

750 *Answer of the ordinaries to the supplication of the Commons.*

Papae Rom.
CLEMENT. VII. 9.

Archiep. Cant.
GUILIEL. WARHAM 29.

Anno Christi
1532.

Reg. Angliae
HENRIC. VIII. 24.

The answer of the ordinaries to the supplication of the worshipful commons of the lower house of parliament, offered to our sovereign lord the king's most noble grace. Ex regist. convoc. Cantuar.

AFTER our most humble wife with our most bounden duty of honour and reverence to your excellent majesty, endued of God with incomparable wisdom and goodness; pleaseth it the same to understand, that we your orators, and daily bounden beadsmen, the ordinaries, have read and perused a certain supplication, which the commons of your grace's most honourable parliament now assembled have offered unto your highness, and by your commandment delivered to us, to make thereunto answer; and as the time hath served and permitted, we have, according to your highness's commandment, made thereunto this answer following, beseeching your grace's indifferent benignity graciously to hear the same.

First, where in the said supplication it is induced as for a preface, that much discord, variance, and debate hath risen among your grace's subjects, spiritual and temporal, and more and more is daily like to increase, to the great quietness and breach of the peace within your grace's catholic realm, as well thro' new fantastical and erroneous opinions, grown by occasion of seditious and overthwart framed books, compiled, imprinted, and made in the English tongue in the parts beyond the sea, contrary and against the very true, catholic, and christian faith; as also by the uncharitable dealing and behaviour of divers ordinaries, their commissioners, and substitutes in the common and often vexation of your grace's said subjects in the spiritual courts; and also by other evil examples and misuses of spiritual persons.

To this we your said orators and daily bounden beadsmen, the ordinaries, answer, assuring your most noble highness, that in our hearts and consciences there is no such discord, variance, debate, nor breach of peace in our party against our brethren in God, and ghostly children, your subjects, as is induced in this preface; but our daily prayer is, and shall be, that all unity, concord, and peace may increase among all the people of God, especially among your grace's true faithful subjects, and our said ghostly children, whom, God be our witness, we love, have loved, and shall ever love with hearty affection; never intending any hurt or harm towards any of them in soul or body, and never having enterprised any thing against them of trouble, vexation, or displeasure; but only have, as we dare surely affirm, with all charity exercised the spiritual jurisdiction of the church, as we are bound of duty, upon certain evil disposed persons, infected and utterly corrupt with the pestilent poison of heresy; and to have had peace with

such, it had been against the Gospel of our saviour Christ, wherein he saith, "Non veni mittere pacem, sed gladium." And if any discords, variance, or debates be or have been on other parties, we think verily, like as they do say, that it hath risen only by uncharitable behaviour of certain evil and seditious persons, infected, as above, with fantastical and erroneous opinions, taken out of such books as be mentionate in the said supplication; of whose fall we be very sorry, and beseech almighty God to repair in them right faith and christian charity again, that all concord, unity, and peace, which Christ gave, and left behind him as a peculiar treasure to all that would be disciples, may have place in this your grace's most noble realm, in the avoiding the most terrible prophecy of the most true prophet, our master Christ, saying in his Gospel, such variance and debate being, "Every kingdom divided in itself shall be desolate, and one house shall fall upon another." In consideration whereof, lowly upon our knees, sincerely, without colour or counterfeiting, we beseech your grace's highness, that it may please the same to be the author of unity, charity, and concord within this your grace's realm; and grant to us, the unworthy ministers of God's church within this your realm, that by your grace's favour, protection, and defence, we may not only serve God quietly in his church, but also execute the spiritual jurisdiction peaceably, for the discharge of our duty, and reformation of sin. In the exercising whereof we trust we have not been so great occasion of variance, as is furnished in the preface, through our misorders, uncharitable behaviour, and vexation of your grace's subjects in spiritual courts; as we doubt not shall appear to your grace by this our answer.

And albeit in a multitude it is hard but certain will in some time fall to lightness, or misuse themselves, yet we trust that there is not such number of evil ruled spiritual persons in the clergy, that for their evil examples and misuses, the occasions of these variances and debates should be annexed to the whole body of the clergy in such a generality. And perhaps many matters of the same supplication have come and been brought to your grace's said commons by misinformation, and by bills devised by some, which bear little favour to the clergy; and percase some of those bills, which contained much matter of this supplication, for just causes moving the charitable consciences of your grace's commons, were heretofore rejected of your said commons; and now percase by the importune suit
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of such as devised these bills, means have been made to have such matters formed into a supplication, to be put unto your highness, to the hinderance of your grace's favour toward the clergy, which will be as far and as loth as any creatures living to fall into your grace's displeasure. And albeit we perceive and know right well, that there be as well disposed and as well consciented men of your grace's commons, in no small number assembled, as ever we knew in any parliament; yet we be not so ignorant, but that we understand, that sinister informations, and importune labours and persuasions of evil disposed persons, pretending themselves to be thereto moved by the zeal of justice and reformation, may induce right wise, sad, and constant men to suppose such things to be true, as be not so indeed.

And where, after a general preface of the said supplication, your grace's commons descend to particular greaves, and first report, that the clergy of this your realm being your highness's subjects, in the convocation by them holden within this your realm, have made and daily make sanctions or laws concerning temporal things, and some of them be repugnant to the laws, and statutes of your realm, not having ne requiring your most royal assent to the same laws, so by them made, neither any assent or knowledge of your said lay subjects is had to the same, neither to them published and known in their mother tongue; albeit divers and sundry of the said laws extend in certain causes to your excellent person, your liberty and prerogative royal, and to the interdiction of your lands and possessions, and so likewise to the goods and possessions of your lay subjects, declaring the infringers of the law so by them made not only to incur into the terrible sentence of excommunication, but also the detestable crime and sin of heresy; by the which divers of your most humble and obedient lay subjects be brought into this ambiguity, whether they may do and execute your laws according to your jurisdiction royal of this realm, for dread of the same censures and pains comprised in the same laws so by them made in the convocations, to the great trouble and inquietation of your said humble and obedient lay subjects, and to the impeachment of your jurisdiction and prerogative royal:

To this article we say, that forasmuch as we repute and take our authority of making laws to be grounded upon the Scripture of God, and determination of holy church, which must also be a rule and square to try the justice of all laws, as well spiritual as temporal, we verily trust that [considering the laws of this realm be such as have been made by most christian, religious, and devout princes and people, how both these laws proceeding from one fountain, the same being sincerely interpreted, and, after the good meaning of their makers, there shall be found no repugnancy nor contrariety, but that the one shall be found as

aiding, maintaining, and supporting the other.] And if it shall otherwise appear, as it is our duty, whereunto we shall always most diligently apply ourselves to reform our ordinances to God's commission, and to conform our statutes and laws, and those of our predecessors to the determination of Scripture and holy church; so we hope in God, and shall daily pray for the same, that your highness will, if there appear cause why, with the consent of your people, temper your grace's laws accordingly; whereby shall ensue a most sure and perfect conjunction and agreement, as God being "*lapis angularis*" to agree and conjoin the same.

And^a as concerning the requiring of your highness's royal assent to the authorizing of such laws, as have been by our predecessors, or shall be made by us in such points and articles, as we have by God authority to rule and order by provisions and laws; we knowing your highness's wisdom, virtue, and learning, nothing doubt but the same perceiveth how the granting thereunto dependeth not upon our will and liberty; and that we your most humble subjects may not submit the execution of our charges and duty, certainly prescribed by God, to your highness's assent, although in very deed the same is most worthy, for your most princely and excellent virtues, not only to give your royal assent, but also to devise and command, what we should for good order and manners by statutes and laws provide in the church; nevertheless considering we may not so, ne in such sort restrain the doing of our office, in the feeding and ruling of Christ's people, your grace's subjects, we most humbly desire your grace (as the same hath done heretofore) so from henceforth to shew your grace's mind and opinion to us, what your high wisdom shall think convenient, which we shall most gladly hear and follow, if it shall please God to inspire us so to do, with all submission and humility, beseeching the same, following the steps of your most noble progenitors, and conformable to your own acts, to maintain and defend such laws and ordinances, as we, according to our calling, and by the authority of God, shall for his honour make to the edification of virtue, and maintaining of Christ's faith, whereof your highness is defender in name, and hath been hitherto in deed a special protector.

Furthermore where in the said first article your said lay subjects say, that sundry of the said laws extend in certain causes to your excellent person, your liberty, and prerogative royal, and to the interdiction of your lands and possessions:

To this your said orators say, that having in answer to the former article submitted the trying and examining of the laws made in the church by us or our predecessors to the just and straight rule of God's law, which giveth measure of power, prerogative, and authority

^a Ex MS. Cott. Cleop. F. 1. fol. 96. to——special protector.

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to all emperors, kings, princes, and potestates, and all other; we have conceived such opinion, and have such estimation of your majesty's goodness and virtue, that whatsoever any person, not so well learned as your grace is, would pretend unto the same, whereby we your most humble subjects may be brought in your grace's displeasure and indignation, furnishing that we should by usurpation and presumption extend our laws to your most noble person, preroga-

tive, and realm; yet the same your highness, being so highly learned, will of your own most bounteous goodness facilly discharge, and deliver us from that envy, when it shall appear that [the said laws are made by us, or our predecessors conformable and maintainable by the Scripture of God, and determination of the church, against which no laws can stand or take effect.]

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Bishop Gardiner's Letter of excuse in relation to this reply.

Ex regist. convoc.

MY duty remembered to your majesty with all lowly humility and reverend honour; forasmuch as letted by disease of body I cannot personally repair to your highness's presence, having heard of your grace's almoner, to my great discomfort, what opinion your highness hath conceived of me, I am compelled by these letters to represent unto the same, lamenting and wailing my chance and fortune to have lost, besides my debts, as much reputation in your grace's heart, as your highness without my merits hath conferred unto me in estimation of the world. And if I comforted not my self with remembrance of your grace's goodnes, with whom "Veritas semper vincit; et fortis taederet et vitae." I know in myself, and can never forget your grace's benefis, and your highness's notable affection towards me. I know my duty and bond to your highness. How much I desire to declare in outward deeds mine inward knowledge, God knoweth, and I trust your highness shall know; but in the mean time for want thereof thus I suffer, and know no remedy but your highness's goodness to expend what I have done, what I should have done, and what I may do, and not be discontent, though in correcting the answer I believed so great a number of learned men affirming it so precisely to be true, that was in the answer alleged concerning God's law; especially considering your highness's book against Luther, in mine understanding most plainly approveth it. The book written in your grace's cause, and translated into English seemeth to allow it; and the council of "Constance" condemning the articles of

Wyclse manifestly decreeth it. The contrary whereof, if your grace can now prove, yet I not learned in divinity, ne knowing any part of your grace's proofs, am, I trust, without cause of blame in that behalf. When I know that I knew not, I shall then speak hereafter. It were pity we lived, if so little expressing our love to God in our deeds, we should abuse his name and authority to your highness's displeasure, of whom we have received so many benefits. On the other part, if it be God's authority to us allotted, though we cannot use it condignly, yet we cannot give it away; and it is no less danger to the receiver than to the giver, as your highness of your high wisdom can consider. I am, for my part, as I am bound, most desirous not only to do what may be done to your highness's contentation, but also appliable to learn the truth what ought to be done; trusting your majesty will finally take in good part, that I think that truth, for which I have so good grounds and authorities, untill I have stronger grounds and reasons to the contrary. I shall most gladly confer with any of your grace's council in this matter, and in the mean time I daily pray to God for the knowledge of his truth, and preservation of your majesty in much felicity, alway most ready and desirous to do as becometh

Your most humble subject,
most bounden chaplain,
and daily beadsman.

STE. WINT.

A reply made by the clergy to the supplication of the commons.

Ex MS. Cott. Cleop. F. i. fol. 98.

FIRST, as concerning such constitutions and ordinances provincial, as be to be made hereafter by us, your most humble subjects; we having our especial trust and confidence in your most high and excellent wisdom, your princely goodness, and fervent zeal to the promotion of God's honour, and christian religion, and especially your incomparable learning far exceeding in our judgment the learning of all

other kings and princes, that we have read of, and doubting nothing but that the same shall still continue and daily increase in your majesty, do offer and promise hereunto the same, that from henceforth during your highness's, natural life, which we most heartily beseech almighty God long to preserve, we shall forbear to enact, promulge, or put in execution any such constitution or ordinance, so by us to be made