

**From** *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, vol. 5: 1531-1532*, edited by James Gairdner. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1880, p. 387.

[1533]  
R. O.

820. [HENRY VIII. TO TUNSTALL?]

I have received your letters "dated, &c.," complaining that a book has been lately printed, in the name of our Council and with our consent, against the pre-eminence of the Pope and the Church of Rome, by which some conceive that we are minded to separate our Church of England from the Church of Rome; and you think that the consequences should be considered. My Lord, before we make any reply, we thank you for your advertisements, because we think that no man being so much bound to us as you are will have a sinister mind against us. Now, as touching schism, we are informed by virtuous and learned men, that, considering what the Church of Rome is, it is no schism to separate from it and adhere to the words of God. The lives of Christ and of the Pope are very opposite, and therefore to follow the Pope is to forsake Christ.

(1.) As to your first : no Christian princes will, we think, abandon us for obeying Christ; nor (2.) withdraw their benevolence from us. (3.) No particular Church may withdraw what they have agreed to in many General Councils; but where there is error there can be no consent. The supremacy of the Pope is usurped. (4.) No Church can be bound by any interpretation of Scripture which appears to it to be forbidden by God. (5.) No Christian man is to regard those who fear man more than God. Replies to arguments alleged for the Pope's supremacy from the Council of Constance. (6.) Defends the Council of Ble as alleged in the said book, in which it had been declared general, and thinks the objection over-scrupulous. (7.) Admits that it is more proper that the particular body should conform to the universal body than the reverse; "but, God willing, we shall never separate from the universal body of Christian men." The Pope has already divided from the most part of Christendom, and is now in no such credence as once he was. It is to be trusted the Papacy will shortly vanish away if it be not reformed. (8.) As to the duty of an inferior Church submitting to a superior, it must be considered whether there is any such superiority in God's laws. (9.) Defends himself for having made war upon Lewis of France, in which he was misled in his youth by those who sought only their own pomp, wealth, and glory; all which points have been well considered by our Council.

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