at this day chief and heads, after whose ordinance, either in general or in particular, they be ordered and governed. For leaving old stories, and considering the state of the world in our time, is there any convocation where laws be made for the order of our clergy, but such as by our authority is assembled? And why should not we say as "Justinian" said, "Omnia nostra facimus, quibus a nobis impartitur auctoritas?" Is any bishop made but he submitteth himself to us, and acknowledgeth himself as bishop to be our subject? Do not we give our licence and assent to the election of abbots? and this is concerning the persons and laws spiritual. As touching their goods, it is in all mens opinions learned in our laws, "extra controversiam," that debate

and controversie of them appertaineth to our occasion and order. And as for the living of the clergy, some notable offences we reserve to our correction, some we remit by our sufferance to the judges of the clergy; as murder, felony, and treason, and such like enormities we reserve to our examination; other crimes we leave to be ordered by the clergy, not because we may not intermeddle with them, for there is no doubt but as well might we punish adultery and insolence in priests, as emperours have done, and other princes at this day do, which ye know well enough; so as in all these articles concerning the persons of priests, their laws, their acts, and order of living, forasmuch as they be indeed all temporal, and concerning this present life only, in those we (as we be called) be indeed in this realm "Caput;" and because there is no man above us here, be indeed "Supremum caput." As to spiritual things, meaning by them the sacraments, being by God ordained as instruments of efficacy and strength, whereby grace is of his infinite goodness conferred upon his people; forasmuch as they be no worldly nor temporal things, they have no worldly nor temporal head, but only Christ that did institute them, by whose ordinance they be ministred here by mortal men, elect, chosen, and ordered as God hath willed for that purpose, who be the clergy; who for the time they do that, and in that respect, "tanquam ministri versantur in his, quae hominum potestati non subijciuntur; in quibus si male versantur sine scandalo, Deum ultorem habent, si cum scandalo, hominum cognitio et vindicta est." Wherein, as is before said, either the prince is chief doer, this authority proceeded to the execution of the same; as when by sufferance or privilege the prelates intromit themselves therein; wherefore in that which is derived from the prince at the beginning, why should any obstacle or scruple be to call him head from whom that is derived? such things as although they be amongst men, yet they be indeed "divina, quoniam quae supra nos sunt nihil ad nos." And being called head of all, we be not indeed, nor in name, to him that would sincerely understand it, head of such things being not spiritual, as they be not temporal; and yet to those words spoken of us "ad evitandam illam calumniam," there is added "quantum per legem Christi licet;" for interpretation of which parenthesis your similitude added of "homo immortalis est, quantum per naturae legem licet," is nothing like; for "naturae lex" is not immortality, as is "lex Christi" to superiority: for "lex naturae" nor speaketh, nor can mean of any immortality at all, considering that the law of nature ordaineth mortality in all things; but Christ's law speaketh of superiority, admitteth superiority, sheweth also and declareth "obediendum esse principibus," as ye do alledge. Wherefore if the law of God permitteth superiority, and commandeth obedience; to examine and measure "modum obedientiae et superioritatis," there can to

no other thing so good a relation be made. For as ye understand the Scripture, though it say nay to part, it saith not nay to the whole; whereas nature denieth utterly all immortality, and so though in speaking of immortality of man it were superfluous to say "quantum per naturae legem licet," yet is not so speaking "de superioritate et modo principatus," referring the certain limits to the law of Christ, "ad cuius normam quicquid quadrat, planum et rectum est, quicquid non quadrat, pravum et iniquum." And as touching the doubt and difficulty you make to give a single answer, yea or no, for that the question propounded containeth two things, whereof the one is true, the other false, as ye say, meaning, as ye write, that in "temporalibus" we be "caput" and in "spiritualibus" we be not; it seemeth that neither your example agreeth in similitude with that ye bring it in for, nor is there in learning or common speech used the scrupulosity in answers ye write of. Truth it is, that the question in plain words containeth two parts expressly, whereof the one is true, the other false; our yea or nay cannot be answered; for there should appear a manifest lye, which God's law detesteth, and naturally is abhorred: as if it should be asked us, if we were king of England and of Denmark, our nay or yea should not suffice. But it is far otherwise both in matters of learning and common speech, where the words in the question may by divers interpretations or relations contain two things, and yet in expression contain but one: as if a man should ask us, "An Filius et Pater unum sunt?" we would not doubt to answer and say, yea, as the Scripture saith; for it is truly answered, and to make a lye is but sophistication, drawing the word "unum" to person, wherein it is a lye. If one were asked the question, Whether the man and wife were one, he might boldly and truly say, yea; and yet it is "distinctione corporum naturalium" a lye; and to the question, "Utrum ecclesia constet ex bonis et malis," yea; and yet as ye define "ecclesiam," it is a lye. The reason of diversity is this, for that it is not supposed men would abuse words, but apply them to signifie truth, and not to signifie a lye; wherein the "Arrians" offending, took occasion of heresies. For that which is in Scripture written, is a most certain truth; and as it is there written, so, and no otherwise, would Christ have answered. If

the question had been asked, "An Pater esset major illo?" he would have said, yea, as it is written. And if the "Arrians" would have taken for a truth that of him that is truth, and speaketh truth, and from whom proceedeth but truth, they would have brought a distinction with them to set forth truly, and not disprove that it was truly written by sophistication of the word. When St. James wrote, "Fides sine operibus mortua est," he wrote truth; and so did St. Paul, "Quod fides justificat absque operibus legis;" which it could not do, if it were "mortua." Either of these made a single asseveration of a sentence, by interpretation containing two; trusting that the reader would "pio animo" so understand them, as their sayings might, as they do indeed, agree with truth. It is never to be thought men will willingly and without shame lye; and therefore the sense, if any may be gathered true, or like to be true, is to be taken, and not that which is a lye. And when we write to the pope "sanctissimo," we mean not holier than St. Peter, though it sound so; and he that in our letters should object that, should be thought ridiculous. He that should say he rode beyond the sea, were not conveniently interrupted in his tale by him that would object sayling upon the sea, where he could not ride at all; and rather then men would note a lye, when they know what is meant, they would sooner by allegory or metaphor draw the word to the truth, then by cavillation of the word note a lye. Hath not the pope been called "Caput ecclesiae," and who hath put any addition to it? Have not men said that the pope may dispence "cum iure divino?" and yet in a part "iuris divini, viz. moralis et naturalis" the same men would say he might not dispence. Wherefore if in all other matters it was never thought inconvenient to speak absolutely the truth, without distinction, why should there be more scruple in our case? The truth cannot be changed by words; That we be, as God's law suffereth us to be, whereunto we do and must conform our selves. And if ye understand, as ye ought to understand "Temporalibus," for the passing over this life in quietness, ye at last descend to agree to that, which in the former part of your letter you intend to impugne; and sticking to that, it were most improperly spoken to say, we be "illius ecclesiae caput in temporalibus," which hath not "temporalia."

Papae Rom.  
CLEMENT. VII. 10.

Archiep. Cant.  
THO. CRANMER I.

Anno Christi  
1533.

Reg. Angliae  
HENRIC. VIII. 25.

*Praelatorum et cleri de provincia Eborum in convocatione super duabus quaestionibus instrumentum publicum. Ex autog apud Rymer Foed. vol. XIV. p. 472.*

UNIVERSIS et singulis sanctae matris ecclesiae filijs, ad quos praesentes literae, sive hoc praesens publicum transumpti instrumentum pervenerint seu pervenerit, et quos infra-scripta tangunt seu tangere poterunt quomodo-

libet infuturum, Edwardus, permissione divina Eboracensis archiepiscopus, Angliae primas, et apostolicae sedis legatus, salutem in Domino, et fidem indubiam praesentibus adhiberi. Ad universitatis vestrae notitiam deducimus et deduci