

Report on Convocation's Sessions from April 1532 to November 1533¹

Convocation praelatorum et cleri provinciae Cantuariæ ad 12 Aprilis [1532] continuata fuit in domo capitulari Westmonasterii Ex reg. convoc. et excerptis Heylinianis

Die Veneris 12. Aprilis (sessio XCVII.) “reverendissimus habuit communicationem super quodam libello supplicationis, per communitatem domus inferioris parlamenti regi factae contra archiepiscopos, episcopos, vel ordinarios; unde reverendissimus putavit expediens, ut responsiones fierent ad hujusmodi querelas”; et quia domus inferior certior facta erat, quod regia majestas celerem et maturam expectaret responsionem ad eundem, prolocutori perlegendus tradebatur cum expectatione responsi in proxima XCVIII. sessione die Lunae (April 15) exhibendi. Quo die lectis per episcopum Wintoniae prooemio libelli supplicis percommunitatem parlamenti regi facti, cum quibusdam conceptis responsis, duabusque perticulis articuli primi libelli ejusdem, cum duabus responsionibus ad easdem, vota et suffragia episcoporum et praelatorum responsis unanimiter assentientium colligebantur. Hoc facto, responsiones praedictae ad domum inferiorem missae, ibique perlectae sequenti sessione (April 19.) assensum obtinuerunt. Antequam autem finis sessioni XCVIII. imponeretur, magister Latymer ad synodum evocatus fuit ad respondendum in causa literarum ab ipso ad magistrum Greenwood in universitate Cantabrigiae scriptarum, et monitus ad comparendum personaliter die Veneris proximo 19 Aprilis ad audiendam voluntatem reverendissimi. Quo tempore jussus ut “praestaret juramentum de respondendo fideliter die Lunae proximo, respondit, quod appellavit ad serenissimum dominum nostrum regem: cui appellationi voluit stare.” Die Lunae Aprilis 22 (sessio C.) “episcopus Londoniae commissarius archiepiscopi tractavit de materia appellationis magistri Latymer; et tunc episcopus Wintoniae significabat regium beneplacitum super materia appellationis praedictae, qui remisit eum ad reverendissimum et convocationem praedictam, ut ipsi decernerent. Unde dictus Latymer exhibuit se personaliter, et flexis genibus dixit quae sequuntur, videlicet

Convocation of the prelates and the clergy of the province of Canterbury was continued April 12 [1532] in the capital of Westminster. *Ex reg. convoc.* and Heylin's Extracts

On Friday April 12 (Session 97), “the Most Reverend held communication concerning a certain little book of supplication, made to the King by the Commons of the Lower House of Parliament to the King, against the archbishops, bishops, or ordinaries; whence the Most Reverend thought it expedient that there be responses to complaints of this kind”; and because the Lower House had been informed that the royal Majesty was expecting a swift and timely response to the same, it was handed down to be read aloud by the prolocutor with the expectation of a response to be offered at the next Session 98, on Monday, April 15. On that day, after the preface of the book of supplication made to the King by the Commons of Parliament, with certain imagined responses, and two particulars of the first article of the same book, with two responses to the same, had been read by Bishop of Winchester, the votes and suffrages of the bishops and prelates agreeing unanimously with the responses were collected. When this had been done, the aforementioned responses were sent to the Lower House, and there, after they had been proclaimed at the following session, on April 19, they obtained approval. Before, however, an end was imposed on Session 98, Master Latimer was called to the synod to respond in the case of a letter written from himself to Master Greenwood in the University of Cambridge and was advised to be present in person on the next Friday, April 19, to hear the will of the Most Reverend. At which time, having been ordered “to swear on oath about responding faithfully on the next Monday, he responded, that he called to the Most Serene Lord, our king: for which appellation he wished to stand.” On Monday April 22 (Session 100), “the Bishop of London, the commissary of the Archbishop, discussed the matter of the appellation of Master Latimer; and then the Bishop of Winchester signified the royal good pleasure about the matter of the aforementioned appellation, who sent him back to the Most Reverend and the aforementioned Convocation that they might discern this. Whence, when he had been called, Latimer showed himself in person, and on bended knee he said the following, viz.

¹ The Latin is taken from *Consilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae* (London 1737): pages 748-49. The translation is by William Farris, 2014.

That where he had aforetime confessed, that he hath heretofore erred, and that he meant then it was onely error of discretion, he hath sythens better seen his own acts, and searched them more deeply, and doth knowledge, that he hath not erred only in discretion, but also in doctrine; and said, that he was not called afore the said lords, but upon good and just ground, and hath been by them charitably and favourably intreated. And where he had afore time misreported of the lords, he knowledgeth, that he hath done yll in it, and desired them, humbly on his knees, to forgive him: and where he is not of ability to make them recompence, he said, he would pray for them.

Qua submissione facta, receptus est in gratiam ad specialem requisitionem domini regis; ita, si postea relapses fuerit, praemissa tum objicerentur eidem. Et illic episcopi protestati sunt, quod ista submitio non extenderetur ad aliquam abrenunciationem, quae fieri consuevit in talibus casibus. Deinde facta fuit per eundem Latymer de parendo juri, et servandis mandatis ecclesiae, dominus Londoniae locum tenens absolvit euncem, et restituit eum sacramentis ecclesiae.”

In quatuor sequentibus sessionibus de responsionibus ad petitiones communitatis ab inferiori domo conscribendis tractabatur. In sessione cv. (May 8.) “episcopus Londoniae commissarius accepit quatuor libellos a prolocutore super auctoritate ecclesiasticorum condendi jura pro suppressione haereseos, conceptos, ut asseruit, per eruditos viros; et protestatus est se non exhibere eosdem ut approbatos unanimi consensus totius domus, sed ut ipse reverendus locum tenens, et alii episcopi eos perlegerent, et ex iisdem et [749] deligerent quae maxime facerent ad veritatem et eorundem propositum.” Deinde praedictus locum tenens certior factus a duce Norfolciae communitatem domus parliamenti sponte quindenam regi concessisse infra duos annos persolvendam, monuit prolocutorem et alios, ut se non minus promptos et paratos ad subveniendum. Necessitatibus regiis exhiberent, et postquam de ea materialiter consultassent, redirent cum responsis suis. Redeuntes inter caetera rogabant, ut episcopi Londoniae, et Lincolniae Abates Westmonasterii et Burton, cum Sampson, decano sacelli regii, et Edward Fox, elemosynario regis, ut ipsi adeant regiam majestatem supplicando, ut ipse ex innata sua bonitate dignetur viris ecclesiasticis non minus assistere, favere, et iisdem auxiliari, eorumque et ecclesiae immunitates illas servare, quam ipse hactenus et ejusdem illustrissimi progenitors antea assistebant. Qui hujusmodi officium in se acceptarunt,

‘That where he had aforetime confessed, that he hath heretofore erred, and that he meant then it was only error of discretion, he hath since better seen his own acts, and searched them more deeply, and doth acknowledge, that he hath not erred only in discretion, but also in doctrine; and said, that he was not called afore the said lords, but upon good and just ground, and hath been by them charitably and favorably entreated. And where he had afore time misreported of the lords, he acknowledgeth, that he hath done ill in it, and desired them, humbly on his knees, to forgive him: and where he is not of ability to make them recompense, he said, he would pray for them.’

“After this submission had been made, he was received into grace for the special requisition of the Lord King; thus, if afterwards he should have relapsed, the promises would then be refused to the same man. And there the bishops protested that that submission might not be extended to any other renunciation, which was accustomed to happen in such cases. Then, after faith had been made by the same Latimer about obeying the law, and preserving the commandments of the Church, the presiding Lord of London absolved the same, and restored him to the sacraments of the Church.”

In the four following sessions the responses to be drawn up to the petitions of the Commons from the Lower House were discussed. In Session 105 (May 8), “the Bishop of London commissary received four books from the prolocutor about the authority of the ecclesiastics to make laws for the suppression of heresies, conceived, as he claimed, by erudite men; and he testified that he did not exhibit the same as had been approved by the consensus of the entire house, but that he himself, presiding as reverend, and other bishops were examining them, and from the same [749] they were choosing which ones especially they might make in accordance with truth and the resolution of the same.” Then after the aforementioned presider was informed by the Duke of Norfolk that the Commons of the House of Parliament, by its own will, had conceded a fifteenth to the King, to be dissolved in two years, he advised the Prolocutor and others that they show themselves no less prompt and prepared to come to the assistance of the royal necessities, and that after they will have consulted about the matter, they should return with their own responses. Returning, they asked, among other things, that the Bishops of London and Lincoln, the Abbots of Westminster and Burton, with Sampson, the Dean of the Chapel Royal, and Edward Fox, the King’s almoner, might themselves approach the royal Majesty with supplication, that he, from his own innate kindness,

ac habita communicatione de concessione alicujus summae pecuniae, profecti sunt ad aulam regiam.

In sequenti session CVI. (Maii 10 [1532].) **exhibebantur articuli per Edward Fox, eleemosynarium regium, synodo missi, quibus rex omnes subscribere voluit.**

Articles to be proposed in convocation.

1. That no constitution or ordinance shall be hereafter by the clergy enacted, promulged, or put in execution, unless the king's highness do approve the same by his high authority and royal assent, and his advice and favour be also interponed for the execution of every such constitution among his highness subjects.

2. That whereas divers of the constitutions provincial, which have been heretofore enacted, be thought not only much prejudicial to the king's prerogative, but also much onerous to his highness subjects, it be committed to the examination and judgement of thirty two persons; whereof sixteen to be of the upper and nether house of the temporalty, and other sixteen of the clergy; all to be appointed by the king's highness. So that finally whichsoever of the said constitutions shall be thought and determined by the most part of the said thirty two persons worthy to be abrogate and annull'd, the same to be afterward taken away, and to be of no force and strength.

3. That all other of the said constitutions, which stand with God's laws and the king's, to stand in full strength and power, the king's highness royal assent given to the same."

Articuli hi primum in capella Sanctae Catharinae infra Westmonasterium, deinde in capella Sancti Dunstani ab archiepiscopo et praelatis perlegebantur; et ibidem concordatum est, quod nonnulli ex utraque domo convocationis episcopum Roffensem adirent, ad mature tractandum super contentis in articulis.

In sequenti session CVII. (Maii 13.) "reverendissimus de consensus episcoporum et totius cleri commisit vices suas magistro Thomas Parker, vicario in spiritualibus generali domini Wigorniae Episcopi, ad exhumandum corpus praescripti Willielmi Tracy, juxta formam decreti." Postea articuli a rege synodo transmissi examinati, ac cum limitatione modica confirmati sunt. **Sequens session CVIII.**

might deign no less to assist the ecclesiastic men, to favor them, and to help the same, and to preserve the unimpaired immunities of them and the Church, which he himself thus far, and his most illustrious progenitors beforehand, used to assist. These men accepted the duty of this kind for themselves, and after they had held communication about a sum of money, they set out for the royal palace."

In the following Session 106 (May 10 [1532]), "articles were displayed through Edward Fox, the King's almoner, sent to the Synod, to which the King wanted all to subscribe.

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2. That whereas diverse of the constitutions provincial, which have been heretofore enacted, be thought not only much prejudicial to the King's prerogative, but also much onerous to his Highness's subjects, it be committed to the examination and judgment of thirty-two persons, whereof sixteen to be of the Upper and Nether House of the temporalty, and other sixteen of the clergy; all to be appointed by the King's Highness. So that finally whichsoever of the said constitutions shall be thought and determined by the most part of the said thirty-two persons worthy to be abrogate and annulled, the same to be afterward taken away, and to be of no force and strength.

3. That all other of the said constitutions, which stand with God's laws and the King's, to stand in full strength and power, the King Highness's royal assent given to the same."

These articles were proclaimed first in the Chapel of St. Catherine in Westminster, then in the Chapel of St. Dunstan by the Archbishop and the prelates; and at the same time it was agreed upon that some of the bishops from each House of Convocation go to Rochester to discuss the contents of the articles in a timely manner.

In the following Session 107 (May 13), "the Most Reverend, from the consensus of the bishops and the entire clergy, entrusted his own office to Master Thomas Parker, the vicar general for spiritual matters for the Lord Bishop of Worcester, to exhume the body of the forewritten William Tracy, according to the form of the decree." Afterwards the articles,

(Maii 15 [1532]) submissionem cleri coram domino rege absque ulla limitatione vel reservation, quoad celebrationem conciliorum provincialium protulit, ac assensum majoris partis convocationis obtinuit. Ex inferiori domo 18. Primum articulum negabant, et 8. se referebant ad alia; duos alios articulos 19. Negabant, et 7. se referebant ad alia. **In domo superiori** tres episcopi conditionaliter assentiebantur; unus plane dissentiit: episcopus Assavensis articulis regiis et submissionem cleri assensum praebuit, “dummodo excellentissimus rex noster permittat illas constitutiones provinciales, quae non sunt contrariae juri divino, nec juri regni, poni in executione, sicut prius.” Episcopus Lincolniae hanc adjecit conditionem, “sic quod rex permittat illas constitutiones alias factas exequi per ordinarios, quousque dictum negotium sit examinatum.” Episcopus Londoniae “sic quod dicta schedula non sit contra jus divinum, nec contraria conciliis generalibus.” Episcopus Bathae et Wellensis plane dissentiit articulis. **Hoc facto, per breve regium convocatio fuit prorogata** usque ad 5. Novembris sequentis. **Postridie, 16. scilicet die Maii, reverendissimus tradidit domino regi instrumentum super submissione cleri per seipsum et alios inactitatum et conclusum.**

Quinto die Novembris, sede archiepiscopali Cantuarie vacante, Henricus, episcopus Assavensis, commissarius prioris et capituli Cantabrigiae breve regium ad custodes spiritualitatis archiepiscopatus Cantuarie datum, in domo capitulari Westmonasterii per doctorem Coxe perlegi fecit, cum literis commissionibus prioris et capituli Cantuarie sibi directis, et convocationem in quintum Februarii proximi continuavit. In sessione II. (Februarii 5.) protestatio per John Fulwell, monachum Westmonasterii de immunitate monasterii sui facta, responsum episcopi Londoniae pro more solito tulit. Et deinde per tres sequentes sessiones de exoneratione universitatum Oxonii et Cantabrigiae ac domorum Carthusiensium religiosorum S. Salvatoris, et B. Mariae virginis, et Brigittae, Sionis, atque monasteriorum monialium Sanctae Clarae extra Aldgate, civitat. London. a solutione subsidii tractabatur. Postea post tres alias sessiones convocatio continuata fuit ad 17. Martii in ecclesia S. Pauli Londoniae. Ibi in nona sessione (Martii 17.) publice perlecta fuerunt certicatorium per D. Coxe super executione mandati episcopo London. per priorem et

transmitted to the Synod by the King, were examined and were accepted with a modest limitation. **The following Session 108 (May 15, [1532]) brought forward a submission of the clergy in the presence of the Lord King without any limitation or reservation, with respect to the gathering of provincial assemblies, and it obtained the assent of the greater part of the Convocation. From the Lower House, 18 rejected the first article, and 8 abstained; 19 rejected two other articles, and 7 abstained. In the Upper House three bishops assented conditionally; one openly dissented: the Bishop of St. Asaph offered assent to the royal articles and to the submission of the clergy, “provided that our most excellent King allows those provincial constitutions, which are not contrary to divine law, nor to the law of the kingdom, to be put into execution, as earlier.” The Bishop of Lincoln added this condition, “thus that the King allow those other constitutions, which had been made, to be carried out until what time the said business may have been examined.” The Bishop of London “thus that the spoken schedule may not happen contrary to the divine law, nor contrary to the general assemblies.” The Bishop of Bath and Wells clearly dissented to the articles. **When this had been done the Convocation was prorogued** through a royal brief until the 5th of November following. **On the next day, the 16th day of May, evidently, the Most Reverend handed over to the House a document about the submission of the clergy, enacted and concluded by itself and others.****

On the 5th day of November, when the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury was vacant, Henry, the Bishop of St. Asaph, commissary of the prior and chapter of Canterbury, made a royal brief, given to the custos of the spirituality of the Archepiscopate of Canterbury, be read aloud, in the chapter house of Westminster, by Dr. Cox, along with commission letters of the prior and chapter of Canterbury directed towards himself, and he continued the Convocation up to the fifth of the next February. In Session 2 (February 5 [1533]), a protestation made by John Fulwell, a monk of Westminster, about the immunity of his own monastery, received a response from the Bishop of London according to his usual custom. And then, during the three following sessions, the exoneration from the payment of submission of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and of the houses of the religious Carthusians of Sanctus Salvator, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of Bridget, of Syon, and of the convents of nuns outside of Aldgate in the city of London. Afterwards, after three other sessions, the Convocation was continued

capitulum Cantuarie directum, pro episcopis et aliis praelatis, etc. convocandis, et certificatoria episcoporum, etc. Et sic post sessionem x. Martii 11. in qua nihil scitu dignum occurrit, convocatio ad diem Mercurii (Mart. 26.) continuabatur.

up to March 17 in the Church of Saint Paul at London. There, in the Ninth Session, March 17, a guarantee about the execution of the mandate, directed to the Bishop of London by the prior and chapter of Canterbury on behalf of the bishops and other prelates, and others about convoking assemblies, and guarantees of the bishops, etc., were read aloud publicly by Dr. Cox. And thus after Session 10, March 11, in which occurred nothing worth knowing, the Convocation was continued until Wednesday, March 26 [1533].