

## Lord Chancellor Thomas More's Address to the King in Parliament, 3 November 1529<sup>1</sup>

Edward Hall's Account from his *Chronicle* (1542)

Sir Thomas More, [Henry VIII's Lord] Chancellor, standing on the right hand of the King behind the bar, made as eloquent oration, declaring that like as a good shepherd which not only keeps and attends well his sheep, but also foresees and provides for all things, which either may be hurtful or noisome to his flock, or may preserve and defend the same against all perils that may chance to come, so the King which was the shepherd, ruler, and governor of his realm, vigilantly foreseeing things to come considered how diverse laws before this time were made now by long continuance of time and mutation of things, very insufficient, and imperfect and also by the frail condition of man, diverse new enormities were sprung among the people, for which no law was yet made to reform the same, which was the very cause why at that time the King had summoned his high court of parliament. And he [More] resembled the King to a shepherd, or herdsman for this cause, yet if a prince be compared to his riches, he is but a rich man; if a prince be compared to his honor, he is but an honorable man; but compare him to the multitude of his people and the number of his flock, then he is a ruler, a governor of might and puissance, so that his people makes him a prince, as of the multitude of sheep; [hence] comes the name of a shepherd. And as you see that among a great flock of sheep some are rotten and faulty which the good shepherd sends from the good sheep, so the great wether which is of late fallen as you all know, so craftily, so scabedly, yes and so untruly juggled with the King, that all men must needs guess and think that he thought in himself, that they had no wit to perceive his crafty doing or else that he presumed that the King would not see nor know his fraudulent juggling and attempts. But he was deceived, for his Grace's sight was so quick and penetrable, that he saw him, yes saw through him, both within and without, so that all things to him were open, and according to his desert he has had a gentle correction, which small punishment the King will not to be an example to other offenders, but clearly declare that whosoever hereafter shall make a like attempt to commit a like offense, shall not escape with like punishment. And because you of the Common House be a gross multitude, and cannot speak all at one time, therefore, the King's pleasure is, that you shall resort to the nether house, and there among yourselves according to the old and ancient custom to choose an able person to be your common mouth and speaker, and after your election so made to advertise his Grace thereof, who will declare to you his pleasure what day he will have him present in this place.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Whibley, ed., *Lives of the Kings: Henry VIII* (London: T. C. and E. C. Jack, 1904), vol. 2, pp. 164-65, but spelling has been modernized