

the keyes of the Church, to the great perill both of his soule, and to the pernicious example of other. For so much therefore, as the holy mother the church hath not to do or to proceed any further in this matter: we humblye desire your kingly maiestye, to direct out your letters for the apprehending of the sayd excommunicat according to the custome of this realme of England, whollome-ly obserued and kept hether to: to the intent, that such whome the feare of God doth not restrayne from euill, the discipline of the secular arme may bridle and plucke backe from offending. Your princely celsitude the Lord long continue. From Lamheth the 15. of January.

the which for so much as I doe suppose to be found and true, he will most willingly confirme my sayd sayth, or if it be erroneous amend the same.

First I suppose, that the Gospell of Christ, is the whole bodye of Gods law, and that Christ which did geue that same law hym- selfe, I beleue him to be a very man, and in that poynt, to exceed the law of the Gospell, and all other partes of the Scripture. A- gayne I do geue and holde, the Bishop of Rome, for so much as he is the Vicare of Christ here in earth, to be bound most of all other men vnto that law of the Gospell. For the greatnesse amongest Christes Disciples, did not consist in worldly dignity or honours but in the neare and exact following of Christ, in his life and ma- ners: wherupon I do gather out of the hart of the law of the Lord, that Christ for the time of his pilgrymage here, was a most poore man, abiecting and casting off all worldly rule and honour, as ap- peareth by the Gospell of Math. the 8. and the 2. Corinthians. 8. chapter.

The true disci- ples of Christ seeke no hono- r

This is not to seeke a- gaine that which is lost by the rule of Ezechiel.

To this letter of the Archb. might not the king (gentle reader) thus aunswere agayne, and aunswere well?

Profopopo- ia. What the kyng might haue aun- swered a- gayne.

Your letters with your complaynt and requestes in the same conteyned, we haue receiued and well considered. For the accomplishing wherof, ye shall vnderstand that as we are readely bent to gratify and satisfy your minde in this behalfe on the one side: so we must beware agayne on the other, that our authoritye be not abused either to oppresse before we know, or to iudge before we haue tryed. Wherfore for so much as you in your letters do excite and sharpen the seuer discipline of our secular sword, agaynst one Nich. Herford, for his not appearing before you: and yet shewing in the sayd your letters no certaine cause to vs what you haue to charge him withall: we therefore following the ex- ample of Alexander Magnus, or rather the rule of equity in opening both our eares indifferently, to heare as well the one part, as the other do asigne both to him, when as he may be found, & to you whē you shalbe called a terme to appeare before vs. To the intēt that the controuersy betwene you and him, stāding vpon points of religiō, being tried by the true touchstone of Gods holy word due correction indifferently may be ministred according as the offence shall be founde. In the meane time, this we cannot but something maruell at in your sayde Letters: First, to see you mē of the Church and Aungels of peace to be so desirous of blood. Secondly, to consider you again so fierce in prosecuting the breach of your lawe: and yet so colde in pursuing the breache of the ex- presse law of God and his commaundementes. Thirdly, to behold the vnstable doubleness in your proceedings, who pretending in your publick sentence, to become as intreaters for them to vs in the bowels of Iesus Christ, that we will withdraw from them the rigour of our seuerity, and yet in your letters you be they which most set vs on. If not appearing before you: be such a matter of contumacy in case of your lawe, that is in no case to bee spared: what shoulde then our Princely discipline haue done to men of your calling: Henry Spencer Bishop of Norwich, being at Cant. was sent for by our speciall commaundement to come to our speach, denyed to come, and yet we spared him. Iohn Stratforde Archbysshop your predecessour, being required of our progeni- tour king Edward the third to come to him at Yorke, would not appeare: by the occasion whereof, Scotland the same time was lost, & yet was he suffered. The like might be sayd of Robert Win- chelsey in the dayes of king Edward the first, and of Edmund the Archb. of Cant in the daies of K. Henry 3. Stephen Langhton was sent for by K. Iohn to come, he came not. The like cōtumacy was in Becket toward K. Henry. 2. Also in Anselme toward K. Henry. 1 All these for theyr not appearing before their princes, ye do ex- cuse, who notwithstanding might haue appeared without daun- ger of life. This one man for not appearing before you, you think worthy of death: whose life you would haue cōdemned notwith- standing, if he had appeared. It is no reason if the Squirill climbing to the tree from the Lyons clawes, would not appeare, being set for to be deuoured: that the Eagle therefore should seise vpon him without any iust cause, declared agaynst the party. Wherfore ac- cording to this, and to that afore sayde when he shall appeare, and you be called, and the cause iustly wayed, due execution shall be ministred.

Bishops of Cant. ap- peared not before theyr kyngs, and yet they were not persecuted.

Hereby I do fully gather, that no faythfull man ought to fol- low, neither the Pope himselfe, neither any of the holy men, but in such poynts, as he hath followed the Lord Iesus Christ. For Pe- ter and the sonnes of Zebede by desiring worldly honour, contra- ry to the folowing of Christes steppes, did offend; and therefore in those errors, they are not to be followed.

Hereof I do gather, as a Cosell, that the Pope ought to leaue vnto the secular power, all temporal dominion and rule, & ther- unto effectually to moue and exhort his whole Clergy: for so did Christ, and specially by his Apostles. Wherfore, if I haue erred in any of these poyntes, I will most humbly submitte my selfe vnto correction euen by death if necessity so require: And if I coulde labor according to my will or desire in my owne person, I would surely present my selfe before the Bishop of Rome: but the Lorde hath otherwise visited me to the cōtrary, and hath taught me ra- ther to obey God than men. For so much then, as God hath geue vnto our Pope, iust and true Euangelicall instinctions, we ought to pray, that those motions be not extinguished by any subtile or crafty deuise.

And that the Pope and Cardinals, be not moued to doe anye thing, contrary vnto the law of the Lord. Wherfore let vs praye vnto our God, that he will so stirre vp our Pope Urbane the sixt as he began, that he with his Clergye may follow the Lorde Iesus Christ, in life and maners: and that they may teach the people ef- fectually, and that they likewise may faithfully follow them in the same. And let vs specially pray, that our Pope may bee preserued from all maligne and euill counsell, as which do know that euill and enuious men of his householde would geuse him. And seing the Lord will not suffer vs to be tempted about our power, much lesse then will he require of any creature to do that thing which they are not able; for so much, as that is the playne condition and maner of Antichrist.

Thus muche wrote Iohn Wickliffe vnto Pope Ur- bane: but this pope Urbane otherwise termed Turbanus was so hote in his warres agaynst Clement the frenche Pope his adueriary, that he had no leasure, and lesse iust, to attend vnto Wickliffes matters. By the occasion of which schisme, God so provided for poue Wickliffe, that he was in some more rest & quietnes, concerning which schisma- tical wars of these popes, for as much as we haue here en- tered into y mention therof, it shall not be inpertinent for the order of our story, digressing a litle from the matter of Iohn Wickliffe, to touch something of the tragical doings of these two holy popes struing for the triple crowne: to the intent that the Christian reader (iudging by their fruits and proceedings) may see and vnderstand what difference is betwene these popes, and Christ and his Apostles. For though in the story of the Gospell it is read, that certaine of the disciples did strue which shuld be the greater, yet nei- ther do we read that one of them tooke euer weapō against the other: and moreover in the sayd story of the Gospell it doeth appeare, that they in so struing as they did, were therefore sharply rebuked of our Saviour Christ, & were taught by him an other lesson.

The Pope occu- pied so in schis- maticall warres that he had no leysure to other matters.

About the beginning of the next yeare folowing, which was an. 1383. Pope Urbane setting all his study howe to represse and cōquere the contrary Pope his adueriary, be- ing then at Auinion (seing all his other means to fayle, and that his crossc keyes coulde doe no good) tooke to hym the sword of Bonulus, & set vpō him with open warre. And first deuising w himselfe whom he might best chuse for hys chief champion: thought none meete for such affaires the Henry Spenser being then Bishop of Norwich, a young and a stout Prelate, more fitter for the camping cure, than for the peaceable church of Christ, as partly also might ap- peare before by his acts done at Benam in struing for the Maynes Place, mentioned before, pag. 428. Vnto this by- shop of Norwich, the Pope had sent his brailes about this

Difference be- twene the Ap- ostles and the Popes in stru- ing for pree- minences. } Ann. } 1383. } The Pope set to warre.

The Epistle of Iohn Wickliffe sent vnto Pope Urbane the 6. An. 1382.

Verely I do reioyce to open and declare the sayth which I do holde vnto euery man. And specially vnto the Bish. of Rome,

The Epistle of I. Wick- liffe to pope Urbane.