

Name: _____ Per. _____ Date _____

Letter of Pope Gelasius to Emperor Anastasius.

“There are two powers, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled, namely, the sacred authority of the priests and the royal power. Of these that of the priests is the more weighty, since they have to render an account for even the kings of men in the divine judgment. You are also aware, dear son, that while you are permitted honorably to rule over human kind, yet in things divine you bow your head humbly before the leaders of the clergy and await from their hands the means of your salvation. In the reception and proper disposition of the heavenly mysteries you recognize that you should be subordinate rather than superior to the religious order, and that in these matters you depend on their judgment rather than wish to force them to follow your will.”

translated in J. H. Robinson, Readings in European History, (Boston: Ginn, 1905), pp. 72-73

What point is the Pope trying to make?

According to this letter, does the King have control over religious leaders? Explain.

What might the RCC and the Pope do, if the King chooses not to follow the instructions of the Pope?

How would his actions affect his kingdom and his subjects?

What would you do, if you were the King? What would be the consequences [positive and negative] of your decision?
