The Act of Supremacy, 1534

By the 1530s Henry VIII needed the broad agreement of the realm for the massive changes created by the Reformation. Here, in the Act of Supremacy, he is invoking the authority of Parliament to proclaim the declared wishes of the convocations of clergy that had already agreed to his becoming the head of the Church of England. Henry VIII’s reign witnessed many far-reaching changes to the structure of a society that was still essentially medieval. Despite its bombastic language, this proclamation gives an indication of how the monarch could use the function of Parliament to define and modify the English state that he or she upheld.

Catalogue reference: C 65/143, m. 5, nos. 8 and 9 (1534)

Albeit the Kynges Majestie justely and rightfully is & oweth to be supreme hede of the Churche of England and so is recogynsed by the Clergy of the Realme in their convocations; yet nevertheless for corroboration & confirmacion thereof, and for increase of vertue in Cristis Religion within the Realme of England, and to represse & extirpe all errours heresies and other enormities & abuses heretofore used in the same.

Be it enacted by auctorite of this present Parliament that the Kyng our Soveraign Lorde his heires and successours Kynges of the Realme shalbe takyn accepted & reputed the onely supreme hede in erthe of the Churche of England callyd Anglicana Ecclesia, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the Ymperyall Crowne of this Realme aswell the title and style thereof, as all Honours, Dignyties prehemyynences jurisdiccions privileges auctorites ymunytyes profits and commodities to the said dignytye of supreme hede of the same Churche belonging and apperteynyng.

And that from tyme to tyme to visite represse redresse reforme ordre correct restrayne and amende all suche errors heresies abuses offences contempts and enormities what so ever they be, whiche by any maner spiritual auctorite or jurisdiccion ought or maie lawfully be reformyd repressyd ordred redressyd corrected restrained or amendyd, moste to the pleasure of Almyghtie God the encrease of vertue yn Chrystis Religion and for the conservacion of the peace unyte and tranquyltye of this Realme any usage custome foreyne lawes foreyne auctoryte prespcion or anye other thinge or thinges to the contrarie hereof notwithstandinge.

Modern English

Albeit the king's majesty justly and rightfully is and ought to be supreme head of the Church of England and so is recognised by the clergy of the realm in their convocations; yet nevertheless for corroboration and confirmation thereof and for increase in virtue in Christ's religion within the realm of England, and to repress and uproot all errors heresies and other enormities and abuses heretofore used in the same, be it enacted by authority of this present Parliament that the king our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors kings of the realm shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England called Anglicana Ecclesia and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof, as all honours, dignities, pre-eminences, jurisdictions, privileges, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities to the said dignity of supreme head of the same Church belonging and appertaining.

And that from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities whatsoever they be, which by any manner [of] spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed redressed, ordered, corrected, restrained, or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God the increase of virtue in Christ's religion and for the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquillity of this realm, any usage, custom, foreign laws, foreign authority, prescription or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.
Atto di supremazia Enrico VIII 1534

Quantunque la Maestà del Re sia e debba essere giustamente e legittimamente capo supremo della Chiesa d’Inghilterra e tale sia riconosciuta dal clero del suo regno nelle convocazioni, tuttavia ad affermazione e conferma di ciò e per l'accrescimento della virtù della religione di Cristo in questo regno d'Inghilterra, ed al fine di reprimere ed estirpare tutti gli errori, eresie ed altri eccessi ed abusi consumati nello stesso, sia decretato per l'autorità di questo attuale Parlamento che il Re, nostro sovrano, i suoi eredi e successori re di questo regno, siano accolti, accettati e considerati come unico capo supremo in terra della Chiesa d’Inghilterra detta "Anglicana Ecclesia" e che detengano e godano la corona imperiale a questo regno annessa ed unita, e del suo titolo ed appannaggio, come di tutti gli onori, dignità, prerogative, giurisdizioni, privilegi, facoltà, immunità, utili e beni propri pertinenti alla detta dignità di capo supremo della suddetta Chiesa: e che il suddetto nostro sovrano e signore, i suoi eredi e successori re di questo regno abbiano pieno potere ed autorità di tempo in tempo, di castigare, reprimere, riformare, correggere, regolare, contenere ed emendare tutti quegli errori, eresie, abusi, offese, spregi ed eccessi di qualunque genere siano, che in qualunque modo per spirituale autorità o giurisdizione debbano o possano essere legalmente riformati, repressi, riparati, corretti, contenuti o emendati, a gloria di Dio Onnipotente e per l'accrescimento della virtù nella religione di Cristo in primo luogo, e per la conservazione della pace, unione e tranquillità di questo regno, nonostante ogni usanza, costume, legge straniera ed autorità straniera, prescrizione o altro in contrario.

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