

# Henry V

## 1.1

*Enter the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely*

**CANTERBURY**

My lord, I'll tell you. That self bill is urged  
Which in th'eleventh year of the last king's reign  
Was like, and had indeed against us passed,  
But that the scrambling and unquiet time  
Did push it out of farther question. 5

**ELY**

But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?

**CANTERBURY**

It must be thought on. If it pass against us,  
We lose the better half of our possession,  
For all the temporal lands which men devout  
By testament have given to the Church 10  
Would they strip from us±±being valued thus:  
As much as would maintain, to the King's honour,  
Full fifteen earls and fifteen hundred knights,  
Six thousand and two hundred good esquires;  
And, to relief of lazars and weak age, 15  
Of indigent faint souls past corporal toil,  
A hundred almshouses right well supplied;  
And to the coffers of the King beside  
A thousand pounds by th' year. Thus runs the bill.

**ELY** This would drink deep. 20

**CANTERBURY** 'Twould drink the cup and all.

**ELY** But what prevention?

**CANTERBURY**

The King is full of grace and fair regard.

**ELY**

And a true lover of the holy Church.

**CANTERBURY**

The courses of his youth promised it not. 25  
The breath no sooner left his father's body  
But that his wildness, mortified in him,  
Seemed to die too. Yea, at that very moment  
Consideration like an angel came

And whipped th'offending Adam out of him, 30  
Leaving his body as a paradise  
T'envelop and contain celestial spirits.  
Never was such a sudden scholar made;  
Never came reformation in a flood  
With such a heady currance scouring faults; 35  
Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness  
So soon did lose his seat±±and all at once±±  
As in this king.

ELY We are blesseÁd in the change.

**CANTERBURY**

Hear him but reason in divinity  
And, all-admiring, with an inward wish 40  
You would desire the King were made a prelate;  
Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,  
You would say it hath been all-in-all his study;  
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear  
A fearful battle rendered you in music; 45  
Turn him to any cause of policy,  
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,  
Familiar as his garter±±that when he speaks,  
The air, a chartered libertine, is still,  
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears 50  
To steal his sweet and honeyed sentences:  
So that the art and practic part of life  
Must be the mistress to this theoric.  
Which is a wonder how his grace should glean it,  
Since his addiction was to courses vain, 55  
His companies unlettered, rude, and shallow,  
His hours filled up with riots, banquets, sports,  
And never noted in him any study,  
Any retirement, any sequestration  
From open haunts and popularity. 60

**ELY**

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,  
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best  
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality;  
And so the Prince obscured his contemplation  
Under the veil of wildness±±which, no doubt, 65  
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,

Unseen, yet cressive in his faculty.

**CANTERBURY**

It must be so, for miracles are ceased,  
And therefore we must needs admit the means  
How things are perfected.

**ELY**

But, my good lord,

70

How now for mitigation of this bill  
Urged by the Commons? Doth his majesty  
Incline to it, or no?

**CANTERBURY**

He seems indifferent,

Or rather swaying more upon our part  
Than cherishing th'exhibitors against us; 75  
For I have made an offer to his majesty,  
Upon our spiritual convocation  
And in regard of causes now in hand,  
Which I have opened to his grace at large:  
As touching France, to give a greater sum 80  
Than ever at one time the clergy yet  
Did to his predecessors part withal.

**ELY**

How did this offer seem received, my lord?

**CANTERBURY**

With good acceptance of his majesty,  
Save that there was not time enough to hear, 85  
As I perceived his grace would fain have done,  
The severals and unhidden passages  
Of his true titles to some certain dukedoms,  
And generally to the crown and seat of France,  
Derived from Edward, his great-grandfather. 90

**ELY**

What was th'impediment that broke this off?

**CANTERBURY**

The French ambassador upon that instant  
Craved audience±±and the hour I think is come  
To give him hearing. Is it four o'clock?

**ELY**

It is.

95

**CANTERBURY**

Then go we in, to know his embassy±±  
Which I could with a ready guess declare  
Before the Frenchman speak a word of it.

**ELY**

I'll wait upon you, and I long to hear it.  
*Exeunt*