

The English Correspondence of Sir Thomas More

The letter and line numbers correspond to the 1947 Rogers edition (Princeton UP).

The English spellings have been standardized for this edition and its concordance by Andrea Frank.

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4. To Joyce Leigh, <London, c. 1 January 1505>

4. To Joyce Leigh

*Unto his right entirely beloved sister in Christ, Joyce
Leigh, Thomas More greeting in our Lord.*

It is, and of long time hath been, my well beloved
sister, a custom in the beginning of the New Year friends to
send between presents or gifts as the witnesses of their love
and friendship and also signifying that they desire each to
other that year a good continuance and prosperous end of that
lucky beginning. But commonly, all those presents that are
used customably all in this manner between friends to be sent be
such things as pertain only unto the body, either to be fed
or to be clad or some otherwise delighted, by which it seemeth
that their friendship is but fleshly and stretcheth in manner to
the body only. But forasmuch as the love and amity of Christian
folk should be rather ghostly friendship than bodily, since that
all faithful people are rather spiritual than carnal. For as the
apostle saith we be not now in flesh but in spirit if Christ
abide in us.

I therefore, mine heartily beloved sister, in good luck of this
new year have sent you such a present, as may bear witness of
my tender love and zeal to the happy continuance and gracious
increase of virtue in your soul; and whereas the gifts of
other folk declare that they wisheth their friends to be worldly
fortunate, mine testifieth that I desire to have you godly prosperous.
%

These works more profitable than large were made in Latin
by one John Picus, Earl of Mirandola, a lordship in Italy of
whose cunning and virtue we need hear nothing to speak forasmuch
as hereafter we peruse the course of his holy life rather
after our little power slenderly, than after his merits sufficiently.
The works are such, that truly, good sister, I suppose of the
quantity there cometh none in your hand more profitable,
neither to the achieving of temperance in prosperity, nor to the
purchasing of patience in adversity, nor to the despising of
worldly vanity, nor to the desiring of heavenly felicity, which
works I would require you gladly to receive, nay were it that
they be such that for the goodly matter (howsoever they be
translated) may delight and please any person that hath any
mean desire and love to God. And that yourself is such one

as for your virtue and fervent zeal to God cannot but joyously

4. To Joyce Leigh

receive anything that meanly soundeth either to the reproach
of vice, commendation of virtue or honor and laude of God,
who preserve you.

40

11. Tunstall, Sampson, More to the Council. Bruges, 9 July 1515

Liketh it your good lordships to understand, that as
touching the state of our business here, forasmuch as we doubt
not but that our letters, in which we have written thereof at
large to the King's Grace, shall by his Highness come to your
hands, we therefore trouble not at this time your good lordships
with the repetitions of the same, but the only cause of our present
writing to your good lordships is to beseech the same to have us
so in your favorable remembrance, that we may have by the
means of your good lordships more money sent unto us. For as
your lordships well remember of 60 days, for which we received
our money before the hand, and spent also a good part
thereof before the hand, there be naught remaining past 3 or 4 days,
from the 12th day of May last at which day we took our journey.
And as your good lordships well know, that we had so short
warning of this journey that our time was very little and scarce
to prepare ourselves and our company forward. And no time had
we to make shift and provision for any substance of our own
hither with us, by reason whereof we have been at some pain hitherto.
And if we should make farther shift here, it would be our
farther pain and loss also. Wherefore we beseech your good lordships,
that as your wisdoms perceive that we be like here
to abide, so it will like you to order that we may have money
sent us. In which doing, your lordships shall bind us to owe
you our poor service and our prayer. As knoweth our Lord, whose
grace long preserve your good lordships. From Bruges the 9th
day of July.

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20

25

By your humble beadsmen

Cuthbert Tunstall.

Richard Sampson.

Thomas More.

30

From the Ambassadors being in Flanders for the Intercourse.

Nono Iulii.

To the honorable and their singular good lords, the Lords of

11. To the Council

the King's most honorable Council.

12. Tunstall, More, Clifford to Henry VIII. Bruges, 21 July 1515

Liketh it your Highness to understand that whereas we by our other letters dated the 9th day of July, which as we verily trust be come unto your gracious hands, have written unto your Highness at length the order of our business until the said day of the same our letters written. 5
To wit, that soon after at such time as we by writing did again reply to their answer, given in to us, by the advice of their Prince and his Council, of which their answer we made mention unto your Grace in our said letters.

The said commissioners, upon the receipt of our explication, 10
desired respite again, until the time that they might send our explication to the Prince and his Council, and from thence have advice again in such wise as they did upon the receipt of our other writing before, without whose advice again had, they would no farther proceed. Whereupon at that 15
time we departed. And afterward by the space of 10 days, they gave us knowledge that they had word from the Prince desiring us to assemble with them on the morrow, at which our meeting, when we trusted to have received some writing, they showed us a letter directed unto them from the Prince, by 20
which he gave them in commandment to resort unto him and his Council to Mechlin, where he intended to be himself within few days, at which their resorting to his presence they should have on his behalf a full and a perfect knowledge of his pleasure concerning our business. Wherefore they required us to 25
have patience till their coming again, at which they thought to bring us a final determinate answer, whereunto for a conclusion we should stand.

Whereupon we answered that we verily trusted in the equity of the Prince and his Council, that they should bring us a 30
better answer and more equal than we yet had. And they answered plainly that they look for none other but such as they before had showed us, that the Prince would never stand to the treatise that we rest upon.

We have written in everything the state of our business to 35

your ambassadors here, by whose means whether the Prince shall happen to change his mind therein or not, we be not sure, but verily we have no great hope therein, we have had so plain words of the commissioners here. Wherefore, as we by our other letters have written unto your Highness, we beseech the same, since we have perused the effect of our instructions, that we might have farther knowledge of your high pleasure, which had we shall to the best of our powers endeavor ourselves to the accomplishment of the same. As knoweth our Lord, whose grace long preserve your most noble Majesty. From Bruges the 21st day of July.

12. To Henry VIII

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45

By your most humble servants and subjects

Cuthbert Tunstall.

Thomas More.

John Clifford.

50

13. Knight, More, Wilsher, Sampson, Hannibal, Hewsten to Wolsey. Bruges, 1 October 1515

Pleaseth it your Grace to understand that since the writing of our last letters, sent unto your Grace by M. Forest, we have treated with the Easterlings as oftentimes as we might conveniently bring them thereunto. But by reason of certain delays that they have taken, we be not yet come to any final determination in our matters, trusting verily that by the end of this week, if they put no further delays in this business than we think verily that they will do, to know the uttermost that they can say for defense of the abuse of their privileges, and whether they will submit themselves to reformation of the same or no. And this known we shall certify your Grace with all diligence, most humbly beseeching your Grace to remember us with some money towards our debts.

5

10

And thus blessed Trinity preserve your Grace. At Bruges this first day of October.

15

Your most humble beadsmen and orators

William Knight. Thomas More.

John Wilsher Kt. Richard Sampson.

Thomas Hannibal. John Hewsten.

To my Lord Cardinal's Grace.

20

49. Wingfield, Knight, More to Wolsey and the Council. Calais, 13 October 1517

49. To Wolsey

Pleaseth it your good lordships to understand, that
the 12th day of this present month, John Hamon, proctor for
Henry de la Fontaine and Nicholas de Chiffraulle of Dieppe in
Normandy, hath put unto us a complaint against Robert Bemoude
and Nicholas Voulet of the town of Southwold in the county
of Suffolk. Whose complaint shall appear to your lordships
by the tenor of the supplication which we send to your lordships
in these letters enclosed, according to our instructions, to the end
that the said Robert Bemoude and Nicholas Voulet by some order
by your lordships to be taken, being thereof admonished, may
by themselves, or their sufficiently instructed proctor, appear here
before us in the King's town of Calais the 12th day of November
next ensuing, for the defense of the same. At which day we
have adjourned the complaint, to return again unto us with
the certification of the warning for the further prosecution
of his said complaint, in which upon the appearance of both
parties, or contumacy of the one, we intend to proceed to the
discussion and final direction of the cause according to right and
good justice, as far forth as our wits and learning will extend.

And in case this bearer shall happen either of negligence or
fraud so long to retain these our letters in his custody that
he leave no time sufficient for the monition of the said defendants
to be executed in due time, that then it may like your good
lordships to provide that we may be thereof ascertained, to
the end that the remiss dealing of the one party turn not the
other to prejudice. And thus Almighty Jesus preserve your good
lordships. Written at Calais the 13th day of October.

Your most humble servants
Wingfield R., Kt.
William Knight
Thomas More.

51. Wingfield, Knight, More to Wolsey and the Council. <Calais?, c. October 1517>

* * * * *

as ours is. And - - - - - commissioners for
speed of the Englishmen - - - - - certain mandements
of summons upon - - - - - their new
commission late obtained is dated - - - - - last
passed, to the end that the processes - - - - - commission
should not be void between them and us concerning

certain quarrels - - - - - sundry complaints upon
 either party, forasmuch - - - - - resorted as well to
 them as to us for the redress - - - - - other injuries committed
 before the last peace concluded between the King's Grace 10
 and the French King Louis, to the - - - - controversies
 our authority stretcheth not. We - - - - parties either
 to remit the subjects of other - - - - ordinary for
 their such matters and that with - - - - on either side if
 the parties require them, to which - - - - condescended at 15
 the request of the French ambassadors - - - - seem to refuse
 such courtesy towards their prince - - - - in like case had
 used already towards the King our master - - - - We entered
 also in communication with them according to our instructions
 - - - - provisions to be devised for the eschewing of pirates 20
 - - - - , also for judges to be appointed for the speedy redress
 of - - - - damnified hereafter from time to time as any such
 should hap to fall in either of the prince's dominions. Whereunto
 that both those points were provided for already by - - - -
 the amity concluded between both princes, in which they - - - - for 25
 either part appointed. And also provision made that no men
 of war shall go forth of any haven of either prince without
 sureties found, that they shall do no harm to the subjects of
 the other. Whereunto we answered that those provisions* *
 And * * and unto great value as - - - - 30
 - - - - complaints, of which as yet we - - - -
 they further showed unto us, that the French - - - -
 surety of all people to be in safeguard from - - - - hath of
 late provided diverse good ordinances sufficient for the avoiding
 of the same. Which ordinances - - - - cause surely to be kept 35
 throughout his dominions - - - - which also they have promised to
 send unto us to London - - - - advise to the end that if those ordinances
 seem in any - - - - unto we might add thereunto between
 us - - - - break with us also of the articles that were provided
 - - - - between the ambassadors of either prince which 40
 articles Thomas More took out of the King's exchequer by
 command of my Lord of Durham. Howbeit of that treaty
 they - - - - us incidentally in other communication not by way
 of - - - - same device, which treaty seemeth unto us very
 - - - - we rested in this, that we would see and advise the 45
 - - - - made by their prince and thereupon enter further
 with - - - - that point, which ordinances, when they shall be

49. To Wolsey

come to our hands, we shall with diligence send unto your good lordships to the end that we may be by your wisdoms instructed
 - - - points. 50

The French ambassadors make much semblance of towardness in doing justice to the - - - of our party, but that notwithstanding we dare make no warranties of them, till we see what speed and - - - they make therein, for many hath begun and yet - - - many complaints in the book for the pursuit. 55

* * *

Your most humble beadsmen

Wingfield R., Kt.

William Knight.

Thomas More. 60

To the most Reverend Father in God the Lord Cardinal of York etc. and the Lords of the King's most honorable Council.

53. Wingfield, Knight, More to Wolsey. Calais, 4 <Nov>ember <1517>

* * * sending - - - - -
 - - - - - their wrongs done by the French - - - - -
 - - - - - William Sabin which for his own - - - - -
 - - - - - and hath also been present and interpreter - - - - -
 of many that hath long sued and yet sue - - - - - self 5
 known but slow speed which have - - - - - unto us, the said
 Sabin can and will, if it please you to enquire of him, show
 unto you at length - - - - - of the matters hath hitherto
 proceeded. - - - - - may soon conjecture the rest that
 is to come in which - - - - - advises with soliciting the commissioners 10
 for them - - - - - nor shall fail any that resorteth
 to us therefore. We sent unto your lordships in the last
 month the - - - - - between the commissioners of the King's
 most noble - - - - - the late King Louis of France concerning
 provision - - - - - the eschewing of piracies and reformation 15
 of the same - - - - - when they fortuned between the subjects
 of either prince - - - - - also sent unto your good
 lordships the ordinances that the - - - - - that now us hath
 lately made. Which ordinances the - - - - - here account sufficient
 with the articles contained in - - - - - by which certain 20
 judges be already appointed for the eschewing of pirates from
 time to time committed, and provision - - - - - sureties to be

taken of such ships of war as depart out - - - - port. We
 think, saving your more prudent advices, - - - - pirates in time
 coming either to be eschewed or redressed, - - - - said treaty 25
 renewed would do very well, but we - - - - by the French commissioners
 that they tender not greatly the renewing of the same,
 the cause why this bearer can inform your good - - - * * *
 not so soon as we - - - - -
 we come unto our hands - - - - - would suffer. 30
 In which things at such - - - - as your good
 lordships shall like, it may percase - - - - advertise us of
 your pleasure. Which known we will endeavor ourselves to
 the accomplishment of the same with - - - - of our powers. As
 knoweth our Lord God who preserve your good lordships. At 35
 Calais this 4th of November.

Your most humble beadsmen,
 Wingfield R., K.
 William Knight
 Thomas More

77. To Wolsey. Woking, 5 July <1519>

To My Lord Legate's Grace.

It may like your good Grace to understand, that yesternight
 the King's Grace commanded me to deliver unto your
 servant Forest a supplication put unto his Grace by men of
 Waterford in the name of the city, by which they complain
 against the town of New Ross in Ireland for disturbing the 5
 city of Waterford in the use of a certain grant of prise wines,
 made and confirmed unto them, as they allege, by the King's
 progenitors. Wherein the King's Grace commanded me to advertise
 your Grace that he calleth to mind that the city of Waterford
 in all such rebellions as hath happed in Ireland hath always 10
 abided firmly in their allegiance and oftentimes done very
 good and faithful service to the King his father and other his
 progenitors. For which, he saith, he beareth them, as your Grace
 well knoweth, very special favor. His Grace saith also that he
 knoweth well, and your Grace also, that there is much bearing 15
 against them in Ireland, and that the city standeth so in the
 danger of the wild Irish people that they cannot without great
 jeopardy resort for the pursuit of their right into such places of

Ireland as the Laws be ministered in. Wherefore his Grace commanded
me to write unto your Grace that he requireth your
Grace that it may like you either in the Star Chamber to examine
the matter of the said city, or else to commit the same to the
examination of some justices, or other such as your Grace shall
think convenient, so that they may have expedition with such
lawful favor, as it may be a comfort to them to see that their
true service is by the King and his council in England considered,
whereby the King's grace thinketh that other cities and
Lords also in Ireland shall be encouraged unto the like.

Sir, if it like your Grace, at my return when I spoke with the
King, his Grace was very joyful, that notwithstanding your so
continual labors in his matters (in which he said ye have many
more than appear to them that see you but at Westminster or with
the council) your Grace is so well in health, as he heareth by
diverse, and he saith that ye may thank his counsel thereof, by
which ye leave the often taking of medicines, that ye were wont
to use, and while ye so do he saith ye shall not fail of health, which
our Lord long preserve. At Woking the fifth day of July.

Your most humble servant and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's Grace.

78. To Wolsey. Woking, 6 July <1519>

It may like your good Grace to understand that the
King's Grace hath commanded me to advertise your Grace that
the Ambassador of the King of Castile hath this present Wednesday
spoken with his Grace and declared unto him such news
on the behalf of his master the King of Castile as your Grace
knoweth of. For which the King's Grace requireth your Grace that
there may be such letters of gratulation devised unto the said
King of Castile as your politic wisdom shall think most
convenient.

The King's Grace hath also commanded me to show your
Grace that the Ambassador hath required his Grace to send his
advise to the King of Castile concerning the matter of the last
Diet, in which the Great Master of France deceased, in which
thing the Ambassador desireth to have letters of credence of the
King's Grace, by which he might himself declare to his master
by mouth the King's advice concerning the premises. Howbeit

the King's Grace thinketh it much better that his whole advice
be written at length by letters devised by the prudent cast of your
Grace.

78. To Wolsey

The King's Grace commanded me further to write unto
your Grace that among other communications had with the Ambassador,
his Grace remembered unto him that he had always been
a very hearty friend unto the King of Castile, and during his life
so intended to persevere, and would of none earthly thing be more
loath, than if any occasion should fall (which he trusted should never
fall) whereby he might be constrained unto the contrary, for
the avoiding whereof, his Grace advised the Ambassador that he
should in anywise counsel his master that he nothing attempt
hereafter that should extend to the breech of any article comprised
in the amity concluded between his Grace, and the King of Castile
and the French King, which if he did, his Grace should think himself
bound to regard the friendship of none earthly man so
highly as his oath given to God for the observation of the said
amity and liege.

The Ambassador is ridden from the court now after dinner and I
think he will be with your Grace very shortly. And thus our Lord
long preserve your Grace in honor and health.

At Woking the sixth day of July.

Your most humble servant and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

79. To Wolsey. Woking, 9 July <1519>

It may like your good Grace to understand that the
King's Grace hath commanded me to write unto your Grace
that he giveth you hearty thanks for your diligent advertisement
of all such things as your Grace hath written unto him in your
latter letters; touching the contents whereof his Grace hath commanded
me to show you that he very well liketh your politic
order taken with Hesdin the King of Castile his Orator, which
his Grace thinketh very good and honorable.

And as touching the overture made by my Lord of Chièvres for
the marriage of my Lord of Devonshire the King is well content,
and as meseemeth, very glad of the motion, wherein he requireth
your Grace, that it may like you to call my Lord of Devonshire
to your Grace and to advise him secretly, to forbear any further
treaty of marriage with my Lord Mountjoy, for a while staying

the matter, not casting it off, showing him that there is a far
better offer made him, of which the King would that he should not
know the specialty before he speak with his Grace. 15 79. To Wolsey

As touching the demeanor of the Cardinal Sedunensis concerning
the trust that the King's Grace did put in him, his Grace
commanded me to show your Grace that he mistrusted the same 20
himself before, and that he so showed your Grace at Richmond.
And though he be not glad of the Cardinal's delaying, yet
is he glad, he saith, that your Grace may see that he foresaw it,
whereby he thinketh your Grace will be the better trust his conjecture
hereafter. 25

I send unto your Grace by your servant, this bearer, certain
writing which the King's Grace commanded me to send unto
your Grace, to take such order in the same, as your most politic
wisdom shall think convenient. And thus our Lord long
preserve your good Grace in honor and health. 30

At Woking this present Saturday the ninth day of July.

Your most humble servant and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

98. Knight, More, Wilsher, Sampson, to Wolsey. Bruges, 15 September <1520>

Pleaseth it your Grace to understand that all the Ambassadors
of the Haunz that be deputed for this present diet
did assemble at Bruges the 12th day of this month. And the
next day ensuing we did meet together at the place accustomed.
Where we showed unto them the King's benevolent mind in 5
form and manner as is contained in our instructions, and that
done did exhibit our commissions which were thought by
either of both parties ample and sufficient.

After this we showed unto them that there hath been great
and many complaints made unto the King's Highness and 10
your Grace of robberies, despoils and other injuries done unto
the King's subjects, which complaints we did aggravate both
by estimation of great sums and also by exhibiting certain
books and many bills of complaints, saying that in consideration
that the said complainants doeth daily desire justice, and 15
that there be also many particulars on their part.

We thought good first to devise some order how and by what
means the said despoils might be conveniently redressed and
then to enter communication upon the generals and in this the

said orators desired respite to take deliberation till the next day, saying that if we would in the meantime think what way were most convenient, they would do likewise on their part, and at the next meeting, the devices of both parties known, that way should be taken that were thought by both parties most ready and expedient. 20 98. To Wolsey 25

The 14th day we returned and purposed unto them that that we thought good to induce them to our intent and in conclusion brought them to this point, that they desired that we would treat upon the generals and particulars together, because many of the particulars dependeth upon the generals, and this doing we follow the contents of your gracious instructions. 30

Immediately upon the aforesaid agreement we required the orators of the Haunz to specify unto us by writing the number and names of the cities and towns that made the body of the Haunz at the first time of the grant of the owed privileges. They answered that they marveled that we would demand any like thing of them, which was never put in doubt at any diet before this, and moreover that it was not unknown to the King and his council, and though it were likewise well known to diverse of the chief cities of the Haunz, yet that notwithstanding they might probably be ignorant in the same, promising that though it could not be done at this time by them without great difficulty, they would do their best to give us knowledge. 35 40

We replied that the declaration of this point was very necessary to be known marveling that they would affirm themselves to be orators for the body of the Haunz and could now show what members made the said body, protesting that though we made digression from this doubt at this time and entered communication upon other matters, we would at time convenient return unto the same. We use and shall use such daily diligence for the brief expedition of this diet that your Grace shall briefly know what towardness is in the said orators. 45 50

Most humbly beseeching your Grace that where it is so that we your most bounden beadsmen have been at great charges and must daily continue in the same and moreover that the days of our diets be passed and expired it may please your Grace to command some provision to be made for us, and we shall daily pray for the continual increase of your Grace's honor. Thus the blessed Trinity preserve your Grace. At Bruges this 15th day of September. 55 60

Your most humble orators and beadsmen
 William Knight Thomas More
 John Wilsher K. Richard Sampson
 To my Lord Legate's Grace

98. To Wolsey

100. To the Deputy Chamberlains of the Exchequer <c. May 1521>

To The Chamberlain's Deputies of the Knight's Exchequer

The ratification of the perpetual pax taken between
 King Henry the 7th and King James of Scotland deceased.

Item the Treaty for reformation of attemptates concluded between
 the said Kings with the commission of the King of Scots
 for the same, and an Indenture of the said two Kings' Ambassadors.

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Deliver these parcels to this bringer, Mr. Udale to be brought
 in all haste to my Lord Legate to the More.

Thomas More
 Undertreasurer

109. To Wolsey, Newall, 14 September <1522>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
 this day I received your Grace's letters dated yesterday, and with
 the same 6 letters devised by your Grace and addressed to certain
 noble men of the Emperor's army, which I do send unto your
 Grace at this present time, signed as your Grace commanded.

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It may like your Grace further to be advertised that yesterday
 the King's Grace received a letter from my Lord of Shrewsbury,
 whereof your Grace shall perceive the contents by the letter self
 which I do send unto your Grace with these presents. And forasmuch
 as the same bare date the 8th day of this present month,

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at which time his Grace perceiveth nothing done but such as
 he was advertised of before by letters of my said Lord sent unto
 his Grace by yours; his Grace therefore esteemed the letters the
 less, saving that inasmuch as it appeared by the same, that in
 consideration that the King's ordinance could not pass over
 Staines Moor towards Carlisle, it was therefore by my said Lord
 and the King's council there thought good that my Lord with
 his company should advance themselves unto the east marshes, and
 there, if they might have all things requisite, enter into Scotland
 and so to proceed forward in doing the hurt that they could till

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such time as they should meet with the Duke in his return from
 the west borders towards Edinburgh, unless they were by necessity
 forced to repair to my Lord Dacre toward Carlisle for his
 relief. Howbeit they reckoned that he should not need, for he should
 have with him upon 20,000 men which my Lord Steward
 thought were resorted unto him, in convenient time. 25

In that point the King's Grace commanded me to write unto
 my Lord Steward that his Grace thought great doubt therein as
 well for that if it should happen my Lord Dacre to be distressed
 with his company, then my Lord Steward and his company might
 peradventure come over late to their relief, as also for that his
 Grace's army being so divided either of the both parties should
 be compelled to encounter with the entire army of his enemies.
 Wherefore his Grace thought it best that my Lord Steward should
 advance forth and bring his whole army as near together as he
 might in such wise as every part against their enemies might
 help other. And then if God give them the victory, after that
 they had defended this land, advance farther and do what damage
 they could in Scotland. 30
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Thus much the King's Grace commanded me to write unto
 my Lord Steward of his opinions in that point leaving nevertheless
 the final order thereof to my Lord Steward and his Grace's council
 there if their wisdoms should perceive that it were better for
 surety and furtherance of the affairs to pursue their said device
 or any other that should upon the circumstances considered be
 seen more available. As touching the lack of money mentioned
 in my said Lord's letter he was answered that the King's Grace
 doubted not but by this time the 10,000 L was come to him
 and knowledge also of the 6500 L by your Grace sent after,
 which with that that should rise of the loan in those parties should
 be such furniture for him that the King's Grace verily trusteth
 that he was by this time well advanced forward, considering that
 his Grace was sure that my Lord Steward had given knowledge
 to the country that the money was in the way coming before it
 came at him and then his Grace thought his loving subjects would
 not let to advance forward a day's journey or twain being by
 him ascertained that their money should be paid them ere ever
 they should be far gone on. And especially since their advancing
 forward should be in the defense of their country against
 their mortal enemies, against whom some of those countries
 have been used both to defend and make invasions at their own
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cost and charge, forasmuch as they have been and yet be for that consideration discharged of taxes and other charges universally born through the remnant of the realm.

109. To Wolsey

Finally, the King's Grace caused me to write him further that it should be provided that upon his advertisement from time to time he should have money sent in time convenient so that he should not need to stop or let therefore. Thus much I remember of the letter written unto my Lord Steward which the King's Grace caused me when his Grace had read it to deliver it forthwith to my said Lord's servant tarrying and incessantly calling upon it. So that I could not write it out again to send your Grace the copy, as knoweth our Lord whose grace long preserve yours in honor and health.

At Newhall the 14th day of September. 75

Your humble orator and daily bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's good grace.

110. To Wolsey, Newall, 21 September <1522>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised, that yesterday in the morning I received from your Grace your honorable letters written unto myself, dated the 19th day of this present month and with the same as well the letters of congratulation with the minute of a letter to be written with the King's own hand to the Emperor and the instructions to the King's Ambassador there as also those letters which your Grace received from Master Secretary, with the letters by your Grace also devised for the expedition of the gentleman of Spruce.

Which things with diligence I presented forthwith unto the King's Grace the same morning, and to the intent that his Grace should the more perfectly perceive what weighty things they were that your Grace had at that time sent unto him and what diligence was requisite in the expediting of the same, I read unto his Grace the letters which it liked your Grace to write to me. In which it much liked his Grace that your Grace so well allowed and approved his opinion concerning the overtures made by the French King unto the Emperor. After your Grace's said letter read, when he saw of your Grace's own hand that I should diligently solicit the expedition of those other things, forasmuch as your Grace intended and gladly would dispatch the

premises this present Sunday, his Grace laughed and said, 110. To Wolsey
 'Nay by my soul that will not be, for this is my removing day
 soon at Newhall. I will read the remnant at night.'

Whereupon after that his Grace was come home hither and 25
 had dined, being 6 of the clock in the night, I offered myself
 again to his Grace in his own chamber, at which time he was
 content to sign the letters to the Emperor and the other letters
 for the expedition of the gentlemen of Spruce, putting over all
 the remnant till this day in the morning. 30

Whereupon at my parting from his Grace yesternight I received
 from your Grace a letter addressed unto his, with which I forthwith
 returned unto his Grace in the Queen's chamber, where his
 Grace read openly my Lord Admiral's letter to the Queen's
 Grace, which marvelously rejoiced in the good news and especially 35
 in that that the French King should be now toward a tutor and
 his realm to have a governor.

In the communication whereof which lasted about one hour,
 the King's Grace said that he trusted in God to be their governor
 himself, and that they should by this means make a way 40
 for him as King Richard did for his father. I pray God if it be
 good for his Grace and for this realm that then it may prove
 so, and else in the stead thereof I pray God send his Grace one
 honorable and profitable peace.

This day in the morning, I read unto his Grace as well the instructions 45
 most politicly and most prudently devised by your
 Grace and thereto most eloquently expressed, as all the letters of
 Mr. Secretary sent unto your Grace, to whom as well for your
 speedy advertisement in the one, as for your great labor and
 pain taken in the other, his Grace giveth his most hearty 50
 thanks.

In the reading of the instruction among the incommodities that
 your Grace there most prudently remembereth if the Emperor should
 leave the estate of Milan up to the French King, the King's Grace
 said that the Emperor should besides all those incommodities sustain 55
 another great damage, that is to wit the loss of all his
 friends and favorers in Italy without recovery forever which
 should be fain to fall wholly to the French King, utterly despairing
 that ever the Emperor leaving the Duchy when he had it
 would after labor therefor when he had left it. Which consideration 60
 his Grace would have planted into the instructions with
 his own hand, saving that he said your Grace could, and so

he requireth you to do better furnish it or set it forth. 110. To Wolsey

As touching Mr. Secretary's letters his Grace thinketh as your
Grace most prudently writeth, that they do but seek delays 65
till they may see how the world is, wherein he much alloweth
your most prudent opinion that they should be with good round
words to their Ambassador and other quick ways pricked
forth.

And forasmuch as your Grace toucheth an order, that no 70
Venetians should be suffered to ship any of their goods out of
the realm, and that it is now showed unto his Grace that one
Deodo a Venetian is about to ship, pretending himself to be
denizen, which is his pretense whether it be true or not his Grace
knoweth not, and also thinketh that he shall under the color 75
of his own send out of the realm the goods of others his
countrymen, for which causes his Grace requireth yours to have
a respect thereto and cause it to be ordered as to your Grace's
wisdom shall seem expedient.

Forasmuch as the King's Grace hath not yet written of his 80
own hand the minute to the Emperor which I delivered his
Grace in this morning, therefore I suppose that this letter written
this present Sunday the twenty-first day of September in the night
cannot be delivered to the post till tomorrow about - - -, as
knoweth our Lord, who long preserve your Grace in honor and 85
health.

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More.

To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

115. To Wolsey, Easthampstead, 26 August <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised, that
the King's Highness yesterday received a letter from his Vice Admiral,
dated on the sea the 14th day of August; which letter
your Grace shall receive with these presents.

And forasmuch as the valiant acquittal of Mr. Fitzwilliam 5
and his company singularly well contenteth the King's Highness,
as a thing much redounding to the honor of his Grace and his
realm, with high reproach and rebuke of his enemies he requireth
your Grace therefore, that as well his Vice Admiral, as
other gentlemen of his company, such as your Grace shall think 10
convenient, may have sent unto them letters of thanks, by

which they may to their comfort and further courage understand how acceptable their good service is unto his Highness.

115. To Wolsey

Furthermore as touching the two ships which your Grace hath devised to be sent unto Sir Anthony Poyntes, albeit that Mr. Vice Admiral, as your Grace may perceive by his letter, moveth three things which he thinketh would be considered therein, yet since your Grace hath had a politic foresight to the provision of the victual, which is the greatest thing that his Grace regardeth, his pleasure is according to your most prudent advice that for to put the matter in the more surety, the said two ships shall in any wise go forth and that they shall there continue till half the month of September be passed, after which time his Grace thinketh it good that Sir Anthony Poyntes and his company, should be discharged, for after that time his Grace believeth that the Duke of Albany either shall not go into Scotland, or else shall go too late to do either them good or us hurt, and therefore it seemeth to his Grace good that he should after the mids of this next month discharge himself of that cost.

In the meanwhile his Highness requireth your Grace that those ships may be so speedily and sufficiently victual for the whole time of their abode upon their enterprise there, as he doubteth not but your Grace hath and will provide therefore, that no lack of victual hinder or impeach their purpose.

It may further like your good Grace to understand that the King's Grace much alloweth your prudent answer made unto the Emperor's Ambassador upon the safe conduct. For his Grace thinketh it a great hindrance to the common affairs that the Emperor should grant any such safe conduct, whereby there should be any mutual intercourse between his subjects and their common enemies, and the commodities of France having vent and utterance, the enemy thereby the better furnished of money, should be the more able the longer to maintain the war. And so shall it be the longer ere he shall incline to any reasonable conditions of peace. Wherefore his Grace for his part according to your Grace's politic advice is as yet in mind neither to ratify that safe conduct, nor to grant any like, and is glad that your Grace so showed unto the Emperor's ambassador.

It may further like your good Grace to be advertised that one Thomas Murner, a frère of Saint Francis' order, which wrote a book against Luther in defense of the King's book, was out of Almaine sent into England by the means of a simple person,

an Almain naming himself servant unto the King's Grace
 and affirming unto Murner that the King had given him in
 charge to desire Murner to come over to him into England, and
 by the occasion thereof, he is come over and hath now been here
 a good while. Wherefore the King's Grace pitying that he was so
 deceived and having tender respect to the good zeal that he
 beareth toward the Faith and his good heart and mind toward his
 Highness, requireth your Grace that it may like you to cause
 him have in reward one hundred pounds, and that he may
 return home where his presence is very necessary, for he is
 one of the chief stays against the faction of Luther in that
 parts, against whom he hath written many books in the Almain
 tongue and now since his coming hither he hath translated
 into Latin the book that he before made in Almain in defense
 of the King's book. He is Doctor of Divinity and of both Laws
 and a man for writing and preaching of great estimation in his
 country.

It may like your Grace further to wit that the same simple
 person which caused Murner to come into England is now come
 to the Court and hath brought with him a baron's son of
 Almaine, to whom he hath also persuaded that the King's
 Grace would be glad to have him in his service. He hath also
 brought letters from Duke Ferdinand unto the King's Grace,
 which letters I send unto your Grace, wherein he desireth the
 King's Highness to take into his service and to retain with some
 convenient yearly pension Duke Mecklenburg, of which
 request the King's Grace greatly marveleth and verily thinketh
 that this simple fellow which brought the letters, likewise as he
 caused Murner to come hither and persuaded the baron's son that
 the King would be glad to have his service, so hath, by some simple
 ways brought the Duke of Mecklenburg in the mind that the
 King's Grace would at the contemplation of Duke Ferdinand's
 letters be content to retain the Duke of Mecklenburg with a
 yearly pension. The fellow hath brought also from the Duke of
 Mecklenburg letters of credence written in the Dutch tongue.
 He bore himself in Almaine for the King's servant and
 boasted that he had a yearly pension of his Grace of fifty marks
 and that the King had sent him thither to take up servants for
 him. And now he saith he is servant unto the Emperor's Majesty
 and is going into Spain with letters to him and indeed he
 hath diverse letters to his Majesty, and so was it easy for him

115. To Wolsey

to get, if he intend to deceive and mock, as the King's Grace
thinketh that he doth. For his Grace never saw him before, but
he understandeth now that before this time he was in England
when the Emperor was here and slew a man and escaped his way.
Wherefore his Grace requireth yours to give him your prudent
advice as well in a convenient answer to be made both to Duke
Ferdinand and the Duke of Mecklenburg as also in what
wise it shall be convenient to order this simple fellow, that so hath
deceived men in the King's name.

Furthermore it may like your good Grace to understand that
at the contemplation of your Grace's letters, the King's Highness is
graciously content that besides the 100 L for my fee, for the office of the
speaker of his Parliament, to be taken at the receipt of his Exchequer,
I shall have one other hundred pounds out of his coffers,
by the hands of the Treasurer of his Chamber, wherefore in most
humble wise I beseech your good Grace that as your gracious
favor hath obtained it for me so it may like the same to write
to Mr. Wyatt that he may deliver it to such as I shall send for
it, whereby I and all mine, as the manifold goodness of your
Grace hath already bound us, shall be daily more and more bounden
to pray for your Grace, whom our Lord long preserve in
honor and health. At East Hampstead the 26th day of August.

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

116. To Wolsey, Woking, 1 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
according to your Grace's commandment, given me by your
letters dated the 30th day of August, I have showed unto the
King's Grace the bill devised for Sir Richard Wingfield, subscribed
by your Grace, and the old bill, also advertising his Grace
of such things as your Grace in the new bill caused to be left
out for the advantage of his Highness, which points I showed his
Grace cancelled in the old bill and omitted in the new, for which
his Highness, with hearty thanks to your Grace for your labor
taken therein, hath signed the new, which I have delivered to him
of whom I received it.

And thus our Lord long preserve your good Grace in honor and
health. At Woking the first day of September.

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

116. To Wolsey

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117. To Wolsey, Woking, 1 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that I have received your Grace's letters directed to myself dated the last day of August with the letters of my Lord Admiral to your Grace sent in post and copies of letters sent between the Queen of Scots and his Lordship concerning the matters and affairs of Scotland with the prudent answers of your Grace as well to my said Lord in your own name as in the name of the King's Highness to the said Queen of Scots. All which letters and copies I have distinctly read unto his Grace. Who hath in the reading thereof substantially considered as well the Queen his sister's letter with the letters againward devised and sent by my Lord Admiral to her and his letters of advertisement to your Grace as your most politic devices and answers unto all the same among which the letter which your Grace devised in the name of his Highness to the Queen his sister his Grace so well liked that I never saw him like thing better, and as help me God in my poor fantasy not causeless, for it is for the quantity one of the best made letters for words, matter, sentence and couching that ever I read in my life.

His Highness in your Grace's letter directed to my Lord Admiral marked and well liked that your Grace touched my said Lord and my Lord Dacre in that that their opinions had been to the let of the great rood, which if it had been ere this time made into Scotland, as by your prudent advice it had, if their opinions with other had not been to the contrary, it should as by the Queen's letter appeareth have been the occasion of some great and good effect.

His Highness also well allowed that your Grace noteth not only remiss dealing but also some suspicion, in that the Lord Dacre so little esteemed the mind and opinion of the King's sister whereof he had by his servant so perfect knowledge.

Finally his Highness is of the mind of your Grace and singularly commendeth your policy in that your Grace determineth for a final way that my Lord Admiral shall set forth his enterprises without any longer tract of time not ceasing to press them with all the annoyance possible till they fall earnestly and effectually

to some better train and conformity. And verily his Highness thinketh as your Grace writeth that for any lack of those things, which as he writeth are not yet come to him, he should not have needed to forbear to have done them with smaller roods as the least way some annoyance in the mean season. 117. To Wolsey 40

I read also to his Highness the letter of Mr. Doctor Knight written unto your Grace, with your Grace's letter written to myself, by the tenor whereof his Grace well perceiveth your most prudent answer devised and made, as well to his said Ambassador as to the Ambassador of the Emperor, concerning the disbursing of such money as his Highness should lay out for the *entretènement* of the 10,100 lance knights, wherein his Grace highly well approveth as well your most politic foresight so wisely doubting lest this delay of the declaration might happen to be a device, whereby the Emperor might spare his own charge and *entretient* the Almans with the only cost of the King's Grace, as also your most prudent order taken therein by which his Highness shall be bound to no charge except the Duke first pass the articles sent by Sir John Russell and that the 10,000 Almans be levied and joined with the Duke and he declared enemy to the French King. 45 50 55

I read, also, to his Highness the copy of your Grace's letter devised to Mr. Doctor Sampson and Mr. Jerningham; wherein his Highness well perceived and marked what labor and pain your Grace had taken as well in substantial advertising his said Ambassadors at length of all occurrents here, with the goodly rehearsal of the valiant acquittal of his army on the sea not only there done but also descending on the land whoso his preparations and armies set forth and furnished as well toward France as Scotland as also in your good and substantial instructions given unto them for the semblable advancing of the Emperor's army and actual invasion to be made on that side for his part. 60 65

His Highness hath also seen and signed the letters by your Grace devised in his name as well to Don Ferdinando and to the Duke of Meckelenburg in answer of their late letters sent unto his Grace as also to the Duke of Ferrara in commendation of the King's orators in case the Duke accept the Order. 70

In the reading and advising of all which things his Highness said that he perceived well, what labor, study, pain and travail your Grace had taken in the device and penning of so many, so great things, so high, well dispatched in so brief time, when the only reading thereof held him about two hours; his 75

Highness, therefore, commanded me to write unto your Grace
 that for your labor, travail, study, pain and diligence, he giveth
 your Grace his most hearty and not more hearty than highly well
 deserved thanks. And thus our Lord long preserve your good
 Grace in honor and health. At Woking the first day of September.
 Your humble Orator and most bounden beadsman
 Thomas More
 Mr. Thomas More prima Septembris.
 To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

117. To Wolsey

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118. To Wolsey, Woking, 3 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that I
 have received your Grace's letter to me directed, written the 2nd
 day of September, and with the same the letters congratulatory by
 your Grace devised in the King's name to the Duke of Venice.
 Which I read unto his Grace, who much commending your substantial
 draft and ornate device therein, hath signed and with
 his hearty thanks remitted the same unto your Grace again.

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I read also to his Highness your said letters written to me which
 his highness very gladly heard and in the reading said that your
 Grace was worthy more thanks than he could give you. And as
 touching the venison which he sent your Grace, he was very
 glad that it liked your Grace so well and would that it had
 been much better. And thus our Lord long preserve your good
 Grace in honor and health. At Woking the 3rd day of September.

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Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.
 Thomas More.

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119. To Wolsey, Woking, 5 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that I
 have received as well your Grace's letters written to myself
 dated the 4th day of this present month, as also the letter of my
 Lord of Suffolk directed unto the King's Highness, with a letter
 of my Lady Margaret unto my said Lord. All which letters I
 have read unto the King's Grace, who most heartily thanketh
 yours, not only for your speedy advertisement, but also for your
 substantial provision for the victual of his army, and your prudent
 advice concerning the demur or marching of the same, which
 your politic counsel his Grace in every point well pondered,

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and the same so well liked, that saving for the plague raining at
Calais and in the March of the same, whereto your Grace hath
also right special regard, his Highness would be the less minded
to make haste in the removing of his army out of his own pale,
into the frontiers of his enemies. 15

But now the danger of the plague standing though it were
in his town and marshes right remiss, which is as his Highness is
informed very fervent, yet ere his Grace would enjeopard his people
in the infection thereof, somewhat would he rather remove them
thence toward their enemies, as your Grace in the end of your
letter for the same cause politically concludeth. Wherein his Grace
requireth yours that my Lord of Suffolk with condign thanks
for his good endeavor may be advertised of his opinion and yours,
so that he may with diligence march out of the English pale
into some more wholesome place upon the frontiers of the enemy,
providing that he neither march further than he may march
and abide surely, nor any such way, as the enemy thereby may perceive,
what place he specially purposeth to invade, so that after
the Burgundians joined with them, which thing he requireth
your Grace with your letters to my Lady Margaret in your prudent
manner to accelerate, they may the less looked for and thereby the
less provided for, suddenly turn to Boleyn, where our Lord send
them good speed. 20 25 30

Where it liketh your good Grace so thankfully to accept my
poor devoir in doing right small part of my bounden duty, ye
show your accustomed goodness and bind me that that in my
service lacketh, in my poor prayer to supply. And thus our Lord
long preserve your good grace in honor and health. At Woking the
fifth day of September. 35

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman. 40

Thomas More.

120. To Wolsey, Woking, 12 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
yesternight late after his supper I presented unto the King's
Grace as well my Lord of Suffolk's letter written to your Grace
with the copy of the Lord Ysselstein's letter to the same and his letter
directed to the King, as also your Grace's letter written to myself
dated the 11th day of this present September and as touching the
consultation of the siege to be laid to Boleyn or abandoned, 5

his Highness hath commanded me to write unto your Grace that
 notwithstanding the reasons of the Lord Ysselstein, with the mind
 of my Lady Margaret and the Emperor too, his Grace is for the
 prudent reasons mentioned in your Grace's letter determinately
 resolved to have the said siege experimented, whereof, as your Grace
 writeth, what may hap to fall who but God can tell. And all the
 preparations purveyed for that way to be now suddenly set aside
 or converted where they cannot serve, sending his army far
 off into the enemy's land, where we should trust to their provision
 of whose slackness and hard handling proof hath been had ere this.
 And yet no proof had of the Duke's fastness, his Highness verily
 thinketh as your Grace hath most prudently written that there
 were no wisdom therein. And his Grace saith that your Grace
 hit the nail on the head where ye write that the Burgundians would
 be upon their own frontiers to the end our money should be
 spent among them and their frontiers defended and themselves
 resort to their houses.

Howbeit as touching the defense of the Low Countries
 his Grace saith that they shall not if all things be well ordered
 on their part so greatly need to fear as well for the reasons prudently
 mentioned in your Grace's letter as also for that the country
 contributeth unto an aid for their own defense whereof this
 company either is, or as his Grace thinketh should be, none but of
 the Emperor's charge besides, so that if the one matter eat not up
 the other his Highness saith they should be sufficiently furnished
 for both.

Finally his Grace for your substantial counsel and prudent
 advice in this point his most affectionate thanksgiving to your
 Grace, heartily requireth the same that as well my Lord of Suffolk
 as the Lord Ysselstein may be with diligence advertised of his
 Grace's resolute pleasure and yours. And thus our Lord long preserve
 your good Grace in honor and health. At Woking the 12th day
 of September about midnight.

The letter for the Ambassador of Venice I shall send unto your
 Grace, as soon as it shall please the King's Highness to take
 the leisure to sign it which I trust his Grace will do tomorrow.

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

121. To Wolsey, Guildford, 13 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised
 that I have received from your Grace a packet containing, as
 well your Grace's letter directed to myself, dated the 12th day of
 this present September, as two letters of Sir John Russell, one
 to the King's Grace, another to yours, with the copy of the letter
 of Chastel, servant of Monsieur de Beaurain, directed to the Emperor's
 Ambassador here, all which I have presented and read unto
 the King's Grace, who most affectionately thanketh your
 Grace for your speedy advertisement and especially for your studious
 consideration of the same so diligently declaring by your
 most prudent letters such things of weight and substance as to
 your high wisdom seemed worthy to be noted.

121. To Wolsey

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All which his Grace well and deeply considering, thinketh in
 every point as your Grace taketh it, that the Duke neither could
 otherwise do than dissimule his purpose for the while, nor is at
 this day nor hereafter likely to be in any hearty peace or concord
 with the French King. But all the danger and harm is as your
 Grace well noteth that it is likely to be so long ere he declare
 himself enemy. His Highness is glad that he is deceived in his
 fear that he conceived lest the French King had haply by some
 means somewhat perceived of this practice. Which his Grace
 now perceiveth well he doth not, for if he had he would either not
 have come in his house or not so departed thence. But his
 Grace greatly feareth that since this matter is now in somewhat more
 men's mouths than it was in the beginning, lest it will
 not long be kept so secret, but that the French King may be well
 likely to come to the suspicion thereof, which if he should happen
 to do, the Duke thinking the contrary, he should not fail to be
 suddenly distressed as his Grace thinketh, and all this conclusion
 quailed; which were to the common affair so great a lack that his
 Grace thinketh the eschewing thereof a thing right deeply to be considered
 and thought upon. Wherein his Grace's opinion is, if your
 Grace think it good, that your Grace should by your high wisdom
 devise some goodly way by which Sir John Russell might
 whoso diligence convenient to be used advertise the Duke on the
 King's behalf, that his Grace perceiveth, that in Flanders and
 other places more folk know of this matter than were likely long
 to keep it close, the knowledge whereof the King's Grace fearing
 lest by some means coming to the French King, ere the Duke
 suspect it, might put him in danger and peril, hath of his

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tender zeal to the Duke's safeguard thought it necessary to advertise
 him thereof, giving him his friendly loving counsel either to
 declare himself or at the least wise in the mean season to make
 no less provision for his own safeguard and surety than he would
 do if he were by undoubted means ascertained that the French
 King knew his purpose. By some such manner advertisement his
 Grace esteemeth that the Duke shall either be moved to declare
 himself the sooner or at the least wise to keep himself the
 surer. And thus hath his Grace in this point commanded me to
 write unto your Grace of his opinion, remitting the further
 consideration of the same to your high prudence.

121. To Wolsey

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His Grace liketh not that the Emperor setteth on so slowly, for
 he thinketh that if the Emperor enter in it would give good courage
 to the Duke to declare. And as for the intelligence that the Emperor
 writeth of to his Ambassador here, that he hath in Guyen with
 hope to attain certain towns whereof he feareth the loss by
 stronger garnisons to be sent in to them, in case his army descended
 ere he have them; the King's Grace saith he hath small
 trust in that matter, esteeming it an excuse of their unforwardness.
 And thus our Lord long preserve your good Grace in honor and
 health. At Guildford the 13th day of September late in the
 night.

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His Highness persevereth in your Grace's opinion that for any
 solicitation of the Emperor or my Lady no money be debursed
 till the declaration be made.

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I eftsoons most humbly thank your good Grace that it liked
 your Grace in so goodly wise to give thanks to the King's Highness
 for his bounteous liberality at the contemplation of your Grace's
 letters used unto Mr. Tuke and me. Whom your Grace hath by
 your manifold benefits before and thereby newly bounden to continue
 your perpetual beadsman.

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Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman

Thomas More.

To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

122. To Wolsey, Easthampstead, 17 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that the
 King's Highness this night going to his supper called me to him
 secretly and commanded me to write unto your Grace that
 whereas it hath pleased our Lord to call to his mercy Mr. Mirfine,

late Alderman of London, his Grace very greatly desireth
 for the special favor which he beareth toward Sir William Tyler
 that the same Sir William should have the widow of the said late
 Alderman in marriage. For the furtherance whereof his Highness
 considering your Grace's well approved wisdom and dexterity
 in the achieving and bringing to good pass his virtuous and honorable
 appetites commanded me with diligence to advertise your
 Grace that his Highness in most hearty wise requireth your
 Grace that it may like you at the contemplation of this his
 affectionate request by your high wisdom to devise, put in ure
 and pursue the most effectual means, by which his Grace's
 desire may in this matter best be brought about and goodly take
 effect, wherein his highness saith that your Grace shall do him
 a right special pleasure and bind the said Sir William during
 his life to pray for your good Grace. 5 122. To Wolsey

Thus much hath his Grace in this behalf commanded me to
 write yours whom both our Lord long preserve in honor and
 health together. At East Hampstead the 17th day of September. 10

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman. 15

Thomas More. 20

To my Lord Legate's good Grace. 25

123. To Wolsey, Abingdon, 20 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that the
 King's Highness by the hands of his servant Sir John Russell, of
 whose well achieved errand his Grace taketh great pleasure, hath
 received your most prudent letter containing your wise and substantial
 counsel and advice concerning the siege of Boleyn to
 be left off at this present time, and his army, with proclamations
 of liberty and forbearing to burn, to proceed and march forward
 unto the places devised by the Duke of Bourbon, which places,
 as your Grace upon credible report from all parties is informed,
 shall easily be taken without any resistance, wherein your Grace
 perceiveth great appearance of winning some great part of France
 or at the least wise all that is on this side of the water of Somme, which
 should be as honorable and beneficial unto his Grace and also
 more tenable than all Normandy, Gascone, and Guyen, requiring
 his Highness therefore that your Grace might whoso possible
 diligence be advertised of his mind and pleasure in the premises
 to the end that ye might advertise my Lord of Suffolk of the 5 10 15

same.

123. To Wolsey

And that it would like his Grace to take in good part your
aforesaid advice and opinion without areting any lightness to
your Grace though the same were of another sort now than was
contained in your late letters addressed unto me, forasmuch as
this declaration of the Duke of Bourbon and his council thereupon
given with the good semblance and grounds and considerations
thereof causeth your Grace to change your opinion. 20 25

The King's Highness also commanded me to write unto your
Grace first concerning this point, that his Highness not only
doth not aret the change of your Grace's opinion to any lightness
but also right well considereth that it proceedeth of a very constant
and unchangeable purpose to the furtherance and advancement
of his affairs. And as his Highness esteemeth nothing
in counsel more perilous than one to persevere in the maintenance
of his advice because he hath once given it, so thinketh he
that counselor very commendable, which, though there were
no change in the matter, yet forbeareth not to declare the change
of his own opinion, if he either perceive or think that he perceiveth
the contrary of his former counsel more profitable. 30 35

Wherefore in the change of your Grace's opinion in this matter his
Highness not only seeth no manner likelihood of lightness but also
perceiveth, commendeth and most affectionately thanketh your
faithful diligence and high wisdom so deeply pondering and
so substantially advertising his Highness of such considerations as
(the matter so greatly changed) move your Grace to change your
opinion and to give your prudent advice to the changing of the
manner and fashion of his affairs. 40 45

His Highness hath further commanded me to write to your
Grace that as touching the resolution of his mind and pleasure
upon your consultation, your Grace hath alleged so many good
and substantial reasons on the one part and yet those notwithstanding,
some considerations so move him to the other, that
his Highness hath though it convenient - - - - - himself
first to communicate his said considerations with your Grace
to the end that those things by your high wisdom well weighed
and pondered, his Highness may upon your further advertisement
take with your Grace's good advice and counsel such final determination
as may God willing be best and most conducible to the
desired end and effect of his purposed enterprise. 50 55

First his Highness in the abandoning of the siege and sending

his army forward into France, is not so much retarded and
 letted in his opinion for the hope of the good that he thinketh 60 123. To Wolsey
 could be now done at the siege, as for the doubts that rise unto his
 Highness of the marching to the places devised and in the manner
 mentioned. For as for the siege, albeit his Grace yet despaireth
 not but that if it were experimented as late as it is, some good
 might yet with God's Grace grow thereof, yet hath he much the 65
 less trust thereunto forasmuch as a great part and the best part
 of the time in which his Highness reckoned that it should have
 been in doing is now and needs must be by the slackness of the Burgundians'
 provision passed and consumed ere they can begin. By
 whose only remiss dealing, his Highness reckoneth the good that 70
 of that siege might have grown at this time, hindered, impeached
 and in manner lost. Wherefore the case so standing albeit that his
 Grace seeth not now so much hope of any great effect of the
 siege as might have grown if their promises had been kept, yet
 some considerations move him to think that of the marching forward 75
 ----- little profit with
 more charge danger and peril than of the siege.

First his Grace findeth the time of the year as far passed for the
 good to be done in the marching forward as in the lying at the
 siege, and yet by reason of wet weather and rotten ways rather 80
 more incommodious to that feat in which they should sometimes
 lie still and sometimes march than to that feat in which they
 should only place themselves and lie still. Especially his Highness
 thinketh that the wetness of the country upon the river's side shall
 not suffer his army to march with artillery either gross enough 85
 for battery or sufficient for the field, without which his Grace
 thinketh it were a great unsurety to send them thither as they
 may be percase constrained to strike battle with a more puissant
 host than is reckoned on.

His Grace saith also Corbie or Compiègne or other towns upon 90
 the river of Somme be not so facile and easy to be taken as some
 men make them that would gladly bring us from Boleyn , or as
 the Burgundians make them, being desirous to bring us to
 them. In whose report what trust there is, his Grace saith they
 made a proof the last summer at Hédin, which was in their 95
 mouths very weak till they came at it and in their eyes very
 strong till they got from it. And if these towns happen to
 prove like, so that without long siege and great battery they will
 not be won, then the ground being over soft to carry so

gross artillery as a full battery would require, his army shall, as he
 saith of necessity -----
 ----- and not without peril, such towns and garnisons
 left behind them as may distress their victuals.

And on the other side, if the towns be so easy to be won
 as the Burgundians and other make it, then thinketh his Grace
 that after his army withdrawn and discharged, they will be as
 easy to be lost, if the French King approach them with an army
 rial, which is more easy for him to do in his own realm than
 for the King's Grace to rescue them with a like army through another
 prince's land, though he be his friend. And if he were otherwise,
 then might his army never come at them but by force
 and fight ere they come to them. And his Highness thinketh that
 it were not so much honor shortly to win them as it would
 be dishonor shortly to leese them.

Whereas your Grace thinketh that by the means of this manner
 of marching with the seas well guarded, Montreuil, Therouenne,
 Hédin, and Boulogne should be secluded utterly from victuals, and
 thereby constrained of necessity to render themselves either some
 part of this winter or by the entry of a mean army into France
 in the beginning of the next summer, the King's Grace saith that
 he would of this thing be most joyous if it might in such wise
 come to pass; but his Highness in the let thereof doubteth two
 things, one that it would be right hard for him to find the money
 that should suffice to the continual keeping of his army so long
 both by sea and by land, namely so great as the obtaining of
 the towns should require, the other, that it would be impossible
 except the towns aforesaid were continually besieged to withstand
 it else but that they should always now and then either by
 land or sea be revictualled, considering that they be so furnished
 already that keeping therein but the ordinary or little above (as they
 would keep no more without constraint of a siege with right small
 refreshing they should endure right long).

His Highness also much bendeth upon a substantial reason
 alleged by your Grace in your late letters addressed to me, which
 yet seemeth to his Grace sore sounding to the danger and peril
 of his host in case they should march forward as is devised, that
 is to wit the doubt of their victualing. For whereas your Grace
 right prudently answereth the doubt which ye made before of
 the interception if it should be conveyed to other place than Boleyn,
 the Duke not having declared himself nor the French King's

100 123. To Wolsey

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army sent out of his realm. Which victual your Grace esteemeth
to more be now conveyed from Calais after the army, since the French
King's puissance is passed and the Duke declared enemy against
whom namely purposing to invade with the 10,000 Almains
and his own power, the French King shall be forced to convert
all the power he can make. 145

The King's Highness in this point findeth two difficulties, one
that since the conveyance of victual with artillery and other things
in the marching further forward must needs require double the
carriage that it should need the army lying at the siege still, where
fewer carts by half might sooner and more safely come and go
in that way shorter and less dangerous, seeing the Burgundians
whoso the diligent soliciting that can be made have not yet or
scantly yet provided that carriage that were sufficient for the siege,
his Highness sore doubteth that his army should be right hardly
bestead in their victual and carriage ere the Burgundians provided
sufficiently for the residue. Wherefore his Grace thinketh if they
should march far, there would be great difficulty in the victualing;
for our own, he thinketh, would not well follow so far and our
friends how we may trust therein we have had experience, then in
our enemy is yet much more unsurety. 150

The other difficulty that his Highness findeth is this. His
Grace thinketh that the French King is not unlikely to do as his
Highness would himself if he were in (as our Lord keep him
out of) the like case. Then would he appease his own realm
ere he would invade another. So if the French King do (as he hath
of likelihood already done) revoke the puissance of his army, being
yet at the time of the declaration not passing six days journey from
him, if they were so far, and with them joining the 5000
Almains with the 200 men of armies whom he hath with him
already about Lyons, he might haply invade the Duke before
the 10,000 Almains were joined with him, or peradventure be
too strong for him when they were joined with him or else if
he suddenly upon the first sure knowledge of the matter unite the
5000Almains and the 200 men of armies with such other power
as he could shortly make at hand, he was not unlikely, the
King thinketh, to distress the Duke ere he should assemble power
sufficient to withstand it. Then if by any of these ways it should
mishap or be by this already mishapped that the Duke be oppressed,
then should the French King, as he may easily march in
his own realm, come down and convert his whole power against 165

123. To Wolsey

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the King's army and the same being far entered into the bowels
of his realm he should have, the King's Grace thinketh, good
opportunity with great number of his horsemen to cut off our victual
at our backs. 123. To Wolsey 185

For which causes it seemeth to the King's Grace that ere ever
his army should march far off, since it can neither join with the
Duke to make him the stronger, nor come so near as they might
relieve his overthrow, if he so mishapped, nor the French King of
likelihood will not divide his power but with his whole power 190
encounter first the one, it were therefore, his Grace thinketh,
expedient somewhat to perceive first how the Duke were able
himself with the aid already given him to sustain the impression
of the enemy.

Finally where the Duke adviseth that the King's army shall in 195
the marching proclaim liberty, sparing the country from burning
and spoil, the King's Highness thinketh that since his army shall
march in hard weather with many sore and grievous incommodities,
if they should also forbear the profit of the spoil, the bare
hope whereof, though they got little, was great encouraging to 200
them, they shall have evil will to march far forward and their
captains shall have much ado to keep them from crying,
Home! Home!

The King's Highness, albeit he well considereth that the year
being so far passed, there is no time to be lost, but all the celerity 205
to be used that conveniently may, yet since his army will in the meanwhile
be somewhat doing, hath deemed it requisite these considerations
that move him to signify to your Grace, to the intent that
the same by your high prudence advised and considered, such
final determination may be taken by his Grace and yours as shall 210
with God's grace bring his affairs to good and honorable
effect.

His Grace is very glad and right heartily thanketh yours that
ye have provided by commandment sent to Mr. Knight, that
the money shall be paid out of hand for the month's wages of the 215
10,000 Almains and the remnant at times and place convenient,
for else he thinketh now for lack of that money the conclusion
might all quail.

After that his Grace had read and reformed the minute of this
present letter, he commanded me to write unto your Grace on 220
his behalf that it might like you to take the pain to devise a
good round letter unto my Lady Margaret in your own name to

stir them forward in the provision of such things as their
 slackness hitherto much hath hindered the common affairs. His
 Highness saith that such dealing so often used and never otherwise,
 may well give him cause hereafter better to be advised ere he
 enter into a charge again for their defense if this be not
 amended. And so he required your Grace to write unto her.
 And thus our Lord long preserve your good Grace in honor and
 health. At Abingdon the 20th day of September.

123. To Wolsey

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Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.
 Thomas More
 To my Lord Legate's Good Grace
 Master More 20 Septembris.

124. To Wolsey, Woodstock, 22 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
 I have this night, after that the King's Grace had supped, presented
 and distinctly read unto his Highness as well your Grace's
 letter dated the 21st day of this present September addressed unto
 myself, as the 4 letters of the Queen of Scots directed twain
 to the King's Grace and the other twain to my Lord of Surrey.

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And also the two letters by your good Grace in the King's name
 most politically devised unto the said Queen of Scots for
 which your labor, pain, travail, diligence, and study therein used
 his Grace giveth unto yours his most affectionate thanks. And

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forasmuch as in the reading of my Lord of Surrey's letter directed
 unto your Grace, the King noted that my said Lord had already
 written unto the Queen of Scots answer unto both her said
 letters, his Grace requireth yours that it may like you to send him
 the copies which his letter specifieth to have been sent unto your
 Grace.

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His Grace also thinketh it right good that the Humes and
 Douglas be received upon convenient hostages, and that as well
 the Chancellor as the other lords mentioned in the Queen's letter
 should be attempted by promises, gifts and good policy to be
 won from the Duke and his faction.

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And forasmuch as his Grace much desireth in these things to
 be advertised of your most politic advice and counsel, which
 he thinketh your Grace intendeth to declare by way of instructions
 to be given unto my said Lord of Surrey, his Highness

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therefore heartily requireth your Grace, that it may like the same
to send unto him the said instructions that his Grace may by
the same be learned of your Grace's prudent advice and counsel in
the premises.

124. To Wolsey

His Highness thinketh it very necessary not only that my
Lord of Surrey were in all possible haste advertised of the declaration
of the Duke of Bourbon but also that the same were insert
within the letter which the Queen of Scots shall show to the
Lords with good exaggeration of the tyranny for which he renounceth
the French King and of the harm and ruin that is
likely to fall to France thereby.

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His Highness also requireth your Grace to peise and consider
the clause of the Queen's letter by which she desireth with her
trusty servants to be received into his realm and how your
high wisdom thinketh good that matter to be ordered or answered.
And to the intent in all these things your Grace may the
more conveniently send him your most prudent advice he hath
commanded me with these presents to remit all the said writings
unto your good Grace to be by your good Grace again
sent unto his Highness with your most politic counsel thereupon.
And thus our Lord long preserve your good Grace in honor
and health. Written at Woodstock, the 22nd day of September at
midnight.

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Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman,

Thomas More

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To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

Master More 22 Septembris.

125. To Wolsey, Woodstock, 24 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
I have this night received and presented unto the King's Grace
as well your Grace's letter written to myself dated this present
day as also the copies of my Lord of Surry's letters written to the
Queen of Scots with the copy of your Grace's former letter
written and sent unto my said Lord and your letter of new devised
at this time to be sent, by all which his Highness well perceiveth
not only your Grace's high policy in the devising and
ordering of his affairs and business comprised in the same but
also your marvelous diligence and celerity in the expedition and
speed of the same, for his Highness seeth all such things as he

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commanded me to put your Grace in remembrance of on his
 behalf by your high diligence anticipated and already done
 ere his Grace thought thereon. Wherefore his Highness with most
 hearty thanks unto your Grace for your great labor, pain and
 diligence used therein hath signed the letters in his name by your
 Grace devised unto his sister the Queen of Scots, commanding
 me forthwith to dispatch the post again unto your Grace with
 the same. And thus our Lord long preserve your good Grace in
 honor and health. At Woodstock the 24th day of September.
 Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.
 Thomas More

125. To Wolsey

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126. To Wolsey, Woodstock, 26 September <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
 I have this night, after the King's Grace had supped, presented
 and read unto his Highness, as well your Grace's letter written
 unto me dated yesterday, as the letters of the Queen of Scots
 written to my Lord of Surrey with the letters of his Lordship
 as well answering her Grace as advertising yours.

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The King's Highness is glad that my Lord of Surrey now beginneth
 savorily to perceive that the Lords of Scotland intend but
 only to drive over the time of their annoyance and much
 would his Grace have been gladder that my Lord had savored
 it before, for then his Grace thinketh that as well the feat that
 shall now be done, or is by this done, might have been long
 since done, and peradventure much more. His Highness also
 liketh not all the best, that my Lord of Surrey in his letter written
 to the Queen, which he would she should show to the Lords of
 Scotland, appointeth them the time and place where they shall
 send to him, to Jedburgh. For his Grace thinketh the time and
 place so certainly known, it shall be a good occasion to the Scots
 the more surely to withstand his enterprise. Howbeit his Grace
 trusteth in God it shall be or is by this time well enough.

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His Highness is very sorry of the plage and the fervent agues
 fallen in his army to so great diminishing of the same for the
 remedy and reinforcing whereof his Highness thinketh nothing
 more profitable than for the causes in your Grace's letters most
 prudently remembered that the places of them that are departed
 to God, or sent back to Calais to be cured, should be and so is he
 content they shall be supplied with as many horsemen of those

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parties. And thereof his Grace requireth yours that my Lord of Suffolk may be advertised.

126. To Wolsey

Finally that it liketh your good Grace so benignly to accept and take in worth my poor service and so far above my merits to commend the same in that letter, which of mine accustomed manner your Grace foreknew the King's Grace should see, whereby his Highness should have occasion to accept it in like wise and so liked your Grace in one letter both give me your thanks and get me his. I were my good Lord very blind if I perceived not, very unkind if ever I forgot, of what gracious favor it proceedeth, which I can never otherwise reanswer than with my poor prayer, which, during my life shall never fail to pray to God for the preservation of your good Grace in honor and health. At Woodstock the 26th day of September.

Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

127. To Wolsey, Woodstock, 30 October <1523>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that I have presented and read unto the King's Grace your Grace's letter written unto myself, dated the 27th day of this present month with the letter of my Lord Admiral, directed unto the King's Highness, dated at Newcastle the 24th day of this month. And two copies of your Grace's letters, one answering the said letter of my Lord Admiral to the other addressed unto my Lord of Suffolk, which letters forasmuch as his Highness well considered by your high wisdom so singularly well devised, that except his only thanks unto your Grace for your labor, pain and study for the same, which his Highness in his most hearty manner giveth unto your Grace, there required no further advertisement, he being then ready to ride, deferred the answer of the same until the morrow at his coming to Woodstock, at which he thought he should peradventure receive some new letters, as he hath indeed.

For this day came the post with your Grace's letter written unto me, dated the 29th day of this present month with the letter of my Lord of Suffolk, dated in the camp at Campien, with diverse other letters and copies contained in the same packet, all which I remit unto your good Grace again with these presents. After the receipt whereof forthwith this night, I read

all the same distinctly to his Highness, whereby he perceived not
 only the goodly victory that his army hath had against the
 enemies at Ancre and Bray, and winning the passage over the
 water of Somme, with free entry into the bowels of France
 without appearance of any great resistance with demonstration
 and good likelihood of the attaining of his ancient right and title
 to the corone of France to his singular comfort and eternal
 honor, but also the marvelous diligence and inestimable industry
 of your good Grace by your high policy, labor, travail and study
 not only providing for the reinforcement of his said army, being
 by sickness, death and otherwise diminished and enfeebled, but also
 for the sufficient furniture as well of money as other necessaries
 for the same, which saving for your high prudence and politic
 provision his Highness would not well have thought feasible wherefore
 his Highness for your accustomed fervent zeal and goodness giveth

 passed the King's high and great matters, so much depending
 upon his honor, surety and reputation on all parties, being in
 so good train with such appearance of notable effect to ensue,
 that it might please his highness to resort unto some place
 and there establish himself, where your Grace might conveniently
 have often recourse and repair to the same for the
 better furtherance and advancement of his affairs, which as
 your Grace most prudently writeth, may be more perfectly communicate
 and more speedily set forth by groundly consultation
 in presence, than by letters in absence, his Highness ensuing the
 most prudent advertisement of your Grace, proceeding of special
 tender zeal to the furtherance of his affairs, intendeth as soon
 as he shall have heard of the good and prosperous end of his
 affairs against Scotland, which, God willing, he trusteth shall be
 shortly, then forthwith to repair to Windsor and there to
 demur until his Grace and yours deliver and determine further.
 Whom both our Lord send well and shortly together and long
 preserve you both in health and much honor.

At Woodstock the Friday before All Hallows' Eve.
 Your humble orator and most bounden beadsman.
 Thomas More
 To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

127. To Wolsey

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136. To Wolsey, Hertford, 29 November <1524>

136. To Wolsey

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
 yesternight at my coming unto the King's Grace's presence,
 after that I had made your Grace's recommendations and his Highness
 showed himself very greatly glad and joyful of your
 Grace's health; as I was about to declare further to his Grace 5
 what letters I had brought, his Highness perceiving letters in my
 hand prevented me ere I could begin and said, "Ah! Ye have
 letters now by John Joachim and I trow some resolution what
 they will do." "Nay verily, Sir," quoth I, "my Lord hath yet no
 word by John Joachim nor John Joachim, as far as my Lord 10
 knew, had yet no word himself this day in the morning when
 I departed from his Grace." "No had?" quoth he, "I much marvel
 thereof for John Joachim had a servant come to him two days
 ago." "Sir," quoth I, "if it like your Grace this morning my
 Lord's Grace had nothing heard thereof, for yesterday his Grace 15
 at afternoon dispatched me to your Grace with a letter sent from
 Mr. Doctor Knight and the same night late his Grace sent a
 servant of his to mine house and commanded me to be with his
 Grace this morning by eight of the clock, where at my coming
 he delivered me these other letters and advertisements sent unto 20
 him from Mr. Pace, commanding me that after that your Highness
 had seen them, I should remit them to him with diligence,
 as well for that he would show them to other of your Grace's
 Council as also to John Joachim, for the contents be such as
 will do him little pleasure." "Marry," quoth his Grace, "I am well apaid 25
 thereof."

And so he fell in merrily to the reading of the letters of Master
 Pace and all the other abstracts and writings, whereof the contents
 as highly contented him as any tidings that I have seen come
 to him, and thanked your Grace most heartily for your good 30
 and speedy advertisement; and forthwith he declared the news
 and every material point, which upon the reading his Grace well
 noted unto the Queen's Grace and all other about him who were
 marvelous glad to hear it. And the Queen's Grace said that she
 was glad that the Spaniards had yet done somewhat in Italy in 35
 recompense of their departure out of Provence.

I showed his Highness that your Grace thought that the French
 King passed the mountains in hope to win all with a visage
 in Italy and to find there no resistance and his sudden coming
 upon much abashed the countries putting each quarter in doubt 40
 of other and out of surety who might be well trusted, but now

136. To Wolsey

since he findeth it otherwise, missing the help of money, which
 he hoped to have had in Milan, finding his enemies strong
 and the fortresses well manned and furnished and at Pavia, by
 the expugnation whereof he thought to put all the remnant in fear 45
 and dread, being now twice rejected with loss and reproach, his
 estimation shall so decay and his friends fail, his enemies confirmed
 and encouraged, namely, such aid of the Almaines of new
 joining with them, that like as the French King before wrote
 and boasted unto his mother that he had of his own mind passed 50
 into Italy, so is it likely that she shall have shortly cause to write
 again to him that it had to be much better and more wisdom for
 him to abide at home than to put himself there where as he
 standeth in great peril whither ever he shall get thence. The
 King's Grace laughed and said that he thinketh it will be very 55
 hard for him to get thence, and that he thinketh he matters
 going thus the Pope's Holiness will not be hasty neither in peace
 nor truce.

Upon the reading of Mr. Knight's letter his Grace said not
 much, but that if Buren come to his Grace he will be plain with 60
 him. And if he do not, but take his dispatch thereof your Grace,
 which thing I perceive his Highness would be well content he did,
 except he desire to come to his presence, his Grace requireth
 yours so to talk with him as he may know that his Grace and
 yours well perceive how the matters be handled by the Emperor's 65
 agents in the enterprise.

The King's Grace is very glad that the matters of Scotland be
 in so good train and would be loath that they were now ruffled by
 the Earl of Angwish and much his Highness alloweth the most
 prudent mind of your Grace minding to use the Earl of Angwish 70
 for an instrument to wring and wrest the matters into
 better train if they walk awry, and not to wrestle with them
 and break them when they go right.

It may like your Grace also to be advertised that I moved
 his Grace concerning the suit of Mr. Broke in such wise as your 75
 Grace declared unto me your pleasure, when Mr. Broke and I
 were with your Grace on Sunday. And his Grace answered me
 that he would take a breath therein, and that he would first once speak
 with the young man and then his Grace departed, but I perceived
 by his Grace that he had taken the young man's promise not to 80
 marry without his advice, because his Grace intended to marry him
 to some one of the Queen's maidens. If it would like your good

Grace in any letter which it should please your Grace hereafter to
 write hither, to make some mention and remembrance of that
 matter, I trust it would take good effect. And thus our Lord long
 preserve your good Grace in honor and health. 85

At Hertford the 29th day of November.

Your Grace's humble orator and most bounden beadsman.

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's good Grace. 90

145. To Wolsey, Stony Stratford, 21 September <1526>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that I
 have presented and read unto the King's Grace your honorable
 letters directed unto myself and written the 17th day of September,
 whereby his Highness very greatly rejoiced the valiant
 acquittal and prosperous success of the Earls of Angwish and 5
 Arran against their enemies and the disturbers of the peace
 and quiet of Scotland, daily devising such enterprises as should, if
 they mote have obtained their intent and purpose, have extended
 in conclusion to the great peril and jeopardy of the young
 Prince his nephew, not without some busyness and inquietness 10
 also to this realm.

Wherefore his Highness much approveth your Grace's most prudent
 device concerning the said Earls to be entertained with some
 good letters and pleasures from his Grace with good advice and
 counsel to be given unto them for such good, virtuous and 15
 politic order to be taken and used by them for the good
 bringing up of the young King, to the weal and surety of his
 noble person and commodity of his realm, that he and his realm
 may hereafter be glad and daily more and more delight and rejoice
 in their late good chance and victory against them that late 20
 were assembled against their King present in the field; and the
 King's Highness thinketh that since the said Earls have now sufficient
 open proof that the Archbishop of Saint Andrew's putteth
 all his possible power to procure their destruction and to rare
 broilery, war, and revolution in the realm, to the no little peril 25
 of the young King their master, it were good that they were
 advised in this their victory so substantially to provide for the
 safeguard of their King and themselves by the effectual repressing
 of their adversaries, that the said Archbishop and his adherents
 in any time to come should not be able either by crafty practices 30

to deceive them, or open rebellion to distress them, but
 without any trust or credence to be given to the blandishing of
 the said Archbishop which this adverse chance shall peradventure
 drive him to use for the while with purpose and intent of
 revenging when he may find occasion, they provide and see so
 substantial order taken for the surety of the King, the realm and
 themselves that none evil weed have power to spring up too high.

145. To Wolsey

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And thus much the King's Highness hath commanded me to
 write unto your good Grace concerning this matter, giving to
 your Grace his most affectionate thanks for your diligent advertisement
 of those good tidings with your labor taken in the letter
 by your Grace devised in his name to the Chancellor of Poland.
 His Highness also thinketh that it were neither honorable to his
 Grace nor to the French King that the Emperor's Ambassador should
 be detained in France, and it seemeth to me that the King's Grace
 somewhat doubteth whether he be there detained against his will
 or not, but his Grace greatly alloweth and thanketh yours in the
 soliciting of his enlarging.

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I remit unto your Grace the letters of Mr. Magnus and Sir
 Christopher Dacre, and shall in like wise send unto your Grace
 the letter to the Chancellor of Poland as soon as the King's Grace
 shall have signed it. As knoweth our Lord whose goodness long
 preserve your good Grace in prosperous health and honor.

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At Stony Stratford the 21st day of September.

Your Grace's humble orator and most bounden beadsman.

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Thomas More

150. To the University of Oxford, Richmond, 11 March <1527>

*Right Worshipful Sir in my most hearty wise I recommend
 me unto you.*

Signifying unto you the King's pleasure is that for
 certain considerations moving his Highness, ye shall forthwith
 upon the sight of these my letters send up to me on Henry the
 manciple of White Hall, in so sure keeping that he do not escape,
 and that ye shall by your wisdom handle the matter so closely
 that there be of his apprehension and sending up as little knowledge
 abroad as may be. And this his Grace's commandment,
 his high pleasure is that he shall whoso diligence and dexterity
 put in execution as ye intend the continuance of his Grace's favor

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towards you and that his University, the privileges whereof, his
 Grace of his blessed mind intendeth to see conserved. And for
 that intent his Highness hath ordered that ye shall send up
 the said Henry to me being Steward of that his University. And
 thus heartily fare ye well, at Richmond the 11th day of March.

Assuredly your own

Thomas More

10 150. To Oxford

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161. To Wolsey, Windsor, 16 March <1528>

It may like your good Grace to be advertised that
 yesternight the King's Highness commanded me to advertise
 your Grace that his servant Michael the Geldrois delivered him
 a letter from Monsieur d'Ysselstein which his Grace hath sent
 unto yours in such manner couched that it seemeth to his Highness
 to have proceeded not without the advice of my Lady Margaret and
 the Council there. And forasmuch as the letter mentioned
 credence to be given to the bringer in the declaring of the same
 he showed unto his Highness on the behalf of Monsieur d'Ysselstein
 that my Lady and all the Council there, and among other
 himself especially were very sorry for this war intimated unto
 the Emperor and marvelous loath and heavy would be that any war
 should arise between them. And that it were to great pity and a
 thing highly declaring our Lord sore displeased with Christian
 people if the three greatest princes of Christendom coming to so
 near points of peace and concord should in so near hope and expectation
 of peace suddenly fall at war, beseeching the King's
 Highness graciously to persevere in his godly mind and appetite of
 peace, and howsoever it should hap to fall between him and
 Spain, yet to consider his ancient amity and to continue his
 good and gracious favor toward Flanders and those Low Countries
 which of all folk living loathest would be to have any
 enmity with his Grace or his people. Adding thereunto, that if
 his Highness had of his high wisdom any convenient means by
 which his Grace thought that the peace might yet be trained
 and come to good point that thing known he would not doubt to
 come over himself to his Grace with sufficient authority to conclude
 it.

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Whereunto the King's Grace answered that no creature living,
 prince nor poor man, was more loath to have come to the war
 than he, nor that more labor and travail had taken in his mind

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to conduce the peace, which he had undoubtedly brought to pass,
 if with the Emperor either reasonable respect of his own honor,
 profit and surety or any regard of the common weal of Christendom
 might have taken place. And since it was without his fault 35
 and against his mind come to this point now, his Grace must
 and would with other his friends and help of God defend his
 and their good cause and the common state of Christendom
 against such as by their immoderate sore dealing show themselves
 utterly set upon a purpose to put all in their own subjection. 40
 And that as touching the Low Countries he had for the old
 friendship and amity such favor to them that, as it hath well
 appeared by his acts since the intimation, he hath not been hasty
 to do them harm nor at the least wise to break any clause of
 their old intercourse albeit every clause had not been kept toward 45
 him. Wherein his Grace said that somewhat they had now
 begun to look unto and he doubted not but more they would for
 their honor. And whereas Monsieur d'Ysselstein upon the hope
 had of any good ways of peace offered himself to come over with
 sufficient authority, his Grace said, that both for is great wisdom 50
 and good zeal toward peace and old friendly mind toward
 his Grace of long time well known, and for the acquaintance
 between them with the favor that his Grace hath for his well
 deserving merits long born unto him, no man should be to his
 Grace more welcome, nor none could there come thence to whom 55
 his Grace could find in his heart more largely to declare his mind.
 In which he had conceived such things that he doubted not, if he
 came over with sufficient authority from the Emperor, either he
 should conclude the peace or plainly perceive and confess himself
 that the Emperor's immoderate hardness should be the only 60
 let and default.

161. To Wolsey

Upon this the said Michael said that Monsieur d' Ysselstein
 would be glad to know what those devices were, which known
 he might see what hope he might have of any fruit to come of
 his coming. Whereunto the King's Highness answered that since 65
 his Grace had made the intimation it would not well stand with
 his honor, after such a sleight fashion to make any overture of
 such points. But if Monsieur d'Ysselstein came in such sufficient manner
 authorized by the Emperor, he should not fail to find his Grace
 such, that having so good zeal and desire to the peace, he should 70
 have cause to be glad of his journey. And thus much the King's
 Highness commanded me to advertise your Grace concerning

the communication had between his Grace and the said Michael,
 desiring your Grace of your high wisdom to consider what were
 further to be devised or set forth concerning the said overture of
 Monsieur d'Ysselstein. 161. To Wolsey 75

After this when I was gone from his Highness, it liked him
 to send again for me into his privy chamber about 10 of the
 clock and then commanded me to advertise your Grace further
 that he had considered with himself how loath the Low Countries
 be to have any war with him and that himself and your
 Grace, if it may be avoided, would be as loath to have any war with
 them. And for that cause his Grace thinketh it good that albeit
 he would there were no slackness in putting of my Lord Sandys,
 and his company in a readiness, yet they should not over hastily
 be sent over, lest those Low Countries being put in more doubt
 and fear of his Grace's intent and purpose toward them for some
 exploit to be done by land, might be the rather moved to retain
 and keep still the goods of his merchants and to begin also
 some business upon the English pale, which thing the matter
 thus hanging without further fear or suspicion added, his Highness
 verily thinketh that they will not attempt, but rather in good
 hope of peace accelerate the delivery of his merchants' goods,
 namely perceiving the discharge of the Spaniards whom by your
 Grace's most prudent advice his Highness hath condescended
 shortly to set at liberty and free passage. 80 85 90 95

And his Grace also thinketh that if my Lord Sandys with his
 company were at Guisnes they should be sore pressed by the French
 party to join with them in some exploit upon the borders of
 Flanders, which thing either they should stiffly refuse to do and
 thereby peradventure move grudge and suspicion, or join in the
 doing. And thereby some hurt done unto Flanders upon the
 frontiers might not only exasperate the matter and hinder the
 peace causing the goods of his merchants to be retained but
 also give occasion to have some broilery made upon the English
 pale in which his people might percuse take more harm than they
 should infer. And when I was about to have showed his Highness
 somewhat of my poor mind in the matter, he said this gere could
 not be done so suddenly but that his Grace and yours should speak
 together first and in the meanwhile he commanded me thus
 much to advertise your grace of his mind. 100 105 110

Furthermore, his Highness desireth your Grace at such time as ye
 shall call the Spaniards before you to give them liberty to depart,

it may like you in such effectual wise to declare unto
 them what favor his Highness beareth to the nation of Spain 115
 and how loath his Grace would have been to have any war with
 them, that the opinion of his gracious favor toward them comprobate
 and corroborate by their discharge and frank deliverance
 being by them reported in Spain may move the nobles
 and the people there to take the more grievously toward the Emperor 120
 that his unreasonable hardness should be the cause and occasion
 of the war.

His Highness hath also commanded me to write unto your
 Grace that there is an hospital in Southwark whereof his Highness
 is informed that the Master is old, blind and feeble, and albeit 125
 that the hospital is in the gift of the Bishop of Winchester,
 yet his Grace is informed that your Grace may as Legate give
 the Master in this case a coadjutor. Which if your Grace conveniently
 may, then his Highness very heartily requireth your
 Grace that it may like you to appoint for his coadjutor his Grace's 130
 chaplain Mr. Stanley, which to desire of your Grace he saith
 that 2 things move him, the one that he would the man were
 provided for being a gentleman born and his Grace's chaplain,
 the other is that his Grace being thereby rid and discharged of
 him might, as he shortly would, have a better learned man in his 135
 place.

It may like your Grace to receive with this presents such
 letters as the King's Grace hath yesterday received out of Ireland,
 which after that I had by his Grace's commandment read and
 reported unto his Grace, he commanded me to send them unto 140
 your Grace to be by your high wisdom further considered
 and answers to them to be devised such as to your high prudence
 shall be seen convenient. And thus our Lord long preserve your
 good Grace in honor and health. At Windsor this 16th of
 March. 145

Your Grace's humble orator, and most bounden beadsman,

Thomas More

To my Lord Legate's good Grace.

170. Tunstall, Hackett, <More> to Henry VIII. <Cambrai, 2 August 1529>

* * * lest they
 saying that the obligations
 and not revived nor renewed in any

----- albeit we told them not so, we intend if 170. To Henry VIII
 ---- some clause for your debts between them and us in 5
 ---- payment by the French King for any cause aforesaid,
 howbeit we shall have much to do to bring them thereto.

After this we talked of your indemnity and of the sums
 of money to your Grace owed by the Emperor and to reckon
 how much it might amount unto. Whereof they made with us 10
 none other sticking but that it could be ----- longer to endure
 the payment thereof than unto the intimation of the war unto
 the Emperor. And after a great sum made, thereupon they
 told us that the Frenchmen and they were agreed and fully 15
 accorded that the French King should discharge the Emperor
 of that indemnity, how great soever it were, willing us to
 treat with the Frenchmen thereupon who, they were sure, would
 satisfy us as they were bound to do, hereupon ---- to demand
 the penalty of breach of the marriage. Whereupon we had --- and
 likewise of the demand of Tournai. And after much reasoning 20
 on both sides of those two matters, nothing agreeing in any
 point either in one or the other, put over those two matters until
 we should have command of the * * * of the clock like
 as we did ----- intercourse. And after
 overture made by us ----- was before the 25
 war they said that that ----- and
 many of their subjects did complain and it -----
 -- he must be heard in it, as well upon the one side as on the
 other and that my Lady in that matter had no sufficient commission
 but must advertise the Emperor, wherefore that matter must 30
 be put in a surseance until his pleasure be here known. Whereunto
 we answered that we had great marvel that they should make
 sticking or make any question therein, wherein if they would stick
 ----- it were as much as to tell us that they should have
 none amity at ----- with your Grace. 35

As for particular matters we were not against, but that they
 might be either remitted to justice, in the place where they pretend
 themselves to be wronged, or else to be ordered at some
 diet by both the princes to be appointed, howbeit the general 40
 treaties of intercourse concerning the intercourse of the subjects
 of either side could not in any wise be deferred but that it
 must of necessity be ordered now with the treaty of peace and
 amity, whereof the intercourse is a great part, for there could be
 no good peace nor amity between the princes, if their people

were left in such case as they might not or wist not in what
wise each of them to meddle with other -----
45 170. To Henry VIII
journey as they did ----- they might write to
the Emperor and ----- matter to be reasonably and
indifferently ordered ----- by the
princes therefore. Whereunto after a little consultation among us,
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we gave them a short and plain answer -----
disposed to renovel the intercourse as well as the amity and in
such case as it was before the war, your Highness, for the great
zeal you bear unto peace, had sent us to conclude it. And on
the other side for anything of the intercourse we had no
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commandment of your Grace to agree to neither. Whereupon they
said they would make further vehement words to the Lady
Margaret and thereupon give us further knowledge of her pleasure
on the morrow.

Whereupon forthwith we showed unto the Chancellor of
60
France what we had done and at what point we were at, who
thought their motion very unreasonable and said he trusted they
would come to some better point on the morrow. This morning
at our meeting again, we found all the Imperials assembled
that treated with us except only Monsieur de Berghes, which
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was as they said by reason of rainy weather somewhat acrazed
and diseased. And there the Lord ----- declared unto us that
he and other of the council had made relation * * *
to move unto us that -----
to some good point, howbeit -----
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said that the Lady Margaret thought it very -----
so press her therein as though we would force -----
----- unto us those things which now are clear at his liberty
----- forfeited from us by the intimation of the war. And
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whereas she had no power nor commission to speak, which
notwithstanding for the general peace, she would be content to
conclude the amity and had already taken reasonable order for
the debts and yet would further of her especial grace be content
to take a surseance of six months during which the -----
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subjects might occupy together as they have used before. And
the Emperor, being advertised, might give his commission unto
some convenient person, and your Grace in like wise, for a
diet to be appointed and held for a further order to be taken
thereupon; upon these words had unto us, which demanded
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of them whether they brought us this from the Lady Margaret

for a resolute answer, and the Lord of Hochstrate said yea,
for it was the answer whereupon she had resolved herself with
the council.

170. To Henry VIII

Whereunto we told them that we much marveled that the
Lady Margaret should think it strange that we should stick for 90
* * * part of that -----
----- when they might not be freely -----
---- after that accustomed manner. And as touching the ---
----- thereof will as well bear the matter as it would ----
----- -of the peace concluded between the French 95
----- And over that we showed them that at our first coming
unto the Lady Margaret we did among other things as
well mention unto her the intercourse as the peace and amity.
So that she needeth not now so marvelously think it strange
to hear speak of the intercourse nor to lay the fault upon the commission, 100
in which if they had found any such faults they
would have told unto us in the beginning and not have kept
us here a month for naught.

Whereunto they answered that forasmuch as, after their demand
and question asked us, we showed them that we could 105
not conclude any peace with them, but if the French King had
-----also, therefore they determined no further
to common with us, until the Frenchmen and they were accorded,
and that therefore they had forborne to tell us this matter before.
And they said that since the Emperor was as well King of 110
Spain as Lord of these Low Countries, it should be peradventure
his pleasure not to conclude any * * * the one part
to take a ----- at large; whereupon it
was answered ----- for the Emperor
never did nor ----- your Grace and your 115
people one treaty of intercourse for the ----- and customs
being so diverse the one from the other ----- self,
neither as King of Spain having any authority in these Low
Countries, nor as Lords of any of the Low Countries having any
authority in Spain. Besides this, that for Spain he can make 120
none intercourse but such as must be concluded as well in his
mother's name as in his own.

Then they said that the Lady Margaret was not advertised
before that any man for your Grace's part should come to this
diet which if she had been she might have provided a commission 125
therefore, whereof she is now destitute and utterly cannot

treat thereof. We showed unto them that I, John Hackett, gave
 them warning thereof at Valenciennes, and that her commission
 as good enough, which might be further helped with a
 clause *de rato* and a covenant of a confirmation. Whereunto they
 said that she might not so covenant, considering that the
 privileges were forfeited by the intimation of war, and that
 your Grace and the French King had done all that ye could
 * * *

- - - - - the morrow being the - - - - -
 Council and we met together again. At - - - - -
 an article in writing concerning the intercourse - - - - -
 - - - that the Lady Margaret by deliberation taken by - - -
 resolved herself upon as the utterest and final point which
 she could condescend unto, which article was indeed such
 as the same would, if it had been agreed, have stood your
 subjects in little stead - - - - - thereupon after long debating
 they condescended in conclusion that the French Council
 should see that article of their making, and the article also which
 we had devised;, and that thereupon we should further experiment
 whether we could come to any nearer point.

Whereupon since that time we have had diverse meetings,
 as well in presence of the French Council as apart, and
 the Imperials have brought in concerning the intercourse diverse
 changes, and ever the longer the worse. Whereupon we had such
 business with them, and found them so stiffly set upon the
 sore impairing of the intercourse, that surely, for aught we can
 perceive, we could never have taken any reasonable end with
 them but they would plainly have broken with us for - - - - - * * *

Post scripta. As we were about to have folded up these letters,
 the Chancellor, the Great Master and the French Council
 sent for us, and at our coming showed unto us, that the Great
 Master had informed my Lady Regent of the manner of the
 departing between the Emperor's Council and us and that himself
 had thereupon, by her commandment, spoken with the
 Lord Hochstrate in her name showing him expressly that without
 an end taken in this contention there should nothing
 go forward, which had been accorded between them, but
 that the French King would rather give up the peace, and
 never have his children home, than take and have his peace
 without agreeable end by us taken for your Highness. He
 showed us further that the Lord Master had answer again

170. To Henry VIII

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from the Lord Hochstrate that the Lady Margaret was minded
to take * * * old intercourse - - - - - 170. To Henry VIII
- - - - - they should break of in like wise - - - - - 170
- - - - - Whereof we most heartily thanked them on your behalf
and departed. And in this case standeth the affairs at present,
unless God better them, as we trust he shall. Howbeit, in case
it fortune that this diet should break up without peace concluded,
we propose to depart with the Lady Regent and come 175
home by France, and we intend not, if peace be not concluded,
to come home by Flanders.

 Please it your Highness also to understand, that the Chancellor,
the Great Master and the French Council have diverse
times been in hand with us again for some capitulation to be 180
made between them and us for the mutual concurrence of your
Grace with your good brother the French King, in case the Emperor
should not perform his covenants nor deliver his
children; whereunto we have always made them fair and courteous
answers, without any reasoning that there were no cause remaining 185
why your Grace should so do, because we were not in
surety what need we might hap to have them, as it now
seemeth to hap indeed, but we have showed them that we
doubt not but that your good brother shall find your Grace
as willing as he can wish. As we shall see the matters proceed 190
we shall further * * * three months and - - - - -
- - - - - the space of that three months in - - - - -
- - - - - together.

 Whereunto we answered that - - - - - be
taken, the matter could be little amended for - - - - - 195
whereunto said the Lord Fiennes that the truce
- - - - - three parties, and they concluding peace with France
- - - - - the parties, the truce were dissolved, seeming
thereby that they would make us a demonstration, and a fear
that France and they should conclude without us. We answered 200
them that if peace were made by one, it breaketh not the truce
between the remnant; howbeit, whether they should make,
break, or conclude, we neither could nor would conclude one or
other, except the articles which we first proposed, that is to
wit, the amity, the debts, and the intercourse whole and unchanged. 205
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 Now after our departing from them, we went this afternoon
to the Chancellor, the Great Master, and the French

170. To Henry VIII

Council, recounting unto them all the premises at length,
 whereupon they made us answer that they would make report
 unto my Lady Regent, and that they were sure that she would
 common with the Lady Margaret thereof, whereupon they
 trusted * * * - - - - - would make a peace with us worse
 - - - - - intimation, our people and theirs
 have - - - - - were before by the space of
 two year which - - - - - peace they would that
 they should never be again - - - - - six months;
 which surseance of six months though they should make it a
 surseance for six years, and for six hundred years after, yet we
 had no power to conclude it nor to limit it to any day, nor
 - - - - - concerning the intercourse any other thing to do than
 to renovel it, and put it in the former terms without one syllable
 changed; wherefore, since they had given this unto us for a
 resolute answer, that they might not meddle with the intercourse,
 they should if they would stand - - - - - thereby take this for our
 resolute answer again, that we could not meddle their amity,
 whereof we desired them to advertise the Lady Margaret, and
 that if she would give us none other answer, that then we might
 know her pleasure, whether she would admit us to her presence
 to take our leave at her, which, if it liked her not, we desired
 them to make our humble recommendations unto her; which
 they said they would, and that they would also send us word
 the * * * Gueldres to make - - - - - he had
 said he could show by your - - - - -

Whereunto we answered that as touching the - - - - -
 - - - - - your Grace had not done it but upon great consideration
 - - - - - of such treaties as your Grace had made with
 the - - - - - for the observing of your part had been at immeasurable
 charge, hurt and travail of your people, yet was
 - - - - - part almost never of one article nor appointment
 kept, whereof we might well at large enter into many a great
 speciality, were it not that your Highness had sent us hither
 for the furtherance and aid of peace, and not to enter into the
 requiting of any displeasance or exprobaton of your gratuity
 and kindness; and yet all this notwithstanding your Grace
 never intimated the war but for a godly purpose for conducting
 the peace, as hath well appeared by your Grace in proceedings
 after the intimation made, which if the Lords well esteemed,
 they should well find not so much - - - - - to the Emperor's

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harm as to the saving of his and their countries, howsoever it 250 170. To Henry VIII
 liked the Duke of Gueldres thus to lie for his - - - - - as
 ever any of us had heard we durst well * * *

171. Tunstall, More, Hackett to Henry VIII. Cambrai, <c. 4> August <1529>

Please it your Grace, by the French King - - - - -
 - - - - - every payment six months after other - - - - -
 - - - - - of November after the delivery of their children
 - - - - - shall be in March next in every payment to be paid
 - - - - - Crowns of the Sun for three first payments, the fourth 5
 payment to be thirty thousand Angelots, or the value in
 Crowns of the Sun, the fifth payment to be all the residue, that
 is to say, ten thousand Angelots - - - - - thirty-five thousand Crowns,
 or the value in Crowns of the Sun. And as for your *Fleur-de-lis*,
 that ye have in pledge, we have left it to be accorded by your 10
 Grace to put what days of payment ye shall think convenient,
 but surely we think they will make great instance in alleging
 necessity at this time, which we think to be unfeigned. Albeit in
 discourse here late of their matters with the Imperials they bragged
 that they were - - - - - so rich to maintain their estate, but 15
 the contrary doth appear - - - - - they cannot furnish the
 money to be paid before March next - - - - - should take
 money by exchange of merchants paying them - - - - -
 which if they should do, considering the dearth and scarceness
 - - - - - now being in the world, would make the French 20
 King's ransom - - - - - that pledge your Grace's - - - - -
 - - - - - ye will, the longer ye give the more - - - - -
 - - - - - and in the shorter the more strain them.

After our last letters were closed and gone with the post, we
 found - - - - - half a leaf to have been left out for haste of 25
 the writer, which he was so hasty to write the part of *post scripta*
 that he left out a piece of - - - - - of our letter of the 2nd of
 August, wherein was contained our advertisement and advice
 in a matter moved unto us by the French Council, like as it
 hath been diverse times, and we always have kept us within 30
 the terms of our answer at that time given, the whole advertisement,
 whereof only the beginning and yet that imperfect,
 was in our said letter, is this that followeth.

Pleaseth it your Highness also to understand that the Chancellor,
 the Great Master and the French Council have diverse 35

171. To Henry VIII

times been in hand with us again for some capitulation to be
made between them and us for the mutual concurrence of your
Grace with your good brother the French King, in case the Emperor
should not perform his covenants - - - - - should so
do because we were - - - - - to have of 40
them as it now seemeth to hap - - - - - we showed them
that we doubt not but that your good brother will find your
Grace as willing as he can wish to anything that he may require
as he hath already of your Grace's manifold gratuities - - - - -
experience, and we showed them according to your Grace's most 45
- - - - - instructions what peril might insurge if any capitulation
of concurrence of the war should be mentioned or spoken
of here, and that what were requisite to be done concerning such
concurrence was more - - - - - after the pax concluded and
this diet absolved to be treated by - - - - - abiding each with 50
other, with which our answer the Chancellor and the
French Council appeared but meanly satisfied, for the Chancellor
answered somewhat warmly, that by this means they
should leese force of the - - - - - *de bello offensivo*; at which
words the Great Master and other of the council communed 55
secretly with him; and after that the Great Master said that
there was no doubt of your Grace's goodness, and that your
brother the French king understood that by the good hearty
- - - - - your said good brother - - - - -
to your Grace, which, as we here say, - - - - - and 60
what other message that he shall have - - - - - part
of his errand shall be for the aforementioned - - - - -
whereof we have thought it necessary to advertise your Grace
- - - - - that using your accustomed prudence ye neither put them
at the - - - - - despair of your concurrence, nor enter presently 65
to any treaty, whereof you might wish afterwards to be discharged.
As we shall see the matters proceed, we shall further
advertise your Grace with all diligence. And thus Almighty
God preserve your Grace to his pleasure. From Cambrai the 2nd
day of August. 70

Thus have we redintegrated our letter late sent unto your
Grace, in the place where it was at that time by oversight of the
writer forgotten, and which we have the rather now repeated
unto your Grace, because your Highness may perceive therein,
that your good brother the French King intendeth of likelihood, 75
still to press upon your Grace for capitulation to be made between

you for mutual concurrence in the war in case the
 ----- *de bello offensivo* standeth -----
 trust and think the contrary, yet made ----- but
 that we had not the words of the treaties ----- we thought 80
 it not good to fall into any such disputations with them, lest it
 should appear unto them that we reckoned your Grace discharged,
 or that your Grace gladly so would be.

Pleaseth it your Grace further to understand, that we have
 taken leave of the Lady Margaret who dismissed us with very 85
 good ----- and great demonstration of very good and hearty
 affection unto your Grace and a full determination to endeavor
 herself for the *entretènement* of the pax and amity between
 your Grace and the Emperor. And afterward, when we were
 taking our leave of the Lady Regent, not intending to have 90
 tarried the French King coming to Cambrai, forasmuch as it
 was showed unto us that he intended to come secretly and not
 to have his being here known, the Lady Regent desired us to
 tarry unto the coming of her son, for she knew he would be
 glad to speak with us. Whereupon this day we have ----- him, 95
 who gave us very hearty thanks for our good and -----
 ----- erred with us and thus ----- to your
 Highness in very benign manner.

-----when we took our leave of the Lady Regent
 in ----- and most humbly recommended 100
 her unto your Grace, with very great testification of your singular
 goodness, both showed unto the King her son in his
 captivity and often since from time to time renewed, and
 now specially at this present diet well showed -----
 servants fastly concurring with the King her son and his 105
 Council for the concluding of the pax and deliverance of the
 King's children, which ----- else she recognized and said had not
 been brought to so good a point ----- but she said she reckoned,
 and so did the King her son also, that your Grace was
 the cause first of his own deliverance and now shall be by God's 110
 grace the deliverer of his children also, which shall ever,
 as they grow more and more in age, so more and more acknowledge
 themselves deeply bounden and beholden unto you. And
 with these words and such other, in very benign manner, she
 bade us farewell. 115

And thus therefore tomorrow, God willing, or else as soon after
 as we can get a carriage for our stuff, which is here at this time

very hard to get, we intend to take our journey homeward
 towards * * * folding up this letter, the Lady
 Margaret sent us word by a gentleman of her chamber that
 the Emperor ----- which God turn,
 if it be true, to the wealth and commodity -----
 By your Grace's most humble subjects, servants, and
 beadsmen,
 Cuthbert London
 Thomas More
 John Hacket
 ----- at the diet of Cambrai, ----- August.

171. To Henry VIII

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172. Tunstall, More, Hacket to Henry VIII. Cambrai, 5 August 1529

----- they have in -----
 ---we have put the treaties of their -----
 effect such as it had before the war begun -----
 ----- almost as much to do to get any clause whereby your
 Grace ----- your desires again of the Emperor in case your good
 brother the French King, for lack of delivery of his children,
 should not be bounden ----- howbeit at length with much
 work and with the first ----- French Council, we
 have a clause that for lack of deliverance of his children, restoreth
 your obligations to their former strength ----- the
 indiction of the war. So that finally your Grace hath the peace
 with the intercourse in manner abovesaid and sealed and sworn
 this day, the fifth day of August, with very honorable and
 solemn ----- as your good brother the French King is peace
 with the Emperor likewise is at the same time in the Cathedral
 church of this town of Cambrai, of which our Lord send
 good and long continuance.
 As touching your Grace's debts, we have had communication
 with the French Council, in which, albeit they desire much
 longer day ----- whole sum in six payments,
 yet forasmuch as your good brother shall not be content ----
 ----- of the deliverance of his children ----- not
 be before March next coming; therefore for your ----- of
 payment we were fain to give them the half ----- to
 be paid at such time as your Grace's half year's pension must be
 paid. Howbeit this end have we agreed unto but only for so
 much as the Emperor's obligations do amount unto. For as

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touching the - - - - - thousand Crowns for the which your
 Grace hath the *Fleur-de-lis* in pledge, and which *Fleur-de-lis*
 your good brother hath expressly bound himself to quit out
 and deliver unto the Emperor's Orator at the deliverance of his
 children, we refused to meddle withal but have remitted them
 for that parcel to make means to your Grace because that we
 showed them that we had not that jewel here. And thus have
 we done to the intent that we would leave it to the liberty of
 your Grace's pleasure, whether ye would compel them for that
 pledge to pay ready money in hand, or else of your Grace's
 benignity to give them further days. For which we perceive
 your good brother - - - - - driven to forbear their
 - - - - - of money sooner to furnish
 the pay - - - - - which he must pay
 at their deliverance and - - - - - Council
 and we accorded, howbeit the writings be - - - - -
 us. And yesterday they were in doubt because we - - - - -
 them for the jewel whether they will covenant with us for any
 - - - - - by their orators make their covenants with your Grace
 and your Council for all your whole debts. And if they hap
 to return again to that - - - - - Grace can take no loss thereby.

172. To Henry VIII

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And as touching the indemnity - - - according to our instructions,
 put it off to be further considered at - - - - - of
 your Grace and of your good brother. And as touching the restitution
 of Tournai and the penalty of the marriage, forasmuch as
 after - - - - - we could nothing obtain thereof we have in
 conclusion let it slip - - - - - in any of our writings. And
 thus after the writings once made between the French Council
 and us for the Emperor's obligations due to your Grace, if they
 will conclude with us, or else after the remitting of them - - - - -
 Grace and your Council there for the same; we thus having
 - - - - - once departing and - - - - -
 - - - - - homeward and give attendance upon - - - - -
 - - - - - as we suppose that your good brother shall
 - - - - - dispatch some gentleman of his
 chamber unto - - - - - who by reason thereof is likely
 to be with your Grace before - - - - - humbly beseech your
 Grace that it may like you to let him know. - - - - - done our
 duty in advertising your Grace of the very fast - - - - - and
 hearty concurrence of the Lady Regent and the Council here,
 specially of the Grand Master, which hath done for the furtherance

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of your Grace's affairs here so much that in the matters
of their own master they could do no more. 172. To Henry VIII
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And thus almighty Jesus preserve your Grace to his pleasure
and yours with increase of much honor. From Cambrai the
fifth day of August.

By your Grace's most humble subjects, servants, and beadsmen.
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Cuthbert London

Thomas More

John Hackett

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173. Tunstall, More, Hackett to Wolsey. Cambrai, 10 August 1529

Please it your Grace to understand, that forasmuch
as we have here finished all such things as were given us in
charge, and that the French King, who this night banqueteth and
feasteth the Lady Margaret, intendeth tomorrow to depart, and
both the ladies on the morrow after, we have therefore taken our
leave as well of the French King as of the both ladies. All who in
very affectionate manner desired us to make their cordial recommendations
unto your Grace, as we shall more plenaryly declare
unto your Grace by mouth at our repairing unto the same, which
shall be, God willing, with as good speed as we can conveniently
make, advertising your Grace further that the Lady Margaret
hath sent us word by a gentleman of her chamber that the Emperor
is arrived in Genoa. 5

Please it your Grace to understand that the Lord Hochstrate
desired us to make his most humble recommendation unto your
Grace, requiring us further to write unto your Grace that one
Rayner Cossyn, bourgeois of Middleborough, was spoiled and
robbed of his ship and goods upon the coast of Flanders not
long ago, by a galleon of Biscay, of the haven of Armew, whereof
was captain one John de Rycanera, which brought the said ship
and goods into the haven of Southampton as a French prize, whereas
the goods indeed belonged unto the said bourgeois of Middleborough,
being the Emperor's subject. And forasmuch as the same
goods be in the hands of diverse the King's subjects at Hampton,
of the delivery of the said Spaniard, the Lord Hochstrate
humbly beseecheth your Grace, that the said merchant of Middleborough,
at such time as he shall come into England and make
his humble suit therefor, may have your Grace's favor in his 15
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expedition, according to right and justice. And thus almighty God preserve your Grace to his pleasure and yours. From Cambrai the 10th day of August.

By your Grace's most humble beadsmen.

Cuthbert London

Thomas More

John Hackett

To my Lord Legate's Grace.

173. To Wolsey
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174. To Lady More, Woodstock, 3 September <1529>

Sir Thomas More was made Lord Chancellor of England in Michaelmas term in the year of our Lord 1529, and in the 21st year of King Henry the VIII. And in the latter end of the harvest then next before, Sir Thomas More, then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, being returned from Cambrai in Flanders (where he had been Ambassador for the King) rode immediately to the King to the Court at Woodstock. And while he was there with the King, part of his own dwelling house at Chelsea and all his barns there full of corn suddenly fell on fire and were burnt and all the corn therein by the negligence of one of his neighbor's carts that carried the corn, and by occasion thereof were diverse of his next neighbors' barns burnt also. Upon which news brought unto him to the Court, he wrote to the lady his wife this letter following.

The copy of the letter.

[These introductory notes in italics, here and below are from William Rastell's 1557 edition of More English Workes, referred to below as EW. This note occurred on page 1419 of EW.]

Mistress Alice, in my most hearty wise I recommend me to you.

And whereas I am informed by my son Heron of the loss of our barns and our neighbors' also whoso the corn that was therein, albeit (saving God's pleasure) it were great pity of so much good corn lost yet since it hath liked him to send us such a chance, we must and are bounden not only to be content but also to be glad of his visitation. He sent us all that we have lost and since he hath by such a chance taken it away again his pleasure be fulfilled; let us

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never grudge thereat but take in good worth and heartily thank
 him as well for adversity as for prosperity and peradventure
 we have more cause to thank him for our loss than for our
 winning, for his wisdom better seeth what is good for us
 than we do ourselves. Therefore I pray you be of good cheer and 30
 take all the household with you to church and there thank God
 both for that he hath given us and for that he hath taken from
 us and for that he hath left us, which if it please him he can
 increase when he will and if it please him to leave us yet less,
 at his pleasure be it. 35

I pray you to make some good ensearch what my poor neighbors
 have lost and bid them take no thought therefor, for and I
 should not leave myself a spoon there shall no poor neighbor
 of mine bear no loss by any chance happened in my house. I
 pray you be with my children and your household merry in God 40
 and devise somewhat with your friends what way were best to
 take for provision to be made for corn for our household and
 for seed this year coming, if ye think it good that we
 keep the ground still in our hands, and whether ye think
 it good that we so shall do or not, yet I think it were not 45
 best suddenly thus to leave it all up and to put away our folk
 of our farm, till we have somewhat advised us thereon, howbeit
 if we have more now than ye shall need and which can get
 them other masters ye may then discharge us of them but I
 would not that any man were suddenly sent away he wot ne'er 50
 whither. At my coming hither I perceive none other but
 that I should tarry still with the King's Grace but now I shall, I
 think, by cause of this chance get leave this next week to come
 home and see you, and then shall we further devise together upon
 all things what order shall be best to take. 55

And thus as heartily fare you well whoso our children as ye
 can wish, at Woodstock the 3rd day of September by the
 hand of

Your loving husband

Thomas More Kg. 60

182. To Sir John Arundell, Chelsea, 5 April <1530>

*Master Arundell, in my right hearty wise I recommend
 me unto you.*

And whereas I understand that ye be one of the coparishioners
of the manor of Sharshell Barton in the parish of Steeple
Barton in the county of Oxford and the farm of Darneton in
the same county, and that your part of the same manor and farm
amounteth by year to 4 marks or thereabout, so it is that a servant
of mine, one Edward Jones, a man right honest and
whom I especially favor, hath obtained of my Lord South and
other your partners their good wills and grants for a lease
of their parts in the same. Wherefore and forasmuch as the said
manor and farm cannot be well occupied but by one tenant
without great unquietness of either part if it were occupied by
diverse, I therefore heartily require you to be good unto my said
servant, which shall be as good a tenant unto you as any other
shall, and as much to your profit, of which I will not for any
friend of mine require any part of your loss. And in being thus
good unto my said servant for my sake, ye shall bind him to
pray for you, and me to do for any friend of yours any such
lawful pleasure as shall lie in my power. And thus heartily fare
you well.

At Chelsea the 5th day of April.

Your assured lover,

Thomas More. Kg. Chancellor.

To the right worshipful Sir John Arundell, Knight

190. To John Frith, Chelsea, 7 December <1532>

In my most hearty wise I recommend me to you, and
send you by this bringer the writing again which I received
from you, whereof I have been offered since a couple of copies more
in the meanwhile, as late as ye wot well it was, whereby men
may see how greedily that these new named brethren write it
out, and secretly spread it abroad. So that whereas the King's
gracious Highness like a most faithful Catholic prince, for
the avoiding of such pestilent books as sow such poisoned
heresies among his people, hath by his open proclamations
utterly forbidden all English printed books to be brought into
this land from beyond the sea, lest our English heretics that
are lurking there might there imprint their heresies among
other matters and so send them hither unsuspected, and therefore
unperceived till more harm were felt then after were well
remediable: the devil hath now taught his disciples, the devisers

of these heresies, to make many more short treatises, whereof their scholars may shortly write out copies, but in their treatises to put as much poison in one written leaf, as they printed before in fifteen, as it well appeareth in this one writing of this young man's making, which hath, I hear say, lately made diverse other things, that yet run in huckermucker so close among the brethren, that there cometh no copies abroad. 20

And would God for his mercy that since there can nothing refrain their study from the devise and compassing of evil and ungracious writing, that they could and would keep it so secret, that never man should see it, but such as are already so far corrupted, as never would be cured of their canker. For less harm were it if only they that are already bemired, were as the Scripture saith mired on more and more, than that they should cast their dirt abroad upon other folks' clean clothes. 25
But alack this will not be. For as Saint Paul saith, the contagion of heresy creepeth on like a canker. For as the canker corrupteth the body further and further, and turneth the whole parts into the same deadly sickness: so do these heretics creep forth among good simple souls, and under a vain hope of some high secret learning, which other men abroad either willingly did keep from them, or else could not teach them, they daily with such abominable books corrupt and destroy in corners very many before those writings come unto light, till at the last the smoke of that secret fire beginneth to reek out at some corner, 30
and sometimes the whole fire so flameth out at once, that it burneth up whole towns, and wasteth whole countries, ere ever it can be mastered, and yet never after so well and clearly quenched, but that it lieth lurking still in some old rotten timber under cellars and ceilings, that if it be not well waited on and marked, will not fail at length to fall on an open fire again, as it hath fared in late years at more places than one, both the one fire and the other. 35
And therefore I am both sure and sorry too, that those other books as well as this is now of this young man's, will once come unto light, and then shall it appear wherefore they be kept so close. 40
Howbeit, a worse than this is, though the words be smooth and fair, the devil, I trow, cannot make. For herein he runneth a great way beyond Luther, and teacheth in few leaves shortly, all the poison that Wycliff, Huyskyn, Tyndale, and Zwingli have taught in all their long books before, concerning the blessed sacrament of the alter, affirming it to be not only very bread 45
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190. To John Frith

still as Luther doth, but also as those other beasts do, saith it is
 nothing else, and that there is neither the blessed body of Christ,
 nor his blood, but for a remembrance of Christ's passion only
 bare bread and wine. And therein goeth he so far in conclusion, 60
 that he saith it is all one unto us in a manner whether it be consecrated
 or unconsecrated. And so that blessed sacrament that is
 and ever hath in all Christendom been held of all sacraments
 the chief, and not only a sacrament but the very self thing also
 which other sacraments betoken, and whereof all other sacraments 65
 take their effect and strength: he maketh in manner (taking
 the consecration so sleight and so light) no manner sacrament
 at all, wherein he runneth yet beyond Tyndale and all the
 heretics that ever I remember before.

And now the matter being of such a marvelous weight it is a 70
 great wonder to see upon how light and sleight occasions he
 is fallen unto these abominable heinous heresies.

For he denieth not nor cannot say nay, but that our savior
 said himself. My flesh is verily meat, and my blood is verily
 drink. 75

He denieth not also that Christ himself at his last supper
 taking the bread into his blessed hands, after that he had blessed
 it, said unto his disciples, 'Take you this and eat it, this is my
 body that shall be given for you.' And in like wise gave them the
 chalice after his blessing and consecration, and said unto them, 80
 'This is the chalice of my blood of the new testament, which
 shall be shed out for many, do you this in remembrance of me.'

The young man denieth not nor can deny, but that our Savior
 here himself said that it was his own body, and said that
 it was his own blood, and there ordained that it should be in 85
 remembrance of him continually consecrated. So that he must
 needs confess, that all they which believe that it is his very body
 and his very blood indeed, have the plain words of our Savior
 himself upon their side, for the ground and foundation
 of their faith. 90

But now saith this young man against all this, that our Savior
 in other places of Scripture, called himself a very vine, and his
 disciples very branches. And he calleth himself a door also,
 not for that he was any of these things indeed, but for certain
 properties for which he likened himself to those things. As a 95
 man for some properties saith of his neighbor's horse, this horse
 is mine up and down, meaning that it is in everything so like.

And like as Jacob built an alter, and called it the God of
 Israel, and as Jacob called the place where he wrestled with the
 angel the face of God, and that the pascal lamb was called the
 passing by of the Lord, with infinite such other phrases as he
 saith not for that they were so indeed, but for certain similitudes
 in the properties: so saith this young man, that Christ though
 he said by his plain words, 'This is my body,' and 'this is my
 blood,' yet for all that he meant not that it was his body and his
 blood indeed, no more than that he meant that himself was a
 very door or a very vine indeed, though for certain properties
 he called himself both. And he saith that Christ meant in like wise
 here, not that it was or should be his own body and his
 blood indeed, but that it should be to them and us as a remembrance
 of him in his absence, as verily as though it were his
 very body and his very blood indeed, as the pascal lamb was a
 token and a remembrance of the passing by of the Lord, and as a
 bridegroom giveth his bride a ring if he hap to go into a
 far country from her, for a remembrance of him in his absence,
 and as a sure sign that he will keep her his faith and not break
 her his promise.

In good faith it grieveth me very sore, to see this young man so
 circumvented and beguiled by certain old limbs of the devil,
 as we now see that he is, when he is fain for the defense of this
 error, to flit in conclusion from the faith of plain and open
 Scripture and so far fall to the newfangled fantasies of foolish
 heretics, that he will for the allegory destroy the true
 sense of the letter, in maintenance of a new false sect, against
 the whole true catholic faith so fully confirmed and continued in
 Christ's whole Catholic Church this 1500 year together. For
 these dregs hath he drunk of Wycliff and Ecolampadius,
 Tyndale and Zwingli, and so hath he all that he argueth here
 besides; which 4 what manner folk they be, is meetly well perceived
 and known, and God hath in part with his open vengeance
 declared. And ever hath God and ever will, by some
 way declare his wrath and indignation against as many as fall
 into such damnable opinions against the blessed body and blood
 of his only begotten Son. From which perilous opinion and
 all his other errors, the great mercy of our sweet Savior call home
 again, and save this young man in time.

As for his allegories I am not offended with, nor with similitudes
 neither where they may have place, though he take one of

his neighbor's horse as he doth, and another if he list of his own
 cow. Provided always for a thing which he list to call like,
 he misconstrue not the Scripture, and take away the very thing
 indeed as he doth here. 190. To John Frith
 140

Now his example also of his bridegroom's ring, I very well
 allow. For I take the blessed sacrament to be left with us for a
 very token and a memorial of Christ indeed. But I say that
 whole substance of the same token and memorial, is his own
 blessed body, whereas this man would make it only bread. 145

And so I say that Christ hath left us a better token than this man
 would have us take it for, and therein fareth like a man to whom
 a bridegroom had delivered a goodly gold ring with a rich
 ruby therein, to deliver over to his bride for a token, and then he
 would like a false shrew, keep away that gold ring, and give
 the bride in the stead thereof a proper ring of a rush, and tell
 her that the bridegroom would send her no better, or else like one
 that when the bridegroom had given such a gold ring to his
 bride for a token, would tell her plain and make her believe that
 the ring were but copper or brass, to diminish the bridegroom's
 thanks. 150
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If he said that the words of Christ might besides the literal
 sense be understood in an allegory, I would well agree with
 him. For so may every word almost thorough the whole Scripture,
 calling an allegory every sense, whereby the words be
 translated unto some other spiritual understanding, besides the
 true plain open sense that the letter first intended. But on the
 other side because that in some words of Scripture is there none
 other thing intended but an allegory, to go therefore and in
 another place of Scripture to take away with an allegory, the
 very true literal sense as he doth here, this is the fault that we
 find in him, which if it may be suffered, must needs make
 all the Scripture as touching any point of our faith, of none
 effect or force at all. I marvel me therefore much that he is not
 afeard to affirm that these words of Christ, of his body and his
 blood, must needs be understood only by way of a similitude
 or an allegory as the words be of the vine and the door. 160
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Now this he woteth well, that though some words spoken by
 the mouth of Christ written in Scripture, be to be understood
 only by way of a similitude or an allegory: it followeth not thereupon
 that of necessity every like word of Christ in other places
 was none other but an allegory. 175

For such kind of sophistication in arguing, was the very
 cavillation and shift that the wicked Arians used, which like
 as this young man taketh away now from the blessed sacrament the
 very body and blood of Christ, by expounding his plain words
 with an allegory under color of some other places where such
 allegories must needs have place, and were none otherwise meant:
 so did they take from Christ's blessed person his omnipotent
 Godhead, and would not grant him to be equal with almighty
 God his father, but the plain texts of Scripture which proved
 his Godhead, they expounded wrong and frowardly, not only by
 some other texts that seemed to say otherwise, but also as this
 young man doth here by some allegories, affirming that he was
 called God and the son of God in Holy Scripture, by such
 manner of speaking, or as this young man calleth it, by such a manner
 of phrase as the Scripture for some property calleth certain other
 persons gods and God's sons in other places. As where God
 saith to Moses, I shall make thee the god of Pharaoh. And
 where he saith, thou shalt not backbite the gods.

And where he saith, I say you be gods and the sons of
 the high God be you all.

And thus against that that Christ was God and the Son of
 God, such cavillations these Arians laid in expounding the
 plain places with false allegories, resembling them to other
 places in which like allegories must needs have place, as this
 young man by the necessary allegories of Christ's words, used in
 the vine and in the door, would in like wise with like cavillations
 as the Arians used against Christ's Godhead, pull away
 the true literal sense of Christ's words concerning the truth
 of his very body and blood in the blessed sacrament.

And surely if this manner of handling of Scripture may be
 received and brought in ure, that because of allegories used in
 some places every man may at his pleasure draw every place
 to an allegory, and say the letter meaneth nothing else, there
 is not any text in all the Scripture, but a willful person may
 find other texts against it, that may serve him to trifle out the
 truth of God's words, with cavillations grounded upon
 God's other words, in some other place, wherein if he may
 be heard as long as he list to talk be it but a woman: yet shall
 she find chat enough for all an whole year. And so did those old
 Arians, of whom God forbid that this young man should follow
 that evil example.

180 190. To John Frith

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If every man that can find out a newfound fantasy upon a
 text of Holy Scripture, may have his own mind taken, and
 his own exposition believed, against the expositions of the old
 holy cunning doctors and saints; then may ye surely see that
 none article of the Christian faith can stand and endure long. For 225
 as holy saint Jerome saith of himself, if the exposition of other
 interpreters and the consent of the common Catholic
 Church, were of no more strength, but that every new man might
 be believed that could bring some texts of Scripture for him
 expounded as it pleased himself, then could I, saith this holy 230
 man, bring up a new sect also, and say by Scripture that no
 man were a true Christian man nor a member of the Church that
 keepeth two coats. And in good faith if that way were allowed, I
 were able myself to find out fifteen new sects in one forenoon,
 that should have as much probable hold of Scripture as 235
 this heresy hath. Against which, besides the common faith of all
 Catholic Christian regions, the expositions of the old holy doctors
 and saints be clear against this young man's mind in
 this matter, as whole as against any heresy that ever was hitherto
 heard of. For as for the words of Christ of which we speak 240
 touching the blessed sacrament, though he may find some old
 holy men that besides the literal sense doth expound them in an
 allegory, yet shall he never find any of them that did as he
 doth now after Wycliff, Ecolampadius, Tyndale, and Zwingli,
 deny the literal sense, and say that Christ meant not that it was 245
 his very body and his very blood indeed, but the old holy doctors
 and expositors besides all such allegories, do plainly
 declare and expound, that in those words our Savior as he expressly
 spoke, so did also well and plainly mean, that the thing
 which he there gave to his disciples in the sacrament, were in 250
 very deed his very flesh and blood. And so did never any of the
 old expositors of Scripture expound any of those other places
 in which Christ is called a vine or a door. And therefore it appeareth
 well, that the manner of speaking was not like. For if it had,
 then would not the old expositors have used such so far unlike 255
 fashion in the expounding of them.

And over this, the very circumstances of the places in the
 Gospel, in which our Savior speaketh of that sacrament, may
 well make open the difference of his speech in this matter and
 of all those other, and that as he spoke all those but in an allegory, 260
 so spoke he this plainly meaning that he spoke of his very body

and his very blood besides all allegories. For neither when our
 Lord said he was a very vine, now when he said he was the
 door, there was none that heard him that anything marveled
 thereof. And why? for because they perceived well that he meant
 not that he was a material vine indeed, nor a material door
 neither. But when he said that his flesh was very meat, and
 his blood was very drink, and that they should not be saved but
 if they did eat his flesh and drink his blood, then were they
 all in such a wonder thereof, that they could not abide. And
 wherefore? but because they perceived well by his words and his
 manner of circumstances used in the speaking of them, that Christ
 spoke of his very flesh and his very blood indeed. For else the
 strangeness of the words would have made them to have taken
 it as well for an allegory, as either his words of the vine or of
 the door. And then would they have no more marveled at the
 one than they did at the other. But now whereas at the vine
 and the door they marveled nothing, yet at the eating of his
 flesh and drinking of his blood, they so sore marveled, and
 were so sore moved, and thought the matter so hard, and the
 wonder so great, that they asked, how could that be, and went
 almost all their way, whereby we may well see, that he spoke
 these words in such wise, as the hearers perceived that he meant
 it not in a parable nor an allegory, but spoke of his very flesh
 and his very blood indeed.

190. To John Frith

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Many other plain proofs might a man gather upon the circumstances
 of the very texts, where this thing is spoken of in the
 Scripture, but that it is not my purpose now to stick in argument
 of this matter, that is of itself so clear out of all question,
 but only a little to touch it, that ye may see how little pith and
 substance for his matter is in all those examples of allegory,
 which Wycliff, Ecolampadius, Tyndale, and Zwingli have
 brought out against the blessed sacrament, and wherewith those old
 shrews have with their false similitudes piteously deceived,
 either the simplicity or the lightness of this seely young man,
 which might if he had not either of lightness overrun himself,
 or of simpleness been deceived, or of pride and high mind
 in putting forth heresies willingly beguiled and blinded, easily
 have perceived himself, that the more such allegories that he
 found in the Scripture in like manner of phrases or speech, the
 worse is his part, and the more clear is it that these places speaking
 of the blessed sacrament, were plainly meant as they were spoken,

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besides all such allegories. For else had never both the hearers
 at the time, and the expositors since and all Christian people
 besides this 1500 year, taken only in this one matter the plain
 literal sense being so strange and marvelous that it might
 seem impossible, and decline from the letter for allegories in all
 such other things, being as he saith and as indeed they be,
 so many far in number more.

190. To John Frith

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Howbeit as for this point that an allegory used in some place,
 is not a cause sufficient to make men leave the proper significations
 of God's word in every other place, and seek an allegory
 and forsake the plain common sense and understanding of the
 letter, this perceived the young man well enough himself. For
 he confesseth that he would not so do save for necessity, because
 he seeth as he saith that the common literal sense is impossible.
 For the thing he saith that is meant thereby, cannot be true, that
 is to wit that the very body of Christ cannot be in the sacrament,
 because the sacrament is in many diverse places at once,
 and was at the Maundy, that is to wit in the hands of Christ
 and in every of his apostles' mouths, and at that time it was
 not glorified.

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And then he saith that Christ's body not being glorified,
 could no more be in two places at once, than his own can. And
 yet he goeth after further, and saith that no more it can neither
 when it is glorified too. And that he proveth by the saying of
 Saint Augustine, whose words be as he saith, that the body with
 which Christ rose, must be in one place, and that it continueth
 in heaven, and shall do till he shall come to judge both quick
 and dead. And yet at the last he proveth that the body of Christ
 cannot be in many places at once. For if it might be in many
 places at once, then it might, he saith, be in all places at once.
 But in all places at once he saith it cannot be, and thereof he concludeth
 that it cannot be in many places at once. And thus for
 this impossibility of the thing that riseth upon the common
 literal sense of Christ's words, he is, he saith, of necessity
 driven to fall from it unto some allegory, which he confesseth
 that he would not do, if the plain literal sense were possible.

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But alas for the dear mercy of God, if we should leave the letter
 and seek an allegory with the destruction of the literal sense,
 in every place where we find a thing that reason cannot reach
 unto, nor see which way it were possible, and therefore would
 take it for impossible: fain would I wit what one article of

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all our faith this young man could assign me spoken of in the
 Scripture, from which his reason shall not drive away the
 strength of his proof in making him leave the literal sense,
 wherein his proof should stand and send him to seek an allegory
 that may stand with reason and drive away the faith, where
 he should believe the letter and make his reason obedient unto faith.

190. To John Frith

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I marvel me very much why the consideration of this impossibility,
 should of necessity drive this young man from the plain
 open literal sense of Christ's words spoken of the blessed sacrament,
 since so many good and holy men so long together this 1500
 year, have believed the literal sense well and firmly, and
 could not be driven from it for any such consideration of such
 impossibility, and yet being as natural men, as wise men, as
 well learned men, as studious in the matter, and men of more age,
 and more sure, sad and substantial judgment, than this
 young man is yet, and men at the least as likely to see what were
 possible and what were impossible as this good young man is.
 And therefore as for all his reasons grounded upon impossibility,
 since I may be bold to think as all those old holy men have
 thought, and as all wise men I ween yet think, that nothing
 is impossible to God: I esteem all those reasons very little worth.

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Howbeit one thing he bringeth in by the way, that I would
 he had showed in what place we might find it, that is to
 wit the saying of Saint Augustine. For why to seek out one line
 in all his books, were to go look a needle in a meadow. But surely
 if we may see the place where the young man found it, we shall
 I doubt not make a clear answer to it. And yet even as himself
 hath rehearsed it, the saying maketh nothing for the proof of his
 purpose. For Saint Augustine saith no more but that the body in
 which Christ arose, must be in one place, and that it continueth
 in heaven, and shall do till the day of doom. As help
 me God except this young man in these words of Saint Augustine
 see further with his young sight, than I can see with mine old
 eyes and my spectacles, I marvel me much that ever he would
 for his purpose once bring them in. For when Saint Augustine
 saith that the body in which Christ arose, must needs be in one
 place, he might mean by those words for anything that here
 appeareth to the contrary, not that his body might not be in two
 diverse places at once, but that it must be in one place, that is to
 say in some place one or other, or that he must have one place
 for his special place, and that place must be heaven, as we say

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God must be in heaven, and angels must be in heaven. He speaketh
 nothing of the sacrament, nor saith not his body with which
 he rose must needs be so in one place, that it can by no possibility
 be in any more. 385 190. To John Frith

Also this word (must), which is in the Latin tongue called
oportet, which word Saint Augustine here useth as this young man 390
 rehearseth him, doth not always signify such a necessity, as
 excludeth all possibility of the contrary. For our Savior said
 himself to the two disciples, *Nonne haec oportuit pati Christum,*
et ita intrare in gloriam suam? was it not so that Christ must
 die, and so enter into his glory? And yet himself said also, 395
 that he might for all that have chosen whether he would have
 died or no. For himself saith that to depart with his soul and
 to take his soul again, both twain were things put in his
 own power. And the prophet Isaiah saith of him, He was offered
 up because he so would himself. And therefore this Latin 400
 word *oportet*, which Saint Augustine hath in that place, is many
 times in the Latin tongue taken not for full and precise necessity,
 but for expedient and convenient. And therefore it is translated
 also into English, not only by this word (must) which yet
 signifieth not always an impossibility of the contrary, but oftentimes 405
 by this word (it behooveth) which word signifieth that
 it is to be done for our behoof and commodity, and not that it
 can in no wise be avoided but that it must needs be. And therefore
 since all that driveth this young man from the literal sense, is as
 he saith the impossibility of Christ's body to be at once in diverse 410
 places, and proveth that thing impossible by the words of Saint
 Augustine, that saith no more but that it must be in once place,
 and saith not that it may be in no more but one, nor speaketh not
 of any such necessity whereof he putteth the contrary for impossible,
 nor speaketh no word at all thereof the sacrament; since 415
 Saint Augustine I say saith no further than this, I marvel much
 in mine heart, what thing this young man seeth in his words,
 worthy the bringing in for any proof of his purpose.

And that ye may the more clearly see that Saint Augustine speaketh
 here of no necessity, he not only saith that the body of Christ 420
 with which he rose must be in one place, but also he determineth
 that one place in which he must be, if this young man rehearse
 him right, that is to say in heaven, there to continue still unto
 the day of doom.

But now I trow this young man thinketh not, that Saint Augustine 425

for all his determining that Christ's body in which he
 rose must be still in the one place, that is to wit in heaven
 until the day of doom, he meaneth for all that that it is so fast
 bound to abide only there, but that he may when it pleaseth
 him in the selfsame body, be beneath here in earth an hundred
 430 times before the day of doom. And good stories are there, testifying
 that he so hath been diverse times ere this, since the
 time of his Ascension.

And therefore this young man may perceive plainly, that Saint
 Augustine in those words, though he say that Christ's body with
 435 which he rose must be in once place, that is to wit in heaven, yet
 he meant no such precise necessity as should drive this young
 man from the literal sense of Christ's words unto the allegory.
 He meant not by this word, it must be in one place, that is to
 say in heaven, that it must so be in that once place till doomsday,
 440 that it might in the meanwhile be in none other besides, and
 that it must be so of an immutable necessity by no power
 changeable, whereof the contrary were by no power possible. And
 therefore as for these words of Saint Augustine to this purpose
 here, I marvel much in good faith, but if he show more hereafter,
 445 that ever this young man would speak of them.

Now as for his natural reasons be not worth the reasoning.
 For first that the body of Christ unglorified could no more
 be in two places at once than his own can, because he is a
 natural body as Christ's was, and Christ's body a natural body
 450 as his is; I will not examine any comparisons between their two
 bodies. But if Christ would tell me that he would make each
 of both their bodies to be in fifteen places at once, I would
 believe him I, that he were able to make his word true in the
 bodies of both twain, and never would I so much as ask
 455 him whether he would glorify them both first or not. But I
 am sure glorified or unglorified, if he said it he is able to do it.
 When our Savior said, that it was as possible for a camel or a
 great cable rope to enter through a needle's eye, as for a rich
 man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and after told his apostles
 460 that though those two things were both impossible to men,
 yet all-thing was possible to God: I think that he meant that
 neither the example nor the matter was to God impossible. Now
 since then at the least wise that it is not impossible for him to
 convey the camel or the cable rope through the needle's eye, what
 465 shall me need to study now whether he can bring them through

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such as they be, or else must of fine force be fain to glorify
the camel or the cable first, as this young man saith of his body
that it were impossible for God to bring about to have it in
two places at once such as it is now, because it is yet somewhat 470
gross and unglorified, and then by the comparison of his own,
he argueth the like of the blessed body of Christ, being like his
at his Maundy no more glorified than he. But I say yet again
of their bodies both twain, if he said the he would do it, I
would not doubt but he could do it. And if he could not do it 475
but if he glorified them first, then were I sure that he would
glorify them both. And therefore if it were true, that he could
not make his own body to be in two places at once at Maundy,
but if it were then glorified, then since I am sure that he there
did it, I am thereby sure also that he then for the time glorified 480
it. For that thing was in his own power to do as often as he
would, as well before his death as at his resurrection, and yet to
keep his glorification from perceiving, as he did from his two
disciples, which for all his glorified body took him but for a
pilgrim. And therefore as I say, if Christ said unto me that he 485
would make both his body and this young man's too, each of them
to be in a thousand places at once, I would put no doubt therein,
but that by some manner means he were able enough to do it.

But here would this young man peradventure say, ye say very
well if God so said, and by his so saying so meant indeed. 490
But ye wot well I deny that he so meant though he so said. For
I say that in so saying he meant but by an allegory, as he did
when he called himself a vine and a door. But now must
this young man consider again, that himself confesseth that
the cause for which himself saith that Christ in so saying did 495
not so mean, is because that if he should have meant so, it was impossible
for God to bring his meaning about, that is to say that
Christ's body might be in two places at once. And therefore but if
he prove that thing impossible for God to do, else he confesseth
that God not only said it, but also meant it indeed. 500

And yet over this, if Christ had never said it, yet doubt I nothing
but that he is able to do it, or else were there somewhat that
he could not do, and then were God not almighty.

Now if this young man will say that to make one body to be
in two places, doth imply repugnance, and that God can do no 505
such thing: I dare be bold to tell him again, that many
things may seem repugnant both to him and me, which

things God seeth how to make them stand together well
enough.

190. To John Frith

Such blind reasons of repugnance induceth many men into
great error, some ascribing all-thing to destiny without any
power of man's free will at all, and some giving all to man's
own will, and no foresight at all unto the providence of God,
and all because the poor blind reason of man cannot see so far,
as to perceive how God's presence and man's free will can
stand and agree together, but seem to them clearly repugnant.

And surely if the seeming of our own feeble reason, may drive
us once to think that one man to be at once in two places, is a
thing so hard and so repugnant, and therefore so impossible
that God himself can never bring it about, the devil will
within a while set us upon such a trust unto our own reason,
that he will make us take it for a thing repugnant and impossible,
that ever one God should be three persons.

I wot well that many good folk have used in this matter many
good fruitful examples of God's other works, not only miracles
written in Scripture, but also done by the common course of
nature here in earth, and some things made also by man's hand,
as one face beheld in diverse glasses, and in every piece of one
glass broken into twenty, and the marvel of the making of
the glass itself such matter as it is made of, and of one word
coming whole to an hundred ears at once, and the sight of one
little eye present and beholding an whole great country at once,
with a thousand such other marvels more, such as those that see
them daily done and therefore marvel not at them, shall yet never
be able, no not this young man himself, to give such reason
by what means they may be done, but that he may have such
repugnance laid against it, that he shall be fain in conclusion
for the chief and the most evident reason to say, that the cause
of all those things is because God that hath caused them so to
be done is almighty of himself and can do what him list.

And also I cannot see why it should be more repugnant that one
body may be by the power of God in two places at once, than
that two bodies may be together in one place at once. And that
point I think this young man denieth not. And I verily think
there is unto man's reason neither more semblance of difficulty
nor of repugnance, neither in the being of one body be it
never so gross and unglorified in twenty diverse places at once,
than in the making of all that whole world, in which all the

bodies both glorified and unglorified have all their rooms and
 places, to make, I say, all that whole world of right naught. 190. To John Frith
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 Which article of our faith we shall find folk within a while
 not greatly force to deny, if men fall to this point, that for
 impossibilities of nature, they think the things impossible also
 to God that is the master and the maker of nature, and that they
 will upon that imagination do as this young man doth, flee 555
 from the literal sense of the Scripture, and seek some allegory in
 the stead, and say they be driven thereto by necessity, by cause
 of the impossibility of the matter. For thus shall as ye may well
 see, by this means none article of our faith stand.

Now his last argument with which he proveth it impossible 560
 for one body of Christ to be in two places at once is this. You
 can, saith he, show no reason, why he should be in many places
 at once and not in all. But in all places he cannot be, wherefore
 we must conclude that he cannot be in many places at once.

This is a marvelous concluded argument. I am sure a very child 565
 may soon see that this consequent can never follow upon those
 two premises of his antecedent. For he can no further conclude
 upon them, but that we can show no reason why he should be in
 many places at once. Now if I should grant him that no man
 could show a reason why he should be in many places at once, 570
 what had he won by that? might he then conclude thereupon
 that he could not be in many places at once, as though that it were
 not possible for God to make his body in two places at once, but
 if we were able to tell how, and why, and whereby, and show the
 reason? Now in this argument he beginneth with “should” in 575
 the major, and then in the minor and the conclusion turneth into
 “can” and so varieth his extremities, that the argument can never
 be good if it were but for that. If he would induce the conclusion
 which he concludeth here, he must have rather have argued
 thus. If it might be in many places at once, then might it be 580
 in all places at once. But in all places at once it cannot be, and
 therefore it cannot be in many places at once. Thus or in some such
 manner must he argue, if he will aught prove. But here now
 both the parties of his antecedent be very weak. The first is this,
 that if the body of our Savior may be in many places at 585
 once, it may be in all places at once. Though I would grant this
 causal proposition for the truth of the second part, yet would
 I deny it him for the form. For though I grant it to be true,
 yet the first part is not the proof of the second, but rather contrariwise

the second inferreth well the first. For the reason is good: 590 190. To John Frith
 he may be in all places, ergo he may be in many. But argue the
 contrariwise as this young man argueth, and then is the form
 very faint. For this hath little strength: he may be in many places,
 ergo he may be in all, many men run, ergo all men run,
 men run in many places, ergo men run in all places, but if 595
 the matter maintain the argument, either by the possibility of
 the antecedent or by the necessity of the consequent, as one man
 is a stone, ergo all men be stones, one man is a living creature,
 ergo all men be living creatures. But let this first proposition
 pass and come now to the second, upon which all his argument 600
 hangeth, that is, that the body of Christ cannot be at once in all
 places. This he saith, but how doth he prove it? If he will
 bid me prove the affirmative, I may answer that I need not,
 for it is not the thing that we have in hand. For we do not
 say that he is in all places, for the sacrament is not at once in all 605
 places. And we be not bound for this matter to go any further,
 and the point for so far I prove by the gospel that saith it is so.
 And therefore this young man that saith it cannot be, let him
 prove that it may not be. For if it may be, he then confesseth that
 the words of Christ do prove that it must be. But because it cannot 610
 be, saith he, therefore he is driven to construe these words by
 any allegory. And now that it cannot be in many places, he
 proveth by that that he cannot be in all places, and therefore
 must he prove that, of else give over the argument.

Howbeit as for me though I be not bound to it, I am content 615
 yet to prove that God may make the body of Christ to be in
 all places at once.

And because this young man coupleth the proposition with
 the other, so will I do, too. And I prove therefore that God can 620
 make his body be both in many places at once, and in all places
 at once, by that that he is almighty, and therefore can do all-thing.
 And now must this young man tell us either that this is nothing,
 or else deny that God can do all-thing. And then must he
 limit God's power how far he will give God leave to stretch
 it. But when this young man shall come to that point, every wise 625
 man will, I ween, suppose and think in themselves that this young
 man hath yet it his youth gone too little while to school, to know
 all that God can do, but if he bring good witness that he hath
 learned up the uttermost of all God's cunning, which thing
 the apostle Paul for all that he was ravished up into the third 630

heaven, reckoned yet so far above his reach, that he cried out,
 "Oh the altitude of the riches of the wisdom and the cunning
 of God."

190. To John Frith

But yet this young man goeth about to prove that point by
 Scripture. For except we grant him that point to be true, 635
 he saith that else we make the angel a liar, that said he is not
 here, and also that else we make as though Christ's body in his
 ascension did not go up in the cloud into heaven from the
 earth, but only hid himself in the cloud, and played bo-peep
 and tarried beneath still. 640

I am in good faith sorry to see this young man presume so far
 upon his wit, so soon ere it be full ripe. For surely such
 liking of themselves maketh many wits wax rotten ere
 they wax ripe. And verily if it do decrease and go backward
 in this fashion, it may not last long. For even here in the 645
 end he forgotteth himself so foul, that when he was a
 young sophister he would, I dare say, have been full sore
 ashamed so to have overseen himself at Oxford at a parvis.
 For ye wot well that thing which he saith and which he
 must therefore prove, is that the body of Christ cannot be in 650
 every place at once, by no means that God could make. And
 the texts that he bringeth in for the proof, say no further but
 that he was not in all places at once, and say not that by no
 possible power of his Godhead it could not be in every place
 at once. And therefore this point is as ye see well of this young 655
 man very youngly handled. And therefore ought every man
 abhor as a plain pestilence, all such unreasonable reasons
 made for nature by more than natural follies, against the possibility
 of God's almighty power. For we may know it
 verily, that against these follies hath especially a place the 660
 good ghostly counsel of Saint Paul, where he warneth us
 and saith, Beware that no man beguile you by vain philosophy.

God forbid that any man should be the more prone and ready
 to believe this young man in this great matter, because he saith in
 the beginning that he will bring all men to a concord and 665
 a quietness of conscience. For he bringeth men to the worst
 kind of quietness that can be devised, when he telleth us
 as he doth, that every man may in this matter without peril
 believe which way he list. Every man may in every matter
 without any counsel of his, soon set himself at rest, if 670
 he list to take that way to believe as he list himself and

care not how.

190. To John Frith

But and if that way had been sure, Saint Paul would never
have showed that many were in peril of sickness and death too,
for lack of discerning reverently the body of our Lord in 675
that sacrament, when they came to receive him.

And against this doctrine of this young brother, is the plain
doctrine of the old holy Fathers interpreters of the Scripture.
And what fashion is this to say that we may believe if we
list that there is the very body of our Lord indeed, and then 680
to tell us for a truth that such a faith is impossible to be true,
for God himself can never bring it about to make his
body be there.

I am very sure that the old holy Doctors which believed
Christ's body and his blood to be there, and so taught other to 685
believe, as by their books plainly doth appear, if they had
thought either that it could not be there, or that it was not
there indeed, they would not for all the good in this world
have written as they have done. For would those holy men,
ween you, have taught that men be bound to believe that the 690
very body and blood of Christ is there, if themselves thought
they were not bound thereto? Or would they make men honor
and worship that thing as the very body and blood of
Christ, which themselves thought were not it? This gere is
too childish to speak of. 695

Yet one great pleasure he doth us, in that he putteth us all
at liberty, that we may without peril of damnation believe
as we believed before, that is to wit that in the blessed sacrament
the whole substance of the bread and the wine is transmuted
and changed into the very body and blood of Christ. 700
For if we may without peril of damnation believe thus as
himself granteth that we may, then granteth he that we
may also without peril of damnation believe that himself
lieth, where he saith the truth of that belief is impossible.
% 705

And therefore I shall therein conclude with him, as our
sovereign lord the King's Highness in his famous book
of *Assertion of the Sacrament* concludeth in one place against
Luther, which in his *Babylonica* confessed that though men in
the sacrament of the alter believed after the common faith as 710
they did before, there was no peril therein. Well then said the
King's Grace, ye do yourself grant that in our belief is

no peril. But all the church believeth that in your way is
undoubted damnation. And therefore if ye will as wisdom
would ye should, deal surely for yourself, ye should rather leave
your unsure way which ye believe, and come yourself and
counsel all other whom ye would did well, to believe as we do.
Lo this reason of the King's Grace clearly concludeth this
young man upon his own confession, and plainly proveth
that except he leave his belief which all good Christian folk
hold for damnable, and come home again to his old faith
the common faith of all the Church, in which as himself
agreeth there is no peril, I will not for courtesy say he is
stark mad, but surely I will say that for his own soul,
the young man playeth a very young wanton pageant.

Now whereas for another quietness of every man's conscience,
this young man biddeth every man be bold, and
whether the blessed sacrament be consecrated or unconsecrated
(for though he most especially speaketh for the wine yet he
speaketh it of both) and biddeth care not but take it for all
that unblessed as it is, because the priest, he saith, cannot deceive
us nor take from us the profit of God's institution,
whether he alter the words or leave them all unsaid, is not
this a wonderful doctrine of this young man? We wot well
all that the priest cannot hurt us by his oversight or malice,
if there be no fault upon our own part. For that perfection
that lacketh upon the priest's part, the great mercy of God
doth as we trust of his own goodness supply. And therefore
as holy Saint Chrisostom saith, no man can take harm but
of himself. But now if we see the thing disordered our own
selves by the priest, and Christ's institution broken, if we then
wittingly receive it unblessed and unconsecrated, and care not
whether Christ's institution be kept and observed or no, but
reckon it is as good without it as with it, then make we ourselves
partners of the fault, and leese the profit of the sacrament,
and receive it with damnation, not for the priest's fault
but for our own. Howbeit as for his belief that taketh it no
better but for bare bread and wine, it maketh him little matter
consecrated or not, saving that the better it is consecrated the
more is it ever noyous unto him that receiveth it, having his
conscience cumbered with such an execrable heresy, by
which well appeareth that he putteth no difference between
the body of our Lord in the blessed sacrament, and the common

190. To John Frith

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bread that he eateth at his dinner, but rather he esteemeth it less,
 for the one yet, I think ere he begin if he lack a priest 755
 he will bless it himself, the other he careth not as he saith
 whether it be blessed or no. From which abominable heresy
 and all his other, our Lord for his great mercy deliver him,
 and help to stop every good man's ears from such ungracious
 incantations as this man's reasons be, which are 760
 unto such simple people as will be with the wind of every
 new doctrine blown about like a weathercock, much more
 contagious a great deal, than was that evil doctrine which
 Saint Paul so sore reproveth, with which the false prophets
 had bewitched the Galatians. But as for those that are good and 765
 fast faithful folk, and have any grace or any spark of any
 reason in their heads, will (I verily think) never be so far
 overseen as in this article (the truth whereof God hath himself
 testified by as many open miracles as ever he testified
 any one) to believe this one young man upon his barren 770
 reasons, against the faith and reason, both of all old holy
 writers, and all good Christian people this 1500 years. All
 which without any doubt or question, believed against his doctrine
 in this blessed sacrament, until Berengar began to fall
 first unto this error, which when he better considered he 775
 fell from it again and forsook it utterly, and for because he had
 ones held it, the good man did of his own good mind uncompelled
 great penance willingly all his life after, as ye
 may read in *Cronica cronicarum* the 190th leaf. And also Frère
 Barnes, albeit that, as ye wot well, he is in many other things 780
 a brother of this young man's sect, yet in this heresy he
 sore abhorreth his heresy, or else he lieth himself. For at
 his last being here, he wrote a letter to me of his own hand,
 wherein he writeth that I lay that heresy wrongfully to his
 charge, and therein he taketh witness of God and his conscience 785
 and showeth himself so sore grieved therewith, that
 any man should so repute him by my writing, that he saith he
 will in my reproach make a book against me, wherein he will
 profess and protest his faith concerning this blessed sacrament.
 By which book it shall, he saith, appear, that I have said 790
 untruly of him, and that he abhorreth this abominable heresy,
 which letter of his I forbear to answer till the book come.
 By which we may see since he forsaketh this heresy, what faith
 he will profess, whether the true faith or some other kind

190. To John Frith

of heresy. For if he will profess the very Catholic faith, he 795 190. To John Frith
and I shall in that point be very soon agreed, and I shall then
make him such answer therein, as he shall have cause to be
well contented with.

But in the meantime, it well contenteth me that Frère Barnes 800
being a man of more age, and more ripe discretion and a
Doctor of Divinity, and in these things better learned than
this young man is, abhorreth this young man's heresy in this
point, as well as he liketh him in many other.

And so I trust will every wise man, and not be so enchanted 805
with such childish reasons as his be, that they would
thereby do as the hearers of Christ did, that for marvel of this
matter as this young man doth now, refused our Savior and
went their way from him, but will rather let them go that
will go, and abide themselves with our Savior still, as will
him that hath in the stead of this young man's vain childish 810
philosophy, not false apparent sophistry, but the very words
of eternal life. Which words I beseech our Lord give this
young man the grace, against his own froward fantasies to
believe, and to the same life bring him and us both, where
we shall without the veil or covering of any manner sacrament, 815
behold our blessed Savior face to face, and in the bright
mirror of truth, the very one Godhead of the three like mighty
and each almighty persons, clearly behold and perceive both
that it may and indeed is, and also how it may be, that Christ's
one body may be in many places at once. Which thing many 820
that will not come thereof foolish frowardness affirm to be
plain impossible.

Lo instead of a letter have you almost a book, longer than I 825
trust good Christian folk shall need in so clear an article of
the faith, and to all fast faithful people so far out of all doubt,
saving that in sending you your copy again, me thought I
must needs write you somewhat what I myself thought of his
writing. In which when I once began, albeit not very well at
ease, the abomination yet of that pestilent heresy and the peril
of his colorable handling, drew me forth further and further, 830
and scant could suffer me now to make an end, but that I was
half in mind to have touched also the schism of the Bohemians,
which he setteth forth here in his writing, saving that it requireth
some length, and that I am in mind to make answer
once in that matter unto Frère Barnes, which hath made therein, 835

ye wot well, an whole treatise, wherein I wonder if himself ween
he have said well.

190. To John Frith

And as for that holy prayer that this devout young man as a
new Christ, teacheth to make at the receiving of the blessed sacrament
all his congregation, I would not give the paring of a pear 840
for his prayer though it were better than it is, pulling away
the true faith therefore as he doth. Howbeit, his prayer there is
such devised, and penned, and painted with leisure and study,
that I trust every good Christian woman maketh a much better
prayer at the time of her housel, by faithful affection and 845
God's good inspiration suddenly. For she besides God's other
goodness, thanketh him, I think, for his high singular benefit
there presently given her, in that it liketh him to accept
and receive her so simple and so far unworthy of herself, to sit
at his own blessed board, and there for a remembrance of his 850
bitter passion suffered for her sin, to suffer her receive and eat
not bread, though it seem bread, but his very own precious
body in form of bread, both his very flesh, blood and bones, the
selfsame with which he died and with which he rose again,
and appeared again to his apostles, and eat among his disciples, 855
and with which he ascended into heaven, and with which he
shall descend again to judgment, and with which he shall
reign in heaven with his Father and their Holy Spirit in eternal
glory, and all his true faithful believing and loving people
with him, whom as the mystical members of his glorious body 860
he shall then, and from thenceforth forever pleasantly nourish
and feed and satiate their insatiable hunger with the beholding
of his glorious Godhead, whose hunger to heavenward he comforteth
and feedeth here by hope, and by the sure token and sign
of salvation, the giving of his own very blessed body under the 865
sign and likeness of bread to be eat and received into our
bodies, that our souls by the faith thereof, and our bodies by
the receiving thereof, may be spiritually and bodily joined and
knit unto his here in earth, and with his holy soul and his blessed
body, and his Godhead both with his Father and their Holy Spirit, 870
gloriously live after in heaven.

This, lo, in effect though not in words, Christian women
pray, and some of them peradventure express it much better too.
For God can, as the prophet saith, make not only women that
have age, faith, and wit, but the mouths also of infants and 875
young sucking children, to pronounce his laud and praise, so that

we need not this young man now to come teach us how and what
 we shall pray, as Christ taught his disciples the Paternoster. Frith
 is an unmeet master to teach us what we should pray at the receiving
 of the blessed sacrament, when he will not acknowledge 880
 it as it is, but take Christ's blessed body for nothing but bare bread,
 and so little esteem the receiving of the blessed sacrament, that
 he forceth little whether it be blessed or not. I pray God bless
 these poisoned errors out of his blind heart, and make him
 his faithful servant, and send you heartily well to fare. At Chelsea 885
 the 7th day of December by the hand of
 more than all your own,
 Thomas More Knight.

192. To Elizabeth Barton, Chelsea, Tuesday <1533>

*Good Madam, and my right dearly beloved sister in our
 Lord God.*

After my most hearty recommendation, I shall beseech
 you to take my good mind in good worth, and pardon me
 that I am so homely as of myself unrequired, and also without
 necessity, to give counsel to you, of whom for the good inspirations,
 and great revelations that it liketh Almighty God 5
 of his goodness to give and show, as many wise, well learned, and
 very virtuous folk testify, I myself have need, for the comfort
 of my soul, to require and ask advise, for surely, good
 Madam, since it pleaseth God sometimes to suffer such as are
 far under and of little estimation, to give yet fruitful advertisement 10
 to other as are in the light of the Spirit, so far above
 them, that there were between them no comparison; as he suffered
 his high prophet Moses to be in some things advised and
 counseled by Jethro, I cannot for the love that in our Lord I
 bear you refrain to put you in remembrance of one thing, 15
 which in my poor mind I think highly necessary to be by
 your wisdom considered, referring the end and order thereof, to
 God and his holy Spirit, to direct you.

Good Madam, I doubt not, but that you remember that in
 the beginning of my communication with you, I showed you 20
 that I neither was, nor would be, curious of any knowledge of
 other men's matters, and least of all of any matter of princes or
 of the realm, in case it so were that God had, as to many good

folks beforetime he hath any things revealed unto you such things, I said unto your ladyship, that I was not only not desirous to hear of, but also would not hear of. Now, Madam, I consider well that many folk desire to speak with you, which are not all peradventure of my mind in this point; but some hap to be curious and inquisitive of things that little pertain unto their parts; and some might peradventure hap to talk of such things, as might peradventure after turn to much harm, as I think you have heard how the late Duke of Buckingham moved with the fame of one that was reported for an holy monk and had such talking with him as after was a great part of his destruction and disheriting of his blood, and great slander and infamy of religion. It sufficeth me, good Madam, to put you in remembrance of such thing, as I nothing doubt your wisdom and the spirit of God shall keep you from talking with any persons especially with lay persons, of any such manner things as pertain to princes' affairs, or the state of the realm, but only to common and talk with any person high and low, of such manner things as may to the soul be profitable for you to show and for them to know.

And thus my good Lady, and dearly beloved sister in our Lord, I make an end of this my needless advertisement unto you, whom the blessed Trinity preserve and increase in grace, and put in your mind to recommend me and mine unto him in your devout prayers. At Chelsea this Tuesday by the hand of

Your hearty loving Brother and Beadsman,
Thomas More, Kt.

192. To E. Barton
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194. To Thomas Cromwell, Chelsea, 1 February <1533/4>

A letter written by Sir Tho More to Master Thomas Cromwell (then one of the King's Privy Council) the first day of February in the year of our Lord God 1533, after the computation of the Church of England and in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the VIII. [EW 1422]

Right Worshipful, in my most hearty wise I recommend me unto you.

Sir, my cousin William Rastell hath informed me, that

your Mastership of your goodness showed him, that it hath been
 reported, that I have against the book of certain articles (which
 was late put forth in print by the King's honorable Council) made
 an answer, and delivered it unto my said cousin to print. And albeit 5
 that he for his part truly denied it, yet because he somewhat
 remained in doubt, whether your Mastership gave him therein full
 credence or not, he desired me for his farther discharge to declare
 you the very truth, sir, as help me God neither my said cousin
 nor any man else, never had any book of mine to print, one or 10
 other, since the said book of the King's Council came forth. For
 of truth the last book that he printed of mine was that book that
 I made against an unknown heretic which hath sent over a
 work that walketh in over many men's hands named the *Supper*
of the Lord, against the blessed sacrament of the alter. My 15
 answer whereunto albeit that the printer (unaware to me) dated
 it Anno 1534, by which it seemeth to be printed since the Feast of
 the Circumcision, yet was it of very truth both made and printed
 and many of them gone before Christmas. And myself never
 espied the printer's oversight in the date, in more than three weeks 20
 after. And this was in good faith the last book that my cousin had
 of mine. Which being true as of truth it shall be found, sufficeth
 for his declaration in this behalf.

As touching mine own self, I shall say thus much farther, that
 on my faith I never made any such book nor never thought to 25
 do. I read the said book once over and never more. But I am for
 once reading very far off from many things, whereof I would
 have meetly sure knowledge, ere ever I would make an answer,
 though the matter and the book both, concerning the poorest man
 in a town, and were of the simplest man's making too. For of many 30
 things which in that book be touched, in some I know not the
 law, and in some I know not the fact. And therefore would I
 never be so childish nor so play the proud arrogant fool, by whomsoever
 the book had been made, and to whomsoever the matter
 had belonged, as to presume to make an answer to the book, 35
 concerning the matter whereof I never were sufficiently learned in
 the laws, nor fully instructed in the facts. And then while the
 matter pertained unto the King's Highness, and the book professeth
 openly that it was made by his honorable Council, and by them
 put in print with his Grace's license obtained thereunto, I verily trust 40
 in good faith that of your good mind toward me, though I never
 wrote you word thereof, yourself will both think and say so

much for me, that it were a think far unlikely, that an answer
 should be made thereunto by me. I will by the grace of Almighty
 God, as long as it shall please him to lend me life in this world,
 in all such places (as I am of duty to God and the King's
 Grace bound) truly say my mind, and discharge my conscience,
 as becometh a poor honest true man, wheresoever I shall be by his
 Grace commanded. Yet surely if it should happen any book to
 come abroad in the name of his Grace or his honorable Council,
 if the book to me seemed such as myself would not have given
 mine own advice to the making, yet I know my bounden duty,
 to bear more honor to my prince, and more reverence to his
 honorable Council, than that it could become me for many
 causes, to make an answer unto such a book, or to counsel and
 advise any man else to do it. And therefore as it is a thing that I
 never did nor intended, so I heartily beseech you if you shall happen
 to perceive any man, either of evil will or of lightness, any such
 thing report by me, be so good master to me, as help to bring us
 both together. And then never take me for honest after, but if ye
 find his honesty somewhat impaired in the matter.

194. To Cromwell

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Thus am I bold upon your goodness to encumber you with my
 long rude letter, in the contents whereof, I eftsoons heartily beseech
 you to be in manner aforesaid good master and friend unto
 me: whereby you shall bind me to be your beadsman while I live:
 as knoweth our Lord, whose special grace both bodily and ghostly
 long preserve and keep you.

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At Chelsea in the Vigil of the Purification of our Blessed
 Lady by the hand of

Assuredly all your own,

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Thomas More, Knight.

195. To Thomas Cromwell, Chelsea, Saturday, <February-March> 1533/4

*Another letter written by Sir Thomas More to Master Tho
 Cromwell in February or in March in the year of our Lord
 God 1533, after the computation of the Church of England,
 and in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of King Henry the Eighth.
 [EW 1423]*

Right Worshipful.

After right hearty recommendation, so it is that I am

informed, that there is a bill put in against me into the higher
house before the Lords, concerning my communication with the
Nun of Canterbury, and my writing unto her: whereof I not
a little marvel, the truth of the matter being such as God and I
know it is, and as I have plainly declared unto you by my
former letters, wherein I found you then so good, that I am now
bold eftsoons upon your goodness to desire you to show me
that favor, as that I might the rather by your good means, have
a copy of the bill. Which seen, if I find any untrue surmise therein
as of likelihood there is, I may make mine humble suite unto
the King's good Grace, and declare the truth, either to his Grace
or by his Grace's commandment, wheresoever the matter shall
require. I am so sure of my truth toward his Grace, that I cannot
mistrust his gracious favor toward me, upon the truth
known, nor the judgment of any honest man. Nor never shall
there loss in this matter grave me, being myself so innocent as
God and I know me, whatsoever should happen me therein, by
the grace of Almighty God, who both bodily and ghostly preserve
you. At Chelsea this present Saturday by the hand of
Heartily all your own,
Thomas More, Knight.

195. To Cromwell

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197. To Thomas Cromwell. <March? 1534>

Right Worshipful,

After my most hearty recommendation, with like
thanks for your goodness in the accepting of my rude long
letter, I perceive that of your further goodness and favor toward
me, it liked your Mastership to break with my son
Roper of that, that I had had communication, not only with
diverse that were of acquaintance with the lewd Nun of Canterbury,
but also with herself; and had, over that, by my writing,
declaring favor toward her, given her advice and counsel;
of which my demeanor, that it liketh you to be content
to take the labor and the pain, to hear, by mine own writing,
the truth, I verily heartily thank you, and reckon myself
therein right deeply beholden to you.

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It is, I suppose, about 8 or 9 years ago since I heard
of that huswife first; at which time the bishop of Canterbury
that then was, God assoil his soul, sent unto the King's Grace

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a roll of paper in which were written certain words of hers,
 that she had, as report was then made, at sundry times spoken
 in her trances; whereupon it pleased the King's Grace to
 deliver me the roll, commanding me to look thereon and afterward
 show him what I thought therein. Whereunto, at another 20
 time, when his Highness asked me, I told him, that in good
 faith I found nothing in these words that I could anything
 regard or esteem, for saving that some part fell in rhyme, and
 that, God wot, full rude, else for any reason, God wot, that I
 saw therein, a right simple woman might in my mind, speak 25
 it of her own wit well enough, howbeit, I said, that because
 it was constantly reported for a truth, that God wrought in her,
 and that a miracle was showed upon her, I durst now nor would
 not, be bold in judging the matter. And the King's Grace, as
 me thought, esteemed the matter as light as it after proved 30
 lewd.

From that time till about Christmas was twelvemonth,
 albeit that continually, there was much talking of her, and of her
 holiness, yet never heard I any talk rehearsed, either of revelation
 of hers, or miracle, saving that I had heard sometimes 35
 in my Lord Cardinal's days, that she had been both with his
 Lordship and with the King's Grace, but what she said either to
 the one or to the other, upon my faith, I had never heard any
 one word.

Now, as I was about to tell you, about Christmas was twelvemonth, 40
 Father Risby, Friar Observant, then of Canterbury,
 lodged one night at mine house; where after supper, a little before
 he went to his chamber, he fell in communication with me of
 the Nun, giving her high commendation of holiness, and that
 it was wonderful to see and understand the works that God 45
 wrought in her; which thing, I answered, that I was very
 glad to hear it, and thanked God thereof. Then he told me
 that she had been with my Lord Legate in his life and with the
 King's Grace too, and that she had told my Lord Legate a revelation
 of hers, of three swords that God hath put in my Lord 50
 Legate's hand, which if he ordered not well, God would lay it
 sore to his charge, the first he said was the ordering of the
 spirituality under the Pope, as Legate, the second the rule that he
 bore in order of the temporality under the King, as his Chancellor.
 And the third, she said was the meddling he was put 55
 in trust with by the King, concerning the great matter of

his marriage. And therewith all I said unto him that any revelation
of the King's matters I would not hear of, I doubt not
but the goodness of God should direct his highness with his
grace and wisdom, that the thing should take such end, as 60
God should be pleased with, to the King's honor and surety of
the realm. When he heard me say these words or the like, he
said unto me, that God had especially commanded her to pray
for the King; and forthwith he broke again into her revelations,
concerning the Cardinal that his soul was saved by her mediation; 65
and without any other communication went into his
chamber. And he and I never talked any more of any such manner
of matter, nor since his departing on the morrow, I never saw
him after to my remembrance, till I saw him at Paul's Cross.

After this, about Shrovetide, there came unto me, a little before 70
supper, Father Rich, Friar Observant of Richmond. And as
we fell in talking, I asked him of Father Risby, how he did?
and upon that occasion, he asked me whether Father Risby
had anything showed me of the holy Nun of Kent? and I
said yea, and that I was very glad to hear of her virtue. I would 75
not, quod he, tell you again that you have heard of him already,
but I have heard and known many great graces that God hath
wrought in her, and in other folk, by her, which I would gladly
tell you if I thought you had not heard them already. And
therewith he asked me, whether Father Risby had told me anything 80
of her being with my Lord Cardinal? and I said yea.
Then he told you, quoth he, of the 3 swords; yea verily, quod I.
Did he tell you, quoth he, of the revelations that she had concerning
the King's Grace? Nay, forsooth, quoth I, nor if he
would have done I would not have given him the hearing; 85
nor verily no more I would indeed, for since she hath been
with the King's Grace herself, and told him methought it a
thing needless to tell the matter to me, or any man else. And
when Father Rich perceived that I would not hear her revelations
concerning the King's Grace he talked on a little of her 90
virtue and let her revelations alone; and therewith my supper
was set upon the board where I required him to sit with
me, but he would in no wise tarry, but departed to London.
After that night I talked with him twice, once in mine own
house, another time in his own garden at the Friars', at every 95
time a great space, but not of any revelation touching the
King's Grace, but only of other mean folk, I knew not

197. To Cromwell

whom, of which things some were very strange and some
 were very childish. But albeit that he said that he had seen
 her lie in her trance in great pains and that he had at other
 times taken great spiritual comfort in her communication,
 yet did he never tell me she had told him those tales herself;
 for if he had I would, for the tale of Mary Magdalene which he
 told me, and for the tale of the host, with which, as I heard,
 she said she was houseled, at the King's Mass at Calais; if I
 had heard it of him as told unto himself by her mouth
 for a revelation, I would have both liked him and her the
 worse. But whether ever I heard that same tale of Rich or of
 Risby or of neither of them both, but of some other man since
 she was in hold, in good faith I cannot tell. But I wot well
 when or wheresoever I heard it, me thought it a tale too marvelous
 to be true, and very likely that she had told some man her
 dream, which told it out for a revelation. And in effect, I
 little doubted but that some of these tales that were told of her
 were untrue; but yet since I never heard them reported, as
 spoken by her own mouth, I thought nevertheless that
 many of them might be true, and she a very virtuous woman
 too; as some lies be peradventure written of some that be saints
 in heaven, and yet many miracles indeed done by them for all that.

After this I being upon a day at Syon talking with diverse
 of the Fathers together at the grate, they showed me that she
 had been with them, and showed me diverse things that some
 of them misliked in her and in this talking, they wished that I
 had spoken with her and said they would fain see how I
 should like her; whereupon, afterward, when I heard that she
 was there again, I came thither to see her and to speak with
 her myself. At which communication had, in a little chapel,
 there were none present but we two. In the beginning whereof I
 showed that my coming to her was not of any curious mind,
 anything to know of such things as folk talked, that it
 pleased God to reveal and show unto her, but for the great virtue
 that I had heard for so many years, every day more and more
 spoken and reported of her, I therefore had a great mind to see
 her, and be acquainted with her, that she might have somewhat
 the more occasion to remember me to God in her devotion and
 prayers, whereunto she gave me a very good virtuous answer
 that as God did of his goodness far better by her than such a
 poor wretch was worthy, so she feared that many folk yet

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besides that spoke of their own favorable minds many things
for her, far above the truth, and that of me she had many such
things heard, that already she prayed for me, and ever would,
whereof I heartily thanked her. 197. To Cromwell
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I said unto her, 'Madam, one Helen, a maiden dwelling
about Totnam, of whose trances and revelations there hath been
much talking, she hath been with me late and showed me
that she was with you, and that after the rehearsal of such visions
as she had seen, you showed her that they were no revelations, but
plain illusions of the devil and advised her to cast them out
of her mind, and verily she gave therein good credence unto you
and thereupon hath left to lean any longer unto such visions
of her own, whereupon she saith, she findeth your words true,
for ever since, she hath been the less visited with such things
as she was wont to be before.' To this she answered me, 'Forsooth,
Sir, there is in this point no praise unto me, but the goodness
of God, as it appeareth, hath wrought much meekness in her
soul, which hath taken my rude warning so well and not
grutched to hear her spirit and her visions reproved.' I liked
her in good faith better for this answer, than for many of those
things that I heard reported by her. Afterward she told me,
upon that occasion how great need folk have, that are visited
with such visions, to take heed and prove well of what spirit
they come of, and in the communication she told me that of
late the devil, in likeness of a bird, was fleeing and flickering
about her in a chamber, and suffered himself to be taken; and
being in hands suddenly changed, in their sight that were
present, into such a strange ugly fashioned bird, that they were
all afraid, threw him out at a window. 145
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For conclusion, we talked no word of the King's Grace or any
great personage else, nor in effect, of any man or woman, but
of herself and myself, but after no long communication had
for ere ever we met, my time came to go home, I gave her a
double ducat, and prayed her to pray for me and mine, and
so departed from her and never spoke with her after. Howbeit,
of truth I had a great good opinion of her, and had in her great
estimation as you shall perceive by the letter that I wrote unto
her. For afterward because I had often heard, that many right
worshipful folks as well men as women used to have much
communication with her, and many folk are of nature inquisitive
and curious, whereby they fall sometimes into such talking, 170
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as better were to forbear, of which thing I nothing thought 180 197. To Cromwell
while I talked with her of charity, therefore I wrote her a
letter thereof, which since it may be peradventure, that she broke
or lost, I shall insert the very copy thereof in this present letter.

Good madam and my right dearly beloved Sister in our
Lord God. - - - 185

[quotation of letter to Elizabeth Barton]

At the receipt of this letter she answered by servant that she
heartily thanked me. Soon after this there came to mine house the
proctor of the Charterhouse at Sheen and one brother William
with him, which nothing talked with me but of her and of the 190
great joy that they took in her virtue, but of any of her revelations
they had no communication. But at another time brother
William came to me, and told me a long tale of her, being at
the house of a Knight in Kent, that was sore troubled with temptation
to destroy himself; and none other thing we talked of 195
nor should have done of likelihood, though we had tarried together
much longer. He took so great pleasure, good man, to
tell that tale with all the circumstances at length. When I came
again another time to Syon, on a day in which there was a profession,
some of the fathers asked me how I liked the Nun? And I 200
answered that, in good faith, I liked her very well in her talking;
'howbeit,' quoth I, 'she is never the nearer tried by that,
for I assure you she were likely to be very bad, if she seemed
good, ere I should think her other, till she happed to be proved
naught;' and in good faith, that is my manner indeed, except I 205
were set to search and examine the truth upon likelihood of
some cloaked evil; for in that case, although I nothing suspected
the person myself, yet no less than if I suspected him
sore, I would as far as my wit would serve me, search to find
out the truth, as yourself hath done very prudently in this 210
matter; wherein you have done, in my mind, to your great
laud and praise, a very meritorious deed in bringing forth to
light such detestable hypocrisy, whereby every other wretch
may take warning, and be feared to set forth their own
devilish dissimuled falsehood, under the manner and color of the 215
wonderful work of God; for verily, this woman so handled
herself, with help of the evil spirit that inspired her, that after
her own confession declared at Paul's cross, when I sent word
by my servant unto the Proctor of the Charterhouse, that she was
undoubtedly proved a false deceiving hypocrite; the good man 220

had had so good opinion of her so long that he could at the first scantily believe me therein. Howbeit it was not he alone that thought her so very good, but many another right good man besides, as little marvel was upon so good report, till she was proved naught. 197. To Cromwell 225

I remember me further, that in communication between Father Rich and me, I counseled him, that in such strange things as concerned such folk as had come unto her, to whom, as she said, she had told the causes of their coming, ere themselves spoke thereof; and such good fruit as they said that many men had received by her prayer, he and such other as so reported it, and thought that the knowledge thereof should much pertain to the glory of God, should first cause the things to be well and surely examined by the ordinaries, and such as had authority thereunto; so that it might be surely known whether the things were true or not, and that there were no lies intermingled among them or else the lies might after hap to aweigh the credence of those things that were true. 230

And when he told me the tale of Mary Maudlin, I said unto him, "Father Rich, that she is a good virtuous woman, in good faith, I hear so many good folk so report her, that I verily think it true; and think it well likely that God worketh some good and great things by her. But yet are, you wot well, these strange tales no part of our creed; and therefore before you see them surely proved, you shall have my poor counsel not to wed yourself so far forth to the credence of them, as to report them very surely for true, lest that if it should hap that they were afterward proved false, it might diminish your estimation in your preaching, whereof might grow great loss. To this he thanked me for my counsel, but how he used it after that, I cannot tell. 235

Thus have I, good Mr. Cromwell, fully declared you, as far as myself can call to remembrance, all that ever I have done or said in this matter, wherein I am sure that never one of them all shall tell you any further thing of effect; for if any of them, or any man else, report of me as I trust verily no man will, and I wot well truly no man can, any word or deed by me spoken or done, touching any breach of my loyal troth and duty toward my most redoubted sovereign and natural liege lord, I will come to mine answer, and make it good in such wise as becometh a poor true man to do; that whosoever 240 245 250 255 260

any such thing shall say, shall therein say untrue; for I
 neither have in this matter done evil nor said evil, nor so much
 as any evil thing thought, but only have been glad, and
 rejoiced of them that were reported for good; which condition I
 shall nevertheless keep toward all other good folk, for the
 false cloaked hypocrisy of any of these, no more than I shall
 esteem Judas the true apostle, for Judas the false traitor.

197. To Cromwell

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But so purpose I to bear myself in every man's company,
 while I live, that neither good man nor bad, neither monk, friar
 nor nun, nor other man or woman in this world shall make me
 digress from my truth and faith, either toward God, or toward
 my natural prince, by the grace of almighty God; and
 as you therein find me true, so I heartily therein pray you to continue
 toward me your favor and good will, as you shall be sure
 of my poor daily prayer; for other pleasure can I none do you.
 And thus the blessed Trinity, both bodily and ghostly, long
 preserve and prosper you.

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I pray you pardon me, that I write not unto you of mine own
 hand, for verily I am compelled to forbear writing for a
 while by reason of this disease of mine, whereof the chief occasion
 is grown, as it is thought, by the stooping and leaning on
 my breast, that I have used in writing. And thus, eftsoons, I
 beseech our Lord long to preserve you.

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198. To Henry VIII. Chelsea, 5 March <1534>

It may like your Highness to call to your gracious
 remembrance, that at such time as of that great weighty room
 and office of your Chancellor (with which so far above my
 merits or qualities able and meet therefore, your Highness had of
 your incomparable goodness honored and exalted me), ye were so
 good and gracious unto me, as at my poor humble suit to discharge
 and disburden me, giving me license with your gracious
 favor to bestow the residue of my life in mine age now to come,
 about the provision for my soul in the service of God, and to
 be your Grace's beadsman and pray for you. It pleased your Highness
 further to say unto me, that for the service which I before had
 done you (which it then liked your goodness far above my deserving
 to commend) that in any suit that I should after have unto
 your Highness, which either should concern mine honor (that
 word it liked your Highness to use unto me) or that should

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pertain unto my profit, I should find your Highness good and gracious lord unto me. So is it now gracious Sovereign, that worldly honor is the thing, whereof I have resigned both the possession and the desire, in the resignation of your most honorable office; and worldly profit, I trust experience proveth, and daily more and more shall prove, that I never was greedy thereon. 20

But now is my most humble suit unto your excellent Highness, partly to beseech the same, somewhat to tender my poor honesty, but principally that of your accustomed goodness, no sinister information move your noble Grace, to have any more distrust of my truth and devotion toward you, than I have, or shall during my life, give the cause. For in this matter of the wicked woman of Canterbury I have unto your trusty Counselor Mr. Thomas Cromwell, by my writing, as plainly declared the truth, as I possibly can, which my declaration, of his duty toward your Grace, and his goodness toward me, he hath, I understand, declared unto your Grace. In any part of all which my dealing, whether any other man may peradventure put any doubt, or move any scruple of suspicion, that can I neither tell, nor lieth in mine hand to let, but unto myself is it not possible any part of my said demeanor to seem evil, the very clearness of mine own conscience knoweth in all the matter my mind and intent so good. 25 30 35

Wherefore most gracious Sovereign, I neither will, nor well it can become me, with your Highness to reason and argue the matter, but in my most humble manner, prostrate at your gracious feet, I only beseech your Majesty with your own high prudence and your accustomed goodness consider and weigh the matter. And then if in your so doing, your own virtuous mind shall give you, that notwithstanding the manifold excellent goodness that your gracious Highness hath by so many manner ways used unto me, I be a wretch of such a monstrous ingratitude, as could with any of them all, or with any other person living, digress from my bounden duty of allegiance toward your good Grace, then desire I no further favor at your gracious hand, than the loss of all that ever I may leese in this world, goods, lands, and liberty and finally my life withall, whereof the keeping of any part unto myself, could never do me pennyworth of pleasure, but only should then my recomfort be, that after my short life and your long, (which with continual prosperity to God's pleasure, our Lord for his mercy send you) I should once meet with your Grace again in heaven, and there be merry with you, where among mine other pleasures 40 45 50 55

this should yet be one, that your Grace should surely see there
 then, that (howsoever you take me) I am your true beadsman now
 and ever have been, and will be till I die, howsoever your pleasure
 be to do by me. 60

Howbeit, if in the considering of my cause, your high wisdom
 and gracious goodness perceive (as I verily trust in God
 you shall) that I none otherwise have demeaned myself, then
 well may stand with my bounden duty of faithfulness toward
 your royal Majesty, then in my most humble wise I beseech your 65
 most noble Grace, that the knowledge of your true gracious persuasion
 in that behalf, may relieve the torment of my present
 heaviness, conceived of the dread and fear (by that I hear such
 a grievous bill put by your learned Council into your high
 Court of Parliament against me) lest your Grace might by some 70
 sinister information be moved anything to think the contrary,
 which if your Highness do not (as I trust in God and your great
 goodness the matter by your own high prudence examined and
 considered, you will not) then in my most humble manner, I
 beseech your Highness further (albeit that in respect of my 75
 former request this other thing is very slight) yet since your
 Highness hath here before of your mere abundant goodness,
 heaped and accumulated upon me (though I was thereto very
 far unworthy) from time to time both worship and great honor
 too, and since I now have left off all such things, and nothing 80
 seek or desire but the life to come, and in the meanwhile pray
 for your Grace, it may like your highness of your accustomed
 benignity somewhat to tender my poor honesty and never suffer
 by the means of such a bill put forth against me, any man to take
 occasion hereafter against the truth to slander me; which 85
 thing should yet by the peril of their own souls do themselves
 more hurt than me, which shall, I trust, settle mine heart, with
 your gracious favor, to depend upon the comfort of the truth
 and hope of heaven, and not upon the fallible opinion or soon
 spoken words, of light and soon changeable people. 90

And thus, most dread and dear sovereign Lord, I beseech
 the blessed Trinity preserve your most noble Grace, both
 in body and soul, and all that are your well willers, and amend all
 the contrary among whom if ever I be or ever have been one, then
 pray I God that he may with mine open shame and destruction 95
 declare it. At my poor house in Chelsea, the fifth day of March,
 by the known rude hand of

Your most humble and most heavy faithful subject and
beadsman,

Thomas More. Kg.

198. To Henry VIII

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199. To Thomas Cromwell. Chelsea, 5 March <1534>

Right Worshipful

After my most hearty recommendation, it may please
you to understand that I have perceived by the relation of my son
Roper (for which I beseech almighty God reward you) your
most charitable labor taken for me toward the King's gracious
Highness, in the procuring at his most gracious hand, the relief
and comfort of this woeful heaviness in which mine heart standeth,
nether for the loss of goods, lands, or liberty, nor for any
respect either, of this kind of honesty that standeth in the opinion
of people and worldly reputation, all which manner things (I
thank our Lord) I so little esteem for any affection therein toward
myself that I can well be content to jeopard, leese, and forgo
them all and my life therewith, without any further respite than
even this same present day, either for the pleasure of God or of
my prince.

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But surely good Master Cromwell, as I by mouth declared unto
you, some part (for all could I neither then say nor now write)
it thoroughly pierceth my poor heart, that the King's Highness
(whose gracious favor toward me far above all the things of
this world I have evermore desired, and whereof both for the conscience
of mine own true faithful heart and devotion toward
him, and for the manifold benefits of his high goodness continually
bestowed upon me, I thought myself always sure),
should conceive any such mind or opinion of me, as to think that
in my communication either with the nun or the friaries, or
in my letter written unto the nun, I had any other manner mind,
than might well stand with the duty of a tender loving subject
toward his natural prince, or that his Grace should reckon in me
any manner of obstinate heart against his pleasure in anything
that ever I said or did concerning his great matter of his marriage
or concerning the primacy of the Pope. Never would I wish other
thing in this world more lief, than that his Highness in these
things all three, as perfectly knew my dealing, and as thoroughly
saw my mind, as I do myself, or as God doth himself, whose

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sight pierceth deeper into my heart, than mine own.

199. To Cromwell

For, Sir, as for the first matter, that is to wit my letter or communication with the nun (the whole discourse whereof in my former letter I have as plainly declared unto you as I possibly can), so pray I God to withdraw that scruple and doubt of my good mind, out of the King's noble breast and none other wise, but as I not only thought none harm, but also purposed good, and in that thing most, in which (as I perceive) his Grace conceiveth most grief and suspicion, that is to wit in my letter which I wrote unto her. And therefore Sir, since I have by my writing declared the truth of my deed, and am ready by mine oath to declare the truth of mine intent, I can devise no further thing by me to be done in that matter, but only beseech almighty God to put into the King's gracious mind, that as God knoweth the thing is indeed, so his noble grace may take it. Now touching the second point concerning his grace's great matter of his marriage, to the intent that you may see cause with the better conscience to make suit unto his highness for me, I shall as plainly declare you my demeanor in that matter as I have already declared you in the other, for more plainly can I not.

Sir, upon a time at my coming from beyond the sea, where I had been in the King's business, I repaired as my duty was unto the King's Grace being at that time at Hampton Court. At which time suddenly his Highness walking in the gallery, broke with me of his great matter, and showed me that it was now perceived, that his marriage was not only against the positive laws of the Church and the written law of God, but also in such wise against the law of nature, that it could in no wise by the Church be dispensable. Now so was it that before my going over the sea, I had heard certain things moved against the bull of the dispensation concerning the words of the Law Levitical and the Law Deuteronomical to prove the prohibition to be *de iure divino* but yet perceived I not at that time but that the greater hope of the matter stood in certain faults that were found in the bull, whereby the bull should by the law not be sufficient. And such comfort was there in that point as far as I perceived a good season, that the Council on the other part were fain to bring forth a brief, by which they pretended those defaults to be supplied, the truth of which brief was by the King's Council suspected, and much diligence was there after done, for the trial of that point, wherein what was finally found, either I never knew, or else I

not remember.

75 199. To Cromwell

But I rehearse you this to the intent you shall know that the first time that ever I heard that point moved, that it should be in such high degree against the law of nature, was the time in which as I began to tell you the King's Grace showed it me himself, and laid the Bible open before me, and there read me the words that moved his Highness and diverse other erudite persons so to think, and asked me further what myself thought thereon. At which time not presuming to look that his Highness should anything take that point for the more proved or unproved for my poor mind in so great a matter, I showed nevertheless as my duty was at his commandment what thing I thought upon the words which I there read. Whereupon his Highness accepting benignly my sudden unadvised answer commanded me to commune further with Mr. Fox, now his Grace's Almoner, and to read a book with him that then was in making for that matter. After which book read, and my poor opinion eftsoons declared unto his Highness thereupon, his Highness like a prudent and a virtuous prince assembled at another time at Hampton Court a good number of very well learned men at which time as far as ever I heard there were (as was in so great a matter most likely to be) diverse opinions among them. Howbeit I never heard but that they agreed at that time upon a certain form in which the book should be made, which book was afterward at York Place in my Lord Cardinal's chamber read in the presence of diverse bishops and many learned men. And they all thought that there appeared in the book, good and reasonable causes, that might well move the King's Highness being so virtuous a prince to conceive in his mind a scruple against his marriage, which, while he could not otherwise avoid, he did well and virtuously for the quieting of his conscience to sow and procure to have his doubt decided by judgment of the Church.

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After this the suit began, and the Legates sat upon the matter, during all which time I never meddled therein, nor was a man meet to do, for the matter was in hand by an ordinary process of the spiritual law, whereof I could little skill. And yet while the Legates were sitting upon the matter, it pleased the King's Highness to send me in the company of my *Lord of London* now of *Durham* in embassy about the peace that at our being there was concluded at Cambrai, between his Highness and the Emperor and the French King. And after my coming home his Highness

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of his only goodness (as far unworthy as I was thereto) made
 me, as you well know, his Chancellor of this realm, soon after
 which time his Grace moved me again yet eftsoons, to look
 and consider his great matter, and well and indifferently to ponder
 such things as I should find therein. And if it so were that thereupon
 it should hap me to see such things as should persuade me
 to that part, he would gladly use me among other of his councilors
 in that matter, and nevertheless he graciously declared unto
 me that he would in no wise that I should other thing do or say
 therein, than upon that that I should perceive mine own conscience
 should serve me, and that I should first look unto God and after
 God unto him, which most gracious words was the first lesson
 also that ever his Grace gave me at my first coming into his noble
 service. This motion was to me very comfortable and much I
 longed beside anything that myself either had seen, or by
 further search should hap to find for the one part or the other,
 yet especially to have some conference in the matter with some such
 of his Grace's learned Council as most for his part had labored
 and most have found in the matter.

Whereupon his Highness assigned unto me the now most
 reverend fathers Archbishops of Canterbury and York with
 Mr. Doctor Fox now his Grace's Almoner and Mr. Doctor
 Nicholas the Italian frère, whereupon I not only sought and
 read, and as far forth as my poor wit and learning served me, well
 weighed and considered every such thing as I could find myself,
 or read in any other man's labor that I could get, which anything
 had written therein, but had also diligent conference with
 his Grace's councilors aforesaid, whose honors and worships
 I had nothing mistrust in this point, but that they both have and
 will report unto his Highness that they never found obstinate
 manner or fashion in me, but a mind as toward and as conformable
 as reason could in a matter disputable require.

Whereupon the King's Highness being further advised both
 by them and myself of my poor opinion in the matter (wherein
 to have been able and meet to do him service I would as I then
 showed his Highness have been more glad than of all such worldly
 commodities as I either then had or ever should come to) his
 Highness graciously taking in gree my good mind in that behalf
 used of his blessed disposition in the prosecuting of his great matter
 only those (of whom his Grace had good number) whose conscience
 his Grace perceived well and fully persuaded upon that

199. To Cromwell

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part, and as well myself as any other to whom his Highness
 thought the thing to seem otherwise, he used in his other business,
 abiding (of his abundant goodness) nevertheless gracious
 lord unto any man, nor never was willing to put any man in ruffle
 or trouble of his conscience. 160

After this did I never nothing more therein, nor never any
 word wrote I therein to the impairing of his Grace's part neither
 before nor after, nor any man else by my procurement, but
 settling my mind in quiet to serve his Grace in other things I
 would not so much as look nor wittingly let lie by me any book
 of the other part, albeit that I gladly read afterward diverse
 books that were made on his part yet, nor never would I read the
 book that Mr. Abell made on the other side, nor other book
 which were as I heard say made in Latin beyond the sea, nor never
 gave ere to the Pope's proceedings in the matter. 170

Moreover whereas I had found in my study a book that I had
 before borrowed of my Lord of Bath, which book he had made
 of the matter at such time as the Legates sat here thereupon, which
 book had been by me merely gently cast aside, and that I showed
 him I would send him home his book again, he told me that
 in good faith he had long time before discharged his mind of that
 matter, and having forgotten that copy to remain in my hands
 had burned his own copy that he had thereof at home, and because
 he no more minded to meddle anything in the matter he
 desired me to burn the same book too. And upon my faith so
 did I. 180

Beside this diverse other ways have I so used myself, that
 if I rehearsed them all, it should well appear that I never have had
 against his Grace's marriage any manner demeanor, whereby his
 Highness might have any manner cause or occasion of displeasure
 toward me, for likewise as I am not he which either can, or
 whom it could become, to take upon him the determination or
 decision of such a weighty matter, nor boldly to affirm this
 thing or that therein, whereof diverse points a great way pass my
 learning, so am I he that among other his Grace's faithful subjects,
 his Highness being in possession of his marriage and this noble
 woman really anointed Queen, neither murmur at it, nor dispute
 upon it, nor never did nor will, but without any other manner
 meddling of the matter among his other faithful subjects faithfully
 pray to God for his Grace and hers both, long to live and
 well and their noble issue too, in such wise as may be to the pleasure 185
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199. To Cromwell

of God, honor and surety to themselves, rest, peace, wealth and profit unto this noble realm.

199. To Cromwell

As touching the third point, the primacy of the Pope, I nothing meddle in the matter. Truth it is, that as I told you, when you desired me to show you what I thought therein, I was myself sometime not of the mind that the primacy of that See should be begun by the institution of God, until that I read in that matter those things that the King's Highness had written in his most famous book against the heresies of Martin Luther, at the first reading whereof I moved the King's Highness either to leave out that point, or else to touch it more slenderly for doubt of such things as after might hap to fall in question between his Highness and some pope as between princes and popes diverse times have done. Whereunto his Highness answered me, that he would in no wise anything diminish of that matter, of which thing his Highness showed me a secret cause whereof I never had anything heard before. But surely after that I had read his Grace's book therein, and so many other things as I have seen in that point by this continuance of these 10 years since and more have found in effect the substance of all the holy doctors from Saint Ignatius, disciple to Saint John the Evangelist, unto our own days both Latins and Greeks so consonant and agreeing in that point, and the thing by such general councils so confirmed also, that in good faith I never neither read nor heard anything of such effect on the other side, that ever could lead me to think that my conscience were well discharged, but rather in right great peril if I should follow the other side and deny the primacy to be provided by God, which if we did, yet can I nothing (as I showed you) perceive any commodity that ever could come by that denial, for that primacy is at the least wise instituted by the corps of Christendom and for a great urgent cause in avoiding of schisms and corroborate by continual succession more than the space of a thousand years at the least for there are passed almost a thousand years since the time of holy Saint Gregory.

And therefore since all Christendom is one corps, I cannot perceive how any member thereof may without the common assent of the body depart from the common head. And then if we may not lawfully leave it by ourselves I cannot perceive (but if the thing were a treating in a general council) what the question could avail whether the primacy were instituted immediately by God or ordained by the Church. As for the general councils assembled

lawfully, I never could perceive, but that in the declaration of
 the truths it is to be believed and to be stood to, the authority
 thereof ought to be taken for undoubtable, or else were there in
 nothing no certainty, but throw Christendom upon every
 man's affectionate reason, all things might be brought from day
 to day to continual ruffle and confusion, from which by the
 general councils, the spirit of God assisting, every such council
 well assembled keepeth and ever shall keep the corps of
 his Catholic Church.

And verily since the King's Highness hath (as by the book
 of his honorable council appeareth) appealed to the general
 council from the Pope, in which council I beseech our Lord
 send his grace comfortable speed, methinketh in my poor mind
 it could be no furtherance thereunto his Grace's cause, if his
 Highness should in his own realm before, either by laws making
 or books putting forth, seem to derogate and deny not only
 the primacy of the see apostolic, but also the authority of the
 general councils too, which I verily trust his Highness intendeth
 not, for in the next general council it may well happen, that
 this Pope may be deposed and another substituted in his Rome,
 with whom the King's Highness may be very well content, for
 albeit that I have for mine own part such opinion of the Pope's
 primacy as I have showed you, yet never thought I the Pope
 above the general council nor never have in any book of mine
 put forth among the King's subjects in our vulgar tongue,
 advanced greatly the Pope's authority. For albeit that a man may
 peradventure somewhat find therein that after the common manner
 of all Christian realms I speak of him as primate yet never
 do I stick thereon with reasoning and proving of that point.
 And in my book against the Masquer, I wrote not I wot well five
 lines, and yet of no more but only Saint Peter himself, from
 whose person many take not the primacy, even of those that
 grant it none of his successors, and yet was that book made,
 printed and put forth of very truth before that any of the books
 of the council was either printed or spoken of. But whereas I
 had written thereof at length in my confutation before, and for
 the proof thereof had compiled together all that I could find
 therefore, at such time as I little looked that there should fall between
 the King's Highness and the Pope such a breech as is fallen
 since, when I after that saw the thing likely to draw toward
 such displeasure between them I suppressed it utterly and never

199. To Cromwell

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put word thereof into my book but put out the remnant without
it, which thing well declareth, that I never intended anything
to meddle in that matter against the King's gracious pleasure,
whatsoever mine own opinion were therein. 280 199. To Cromwell

And thus have I, good Mr. Cromwell, long troubled your
Mastership with a long process of these matters, with which I 285
neither durst, nor it could become me to encumber the King's
noble Grace, but I beseech you for our Lord's love, that you
be not so weary of my most cumbrous suit, but that it may like
you at such opportune time or times as your wisdom may find,
to help that his Highness may by your goodness be fully informed 290
of my true faithful mind, and that in the matter of that wicked
woman there never was on my part any other mind than good,
nor yet in any other thing else never was there nor never shall
there be any further fault found in me, than that I cannot in
everything think the same way that some other men of more 295
wisdom and deeper learning do, nor can find in mine heart otherwise
to say, than as mine own conscience giveth me, which
condition hath never grown in anything that ever might
touch his gracious pleasure of any obstinate mind or misaffectionate
appetite, but of a timorous conscience rising haply 300
for lack of better perceiving, and yet not without tender
respect unto my most bounden duty toward his noble Grace,
whose only favor I so much esteem, that I nothing have of mine
own in all this world, except only my soul, but that I will with
better will forgo it than abide of his Highness, one heavy displeasent 305
look. And thus I make an end of my long troublous
process, beseeching the blessed Trinity for the great goodness ye
show me, and the great comfort ye do me, both bodily and
ghostly to prosper you, and in heaven to reward you. At Chelsea
the 5th day of March by 310

Your deeply bounden,

Thomas More. Kg.

200. To Margaret Roper. <Tower of London, c. 17 April 1534>

*Sir Thomas More, upon warning given him, came before
the King's Commissioners at the Archbishop of Canterbury's
place at Lambeth (the Monday the thirteenth day of April
in the year of our Lord 1534, and in the latter end of the twenty-fifth
year of the reign of King Henry the XIII): where he*

refused the oath then offered unto him. And thereupon was he delivered to the Abbot of Westminster to be kept as a prisoner: with whom he remained till Friday following, and then was sent prisoner to the Tower of London. And shortly after his coming thither he wrote a letter and sent unto his eldest daughter Mistress Margaret Roper, the copy whereof here followeth. [EW 1428]

200. To M. Roper

When I was before the Lords at Lambeth, I was the first that was called in, albeit, Master Doctor the Vicar of Croydon was come before me, and diverse others. After the cause of my sending for, declared unto me (whereof I somewhat marveled in my mind, considering that they sent for no more temporal men but me) I desired the sight of the oath, which they showed me under the great seal. Then desired I the sight of the Act of Succession, which was delivered me in a printed roll. After which read secretly by myself, and the oath considered with the act, I showed unto them, that my purpose was not to put any fault either in the act or any man that made it, or in the oath or any man that swore it, nor to condemn the conscience of any other man. But as for myself in good faith my conscience so moved me in the matter, that though I would not deny to swear to the succession, yet unto the oath that there was offered me I could not swear, without the jeoparding of my soul to perpetual damnation. And that if they doubted whether I did refuse the oath only for the grudge of my conscience, or for any other fantasy, I was ready therein to satisfy them by mine oath. Which if they trusted not, what should they be the better to give me any oath? And if they trusted that I would therein swear true, then trusted I that of their goodness they would not move me to swear the oath that they offered me, perceiving that for to swear it was against my conscience.

Unto this my Lord Chancellor said, that they all were sorry to hear me say thus, and see me thus refuse the oath. And they said all that on their faith I was the very first that ever refused it; which would cause the King's Highness to conceive great suspicion of me and great indignation toward me. And therewith they showed me the roll, and let me see the names of the lords and the commons which had sworn, and subscribed their names already. Which notwithstanding when they saw that I refused to swear the same myself, not blaming any other man that had

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sworn, I was in conclusion commanded to go down into the garden, and thereupon I tarried in the old burned chamber, that looketh into the garden and would not go down because of the heat. In that time saw I Master Doctor Latimer come into the garden, and there walked he with diverse other doctors and chaplains of my Lord of Canterbury, and very merry I saw him, for he laughed, and took one or twenty about the neck so handsomely, that if they had been women, I would have weened he had been waxen wanton. After that came Master Doctor Wilson forth from the lords and was with two gentlemen brought by me, and gentlemanly sent straight unto the Tower. What time my Lord of Rochester was called in before them, that cannot I tell. But at night I heard that he had been before them, but where he remained that night, and so forth till he was sent hither, I never heard. I heard also that Master Vicar of Croydon, and all the remnant of the priests of London that were sent for, were sworn, and that they had such favor at the council's hand, that they were not lingered nor made to dance any long attendance to their travail and cost, as suitors were sometimes wont to be, but were sped apace to their great comfort, so far forth that Master Vicar of Croydon, either for gladness or for dryness, or else that it might be seen (*quod ille notus erat pontifici*) went to my Lord's buttery bar, and called for drink, and drank (*valde familiariter*).

When they had played their pageant and were gone out of the place, then was I called in again. And then was it declared unto me, what a number had sworn, even since I went aside, gladly, without any sticking. Wherein I laid no blame in no man, but for mine own self answered as before. Now as well before as then, they somewhat laid unto me for obstinacy, that whereas before, since I refused to swear, I would not declare any special part of that oath that grudged my conscience, and open the cause wherefore. For thereunto I had said to them, that I feared lest the King's Highness would as they said take displeasure enough toward me for the only refusal of the oath. And that if I should open and disclose the causes why, I should therewith but further exasperate his Highness, which I would in no wise do, but rather would I abide all the danger and harm that might come toward me, than give his Highness any occasion of further displeasure, than the offering of the oath unto me of pure necessity constrained me. Howbeit when they diverse times imputed this to me for stubbornness and obstinacy

200. To M. Roper

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that I would neither swear the oath, nor yet declare the causes why, 75 200. To M. Roper
I declined thus far toward them, that rather than I would be
accounted for obstinate, I would upon the King's gracious license
or rather his such commandment had, as might be my sufficient
warrant, that my declaration should not offend his Highness,
nor put me in the danger of any of his statutes, I would be content 80
to declare the causes in writing; and over that to give an oath
in the beginning, that if I might find those causes by any man in
such wise answered, as I might think mine own conscience satisfied,
I would after that with all mine heart swear the principal oath,
too. 85

To this I was answered, that though the King would give me
license under his letters patent, yet would it not serve against the
statute. Whereto I said, that yet if I had them, I would stand unto
the trust of his honor at my peril for the remnant. But yet it
thinketh me, lo, that if I may not declare the causes without 90
peril, then to leave them undeclared is no obstinacy.

My Lord of Canterbury taking hold upon that that I said, that
I condemned not the conscience of them that swore, said unto
me that it appeareth well, that I did not take it for a very sure thing
and a certain, that I might not lawfully swear it, but rather as a 95
thing uncertain and doubtful. But then (said my Lord) you
know for a certainty and a thing without doubt, that you be
bound to obey your sovereign lord your King. And therefore
are ye bound to leave off the doubt of your unsure conscience
in refusing the oath, and take the sure way in obeying of your 100
prince, and swear it. Now all was it so, that in mine own mind
me thought myself not concluded, yet this argument seemed me
suddenly so subtle and namely with such authority coming out
of so noble a prelate's mouth, that I could again answer nothing
thereto but only that I thought myself I might not well do so, 105
because that in my conscience this was one of the cases, in which
I was bound that I should not obey my prince, since that whatsoever
other folk thought in the matter, (whose conscience and
learning I would not condemn nor take upon me to judge) yet
in my conscience the truth seemed on the other side. Wherein I 110
had not informed my conscience neither suddenly nor slightly,
but by long leisure and diligent search for the matter. And of
truth if that reason may conclude, then have we a ready way to
avoid all perplexities. For in whatsoever matters the doctors
stand in great doubt, the King's commandment given upon 115

whither side he list assoileth all the doubts.

200. To M. Roper

Then said my Lord of Westminster to me, that howsoever
 the matter seemed unto mine own mind, I had cause to fear
 that mine own mind was erroneous, when I see the great council
 of the realm determine of my mind the contrary, and that therefore 120
 I ought to change my conscience. To that I answered, that
 if there were no more but myself upon my side, and the whole
 Parliament upon the other, I would be sore afraid to lean to mine
 own mind only against so many. But on the other side, if it
 so be, that in some things for which I refuse the oath, I have (as 125
 I think I have) upon my part as great a council and a greater
 too, I am not then bound to change my conscience, and confirm
 it to the council of one realm, against the general council of
 Christendom. Upon this Master Secretary (as he that tenderly
 favoereth me), said and swore a great oath, that he had liefer that 130
 his own only son (which is of truth a goodly young gentleman,
 and shall I trust come to much worship) had lost his head, than
 that I should thus have refused the oath. For surely the King's
 Highness would now conceive a great suspicion against me, and
 think that the matter of the nun of Canterbury was all contrived 135
 by my drift. To which I said that the contrary was true
 and well known, and whatsoever should mishap me, it lay
 not in my power to help it without peril of my soul. Then did
 my Lord Chancellor repeat before me my refusal unto Master
 Secretary, as to him that was going unto the King's Grace. And 140
 in the rehearsing, his Lordship repeated again, that I denied not
 but was content to swear to the succession. Whereunto I said, that
 as for that point, I would be content, so that I might see my oath
 in that point so framed in such a manner as might stand with
 my conscience. 145

Then said my Lord: 'Marry, Master Secretary, mark that too,
 that he will not swear that neither, but under some certain manner.'
 'Verily no, my Lord,' quoth I, 'but that I will see it made in such wise
 first, as I shall myself see, that I shall neither be foresworn nor
 swear against my conscience. Surely as to swear to the succession 150
 I see no peril, but I thought and think it reason, that to mine
 own oath I look well myself, and be of council also in the
 fashion, and never intended to swear for a piece, and set my hand
 to the whole oath. Howbeit (as help me God), as touching the
 whole oath, I never withdrew any man from it, nor never advised 155
 any to refuse it, nor never put, nor will, any scruple in any

man's head, but leave every man to his own conscience. And methinketh in good faith, that so were it good reason that every man should leave me to mine.'

200. To M. Roper

201. To Margaret Roper. Tower of London, <April-May? 1534>

A letter written with a coal by Sir Thomas More to his daughter Mistress Margaret Roper, within a while after he was prisoner in the Tower. [EW 1430]

Mine own good daughter,

Our Lord be thanked, I am in good health of body, and in good quiet of mind: and of worldly things I no more desire than I have. I beseech him make you all merry in the hope of heaven. And such things as I somewhat longed to talk with you all, concerning the world to come, our Lord put them into your minds, as I trust he doth, and better too, by his Holy Spirit: who bless you and preserve you all. Written with a coal by your tender loving father, who in his poor prayers forgetteth none of you all, nor your babes, nor your nurses, nor your good husbands, nor your good husbands' shrewd wives, nor your father's shrewd wife neither, nor our other friends. And thus fare you heartily well for lack of paper.

Thomas More, Knight.

Our Lord keep me continually true faithful and plain, to the contrary whereof I beseech him heartily never to suffer me live. For as for long life (as I have often told thee Meg) I neither look for, nor long for, but am well content to go, if God call me hence tomorrow. And I thank our Lord I know no person living that I would had one fillip for my sake: of which mind I am more glad than of all the world besides.

Recommend me to your shrewd Will and mine other sons, and to John Harris my friend, and yourself knoweth to whom else, and to my shrewd wife above all, and God preserve you all, and make and keep you his servants all.

202. To Margaret Roper. Tower of London, <May? 1534>

Within a while after Sir Thomas More was in prison in the Tower, his daughter Mistress Margaret Roper wrote and sent

unto him a letter, wherein she seemed somewhat to labor to persuade him to take the oath (though she nothing so thought) to win thereby credence with Master Thomas Cromwell, that she might the rather get liberty to have free resort unto her father (which she only had for the most time of his imprisonment) unto which letter her father wrote an answer, the copy whereof here followeth. [EW 1431]

202. To M. Roper

Our Lord bless you all.

If I had not been, my dearly beloved daughter, at a firm and fast point, (I trust in God's great mercy) this good great while before, your lamentable letter had not a little abashed me, surely far above all other things, of which I hear diverse times not a few terrible toward me. But surely they all touched me never so near, nor were so grievous unto me, as to see you, my well beloved child, in such vehement piteous manner labor to persuade unto me, that thing wherein I have of pure necessity for respect unto mine own soul, so often given you so precise answer before. Wherein as touching the points of your letter, I can make none answer, for I doubt not but you well remember, that the matters which move my conscience (without declaration whereof I can nothing touch the points) I have sundry times showed you that I will disclose them to no man. And therefore daughter Margaret, I can in this thing no further, but like as you labor me again to follow your mind to desire and pray you both again to leave off such labor, and with my former answers to hold yourself content.

A deadly grief unto me, and much more deadly than to hear of mine own death, (for the fear thereof, I thank our Lord, the fear of hell, the hope of heaven and the passion of Christ daily more and more assuage), is that I perceive my good son your husband, and you my good daughter, and my good wife, and mine other good children and innocent friends, in great displeasure and danger of great harm thereby. The let whereof, while it lieth not in my hand, I can no further but commit all unto God. *Nam in manu Dei*, saith the scripture, *cor regis est, et sicut divisiones aquarum quocunque voluerit, impellit illud*, whose high goodness I most humbly beseech to incline the noble heart of the King's Highness to the tender favor of you all, and to favor me no better than God and myself know that my faithful heart toward him and my daily prayer for him, do deserve. For surely if his Highness

might inwardly see my true mind such as God knoweth it
 is, it would (I trust) soon assuage his high displeasure. Which
 while I can in this world never in such wise show, but that his
 Grace may be persuaded to believe the contrary of me, I can no
 further go, but put all in the hands of him, for fear of whose
 displeasure for the safeguard of my soul stirred by mine own
 conscience (without insectacion or reproach laying to any other
 man's) I suffer and endure this trouble. Out of which I beseech
 him to bring me, when his will shall be, into his endless bliss
 of heaven, and in the meanwhile, give me grace and you both
 in all our agonies and troubles, devoutly to resort prostrate unto
 the remembrance of that bitter agony, which our Savior suffered
 before his passion at the Mount. And if we diligently so do, I
 verily trust we shall find therein great comfort and consolation.
 And thus my dear daughter the blessed spirit of Christ for his
 tender mercy govern and guide you all, to his pleasure and your
 weal and comforts both body and soul.

Your tender loving father,

Thomas More, Knight.

202. To M. Roper

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203. From Margaret Roper. <May? 1534>

*To this last letter Mistress Margaret Roper wrote an answer
 and sent it to Sir Thomas More her father, the copy whereof
 here followeth. [EW 1432]*

Mine own good Father,

It is to me no little comfort, since I cannot talk with
 you by such means as I would, at the least way to delight myself
 among in this bitter time of your absence, by such means as I
 may, by as often writing to you, as shall be expedient and by
 reading again and again your most fruitful and delectable
 letter, the faithful messenger of your very virtuous and ghostly
 mind, rid from all corrupt love of worldly things, and fast knit
 only in the love of God, and desire of heaven, as becometh a very
 true worshiper and a faithful servant of God, which I doubt not,
 good father, holdeth his holy hand over you and shall (as he
 hath) preserve you both body and soul (*ut sit mens sana in corpore
 sano*) and namely, now when you have abjected all earthly

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consolations and resigned yourself willingly, gladly and fully for his love to his holy protection.

203. From M. Roper

Father, what think you hath been our comfort since your departing 15
 from us? Surely the experience we have had of your life past
 and godly conversation, and wholesome counsel, and virtuous
 example, and a surety not only of the continuance of the same,
 but also a great increase by the goodness of our Lord to the great
 rest and gladness of your hearth devoid of all earthly dregs, and 20
 garnished with the noble vesture of heavenly virtues, a pleasant
 palace for the Holy Spirit of God to rest in, who defend you
 (as I doubt not, good father, but of his goodness he will) from
 all trouble of mind and of body, and give me your most loving
 obedient daughter and handmaid, and all us your children and 25
 friends, to follow that that we praise in you, and to our only
 comfort remember and common together of you, that we may in
 conclusion meet with you, mine own dear father, in the bliss
 of heaven to which our most merciful Lord hath bought us
 with his precious blood. 30

Your own most loving obedient daughter and beadswoman,
 Margaret Roper, which desireth above all worldly things to be
 in John Wood's stead to do you some service. But we live in hope
 that we shall shortly receive you again, I pray God heartily we
 may, if it be his holy will. 35

204. To All His Friends. Tower of London, <1534>

Within a while after Sir Thomas More had been in prison in the Tower, his daughter M^lstress Margaret Roper obtained license of the King, that she M^lstress resort unto her father in the Tower, which she did. And thereupon he wrote with a coal a letter to all his friends, whereof the copy followeth. [EW 1432]

To all my loving Friends

Forasmuch as being in prison I cannot tell what need I may have, or what necessity I may hap to stand in, I heartily beseech you all, that if my well beloved daughter Margaret Roper (which only of all my friends hath by the King's gracious favor license to resort to me) do anything desire of any of you, of such 5
 thing as I shall hap to need, that it may like you no less to

regard and tender it, than if I moved it unto you and required it of you personally present myself. And I beseech you all to pray for me, and I shall pray for you.

Your faithful lover and poor beadsman,
Thomas More, Knight, prisoner.

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204. To His Friends

205. Alice Alington to Margaret Roper. 17 August <1534>

In August in the year of our Lord 1534 and in the xxvi year of the reign of King Henry the eight, the Lady Alice Alington, (wife to Sir Giles Alington Knight, and daughter to Sir Thomas More's second and last wife) wrote a letter to Maistres Margaret Roper, the copy whereof here followeth. [EW 1433]

Sister Roper, with all my heart I recommend me unto you, thanking you for all kindness.

The cause of my writing at this time is to show you that at my coming home within two hours after, my Lord Chancellor did come to take a course at a buck in our park, the which was to my husband a great comfort that it would please him so to do. Then when he had taken his pleasure and killed his deer he went unto Sir Thomas Barmeston to bed, where I was the next day with him at his desire, the which I could not say nay to, for me thought he did bid me heartily, and most especially because I would speak to him for my father.

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And when I saw my time, I did desire him as humbly as I could that he would, as I have heard say that he hath been, be still good lord unto my father. And he said it did appear very well when the matter of the nun was laid to his charge. And as for this other matter, he marveled that my father is so obstinate in his own conceit, as that everybody went forth with all save only the blind Bishop and he. And in good faith, said my Lord, I am very glad that I have no learning but in a few of Aesop's fables of the which I shall tell you one. There was a country in the which there were almost none but fools, saving a few which were wise. And they by their wisdom knew, that there should fall a great rain, the which should make them all fools, that should be fouled or wet therewith. They seeing that, made them caves under the ground till all

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the rain was past. Then they came forth thinking to make the
fools to do what they list, and to rule them as they would. 25 205. To M. Roper

But the fools would none of that, but would have the rule themselves
for all their craft. And when the wise men saw they could
not obtain their purpose, they wished that they had been in the
rain, and had defoiled their clothes with them.

When this tale was told my Lord did laugh very merrily. Then 30
I said to him that for all his merry fable I did put no doubts but
that he would be good lord unto my father when he saw his
time. He said I would not have your father so scrupulous of his
conscience. And then he told me another fable of a lion, an ass,
and a wolf and of their confession. First the lion confessed 35
him that he had devoured all the beasts that he could come by.
His confessor assoiled him because he was a king and also it was
his nature so to do. Then came the poor ass and said that he
took but one straw out of his master's shoe for hunger, by the
means whereof he thought that his master did take cold. His 40
confessor could not assoil this great trespass, but by and by
sent him to the bishop. Then came the wolf and made his
confession, and he was straightly commanded that he should
not pass the 6d at a meal. But when this said wolf had used this
diet a little while, he waxed very hungry, insomuch that on a day 45
when he saw a cow with her calf come by him he said to himself,
I am very hungry and fain would I eat, but that I am
bound by my ghostly father. Notwithstanding that, my conscience
shall judge me. And then if it be so, then shall my conscience
be thus, that the cow doth seem to me now but worth a groat, 50
and then if the cow be but worth a groat then is the calf but
worth 2d. So did the wolf eat both the cow and the calf.
Now good sister hath not my lord told me two pretty fables?
In good faith they please me nothing, nor I wist not what to
say for I was abashed of this answer. And I see no better 55
suit than to Almighty God, for he is the comforter of all sorrows,
and will not fail to send his comfort to his servants
when they have most need. Thus fare ye well mine own good
sister.

Written the Monday after Saint Lawrence in haste by 60
Your sister Dame,
Alice Alington

206. Margaret Roper to Alice Alington, <August 1534>

206. To A. Alington

When I came next unto my father after, me thought it
 both convenient and necessary, to show him your letter. Convenient,
 that he might thereby see your loving labor taken for him.
 Necessary, that since he might perceive thereby, that if he stand
 still in this scruple of his conscience (as it is at the least wise called
 by many that are his friends and wise) all his friends that seem
 most able to do him good either shall finally forsake him, or peradventure
 not be able indeed to do him any good at all.

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And for these causes, at my next being with him after your
 letter received, when I had a while talked with him, first of his
 diseases, both in his breast of old, and his reins now by reason
 of gravel and stone, and of the cramp also that diverse nights
 grippeth him in his legs, and that I found by his words that
 they were not much increased, but continued after their manner that
 they did before, sometimes very sore and sometimes little grief,
 and that at that time I found him out of pain, and (as one in
 his case might), meetly well minded, after our 7 psalms and
 the litany said, to sit and talk and be merry, beginning first with
 other things of the good comfort of my mother, and the good
 order of my brother, and all my sisters, disposing themselves every
 day more and more to set little by the world, and draw more and
 more to God, and that his household, his neighbors, and other
 good friends abroad, diligently remembered him in their prayers,
 I added unto this: 'I pray God, good Father, that their prayers and
 ours, and your own therewith, may purchase of God the grace,
 that you may in this great matter (for which you stand in this
 trouble and for your trouble all we also that love you) take such
 away by time, as standing with the pleasure of God, may content
 and please the King, whom ye have always found so singularly
 gracious unto you, that if ye should stiffly refuse to do the thing
 that were his pleasure, which God not displeased you might do
 (as many great wise and well learned men say that in this thing
 you may) it would both be a great blot in your worship in every
 wise man's opinion and as myself have heard some say (such as
 yourself have always taken for well learned and good) a peril
 unto your soul also. But as for that point (Father) will I not be
 bold to dispute upon, since I trust in God and your good mind,
 that ye will look surely thereto. And your learning I know for
 such, that I wot well you con. But one thing is there which I
 and other your friends find and perceive abroad, which but if

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206. To A. Alington

it be showed you, you may peradventure to your great peril,
 mistake and hope for less harm (for as for good I wot well in
 this world of this matter ye look for none) then I sore fear me,
 shall be likely to fall to you. For I assure you Father, I have received
 a letter of late from my sister Alington, by which I see 45
 well that if ye change not your mind, you are likely to lose
 all those friends that are able to do you any good. Or if ye
 leese not their good wills, ye shall at the least wise leese the effect
 thereof, for any good that they shall be able to do you.'

With this my father smiled upon me and said: 'What, mistress 50
 Eve, (as I called you when you came first) hath my daughter
 Alington played the serpent with you, and with a letter set you a
 work to come tempt your father again, and for the favor that
 you bear him labor to make him swear against his conscience,
 and so send him to the devil?' And after that, he looked sadly 55
 again, and earnestly said unto me, 'Daughter Margaret, we two
 have talked of this thing ofter than twice or thrice, and that same
 tale in effect, that you tell me now therein, and the same fear too,
 have you twice told me before, and I have twice answered you
 too, that in this matter if it were possible for me to do the thing 60
 that might content the King's Grace, and God therewith not
 offended, there hath no man taken this oath already more gladly
 than I would do: as he that reckoneth himself more deeply
 bound unto the King's Highness for his most singular bounty,
 many ways showed and declared, than any of them all besides. 65
 But since standing my conscience, I can in no wise do it, and that
 for the instruction of my conscience in the matter, I have not
 slightly looked, but by many years studied and advisedly considered,
 and never could yet see nor hear that thing, nor I think
 I never shall, that could induce mine own mind to think 70
 otherwise than I do, I have no manner remedy, but God hath
 given me to the straight, that either I must deadly displease him,
 or abide any worldly harm that he shall for mine other sins,
 under name of this thing, suffer to fall upon me. Whereof (as I
 before this have told you too) I have ere I came here, not left unbethought 75
 nor unconsidered, the very worst and the uttermost that
 can by possibility fall. And albeit that I know mine own frailty
 full well and the natural faintness of mine own heart, yet if I
 had not trusted that God should give me strength rather to
 endure all things, than offend him by swearing ungodly against 80
 mine own conscience, you may be very sure I would not have come

here. And since I look in this matter but only unto God, it maketh me little matter, though men call it as it pleaseth them and say it is no conscience but a foolish scruple.'

206. To A. Alington

At this word I took a good occasion, and said unto him thus: 85
 'In good faith Father for my part, I neither do, nor it cannot become me, either to mistrust your good mind or your learning. But because you speak of that that some call it but a scruple, I assure you you shall see my sister's letter, that one of the greatest estates in this realm and a man learned too, and (as I dare say yourself shall think when you know him, and as you have already right effectually proved him) your tender friend and very special good lord, accounteth your conscience in this matter, for a right simple scruple, and you may be sure he saith it of good mind and layeth no little cause. For he saith that where you say your conscience moveth you to this, all the nobles of this realm and almost all other men too, go boldly forth with the contrary, and stick not thereat, save only yourself and one other man: whom though he be right good and very well learned too, yet would I ween, few that love you, give you the counsel against all other men to lean to his mind alone.'

And with this word I took him your letter, that he might see my words were not feigned, but spoken of his mouth, whom he much loveth and esteemeth highly. Thereupon he read over your letter. And when he came to the end, he began it afresh and read it over again. And in the reading he made no manner haste, but advised it leisurely and pointed every word. 105

And after that he paused, and then thus he said: 'Forsooth, daughter Margaret, I find my daughter Alington such as I have ever found her, and I trust ever shall, as naturally minding me as you that are mine own. Howbeit, her take I verily for mine own too, since I have married her mother, and brought up her of a child as I have brought up you, in other things and learning both, wherein I thank God she findeth now some fruit, and bringeth her own up very virtuously and well. Whereof God, I thank him, hath sent her good store, our Lord preserve them and send her much joy of them and my good son her gentle husband too, and have mercy on the soul of mine other good son her first; I am daily beadsman (and so write her) for them all. 115

'In this matter she hath used herself like herself, wisely and like a very daughter toward me, and in the end of her letter, giveth as good counsel as any man that wit hath would wish, 120

206. To A. Alington

God give me grace to follow it and God reward her for it. Now
 daughter Margaret, as for my Lord, I not only think, but have
 also found it, that he is undoubtedly my singular good lord. And 125
 in mine other business concerning the seely nun, as my cause
 was good and clear, so was he my good lord therein, and Master
 Secretary my good master too. For which I shall never cease to be
 faithful beadsman for them both and daily do I by my troth, pray
 for them as I do for myself. And whensoever it should happen 130
 (which I trust in God shall never happen) that I be found other
 than a true man to my prince, let them never favor me neither of
 them both, nor of truth no more it could become them to do.

'But in this matter, Meg, to tell the truth between thee and
 me, my lord's Aesop's fables do not greatly move me. But as his 135
 wisdom for his pastime told them merrily to mine own daughter,
 so shall I for my pastime, answer them to thee, Meg, that
 art mine other daughter. The first fable of the rain that washed
 away all their wits that stood abroad when it fell, I have heard
 often ere this: It was a tale so often told among the King's Council 140
 by my Lord Cardinal when his Grace was chancellor, that
 I cannot lightly forget it. For of truth in times past when variance
 began to fall between the Emperor and the French King,
 in such wise that they were likely and did indeed fall together
 at war, and that there were in the Council here sometimes sundry 145
 opinions, in which some were of the mind, that they thought it
 wisdom, that we should sit still and let them alone: but evermore
 against that way, my Lord used this fable of those wise
 men, that because they would not be washed with the rain that
 should make all the people fools, went themselves into caves, and 150
 hid them under the ground. But when the rain had once made
 all the remnant fools and that they come out of their caves
 and would utter their wisdom, the fools agreed together against
 them, and there all to beat them. And so said his Grace that if we
 would be so wise that we would sit in peace while the fools fought, 155
 they would not fail after, to make peace and agree and fall at
 length all upon us. I will not dispute upon his Grace's counsel,
 and I trust we never made war but as reason would. But yet this
 fable for his part, did in his days help the King and the realm
 to spend many a fair penny. But that gere is passed and his 160
 Grace is gone, our Lord assoil his soul.

'And therefore shall I now come to this Aesop's fable, as my Lord
 full merrily laid it forth for me. If those wise men, Meg, when

the rain was gone at their coming abroad, where they found
all men fools, wished themselves fools too, because they could
not rule them, then seemeth it, that the foolish rain was so sore a
shower, that even through the ground it sank into their caves,
and poured down upon their heads, and wet them to the
skin, and made them more noddies than them that stood abroad.
For if they had had any wit, they might well see, that though
they had been fools too, that thing would not have sufficed to
make them the rulers over the other fools, no more than the
other fools over them: and of so many fools all might not be
rulers. Now when they longed so sore to bear a rule among
fools, that so they they so might, they would be glad to leese
their wit and be fools too, and the foolish rain had washed them
meetly well. Howbeit, to say the truth, before the rain came,
if they thought that all the remnant should turn into fools,
and then either were so foolish that they would, or so mad to think
that they should, so few rule so many fools, and had not so
much wit as to consider, that there are none so unruly as they that
lack wit and are fools, then were these wise men stark fools
before the rain came. Howbeit daughter Roper, whom my
Lord taketh here for the wise men and whom he meaneth to
be fools, I cannot very well guess, I cannot well read such
riddles. For as Davus saith in Terence (*Non sum Oedipus*) I may
say you wot well (*Non sum Oedipus, sed Morus*) which name of
mine what it signifieth in Greek, I need not tell you. But I trust
my Lord reckoneth me among the fools, and so reckon I myself,
as my name is in Greek. And I find, I thank God, causes
not a few, whereof I so should in very deed.

'But surely among those that long to be rulers, God and mine
own conscience clearly knoweth, that no man may truly number
and reckon me. And I ween each other man's conscience can
tell himself the same, since it is so well known, that of the
King's great goodness, I was one of the greatest rulers in this
noble realm and that at mine own great labor by his great
goodness discharged. But whomsoever my Lord meaneth for
the wise me, and whomsoever his Lordship take for the fools,
and whomsoever long for the rule, and whosoever long for
none, I beseech our Lord make us all so wise as that we may every
man here so wisely rule ourselves in this time of tears, this vale
of misery, this simple wretched world (in which as Boethius saith,
one man to be proud that he beareth rule over other men, is much

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like as one mouse would be proud to bear a rule over other mice
 in a barn) God, I say, give us the grace so wisely to rule ourselves
 here, that when we shall hence in haste to meet the great
 Spouse, we be not taken sleepers and for lack of light in our
 lamps, shut out of heaven among the 5 foolish virgins. 205 206. To A. Alington

'The second fable, Marget, seemeth not to be Aesop's. For by that 210
 the matter goeth all upon confession, it seemeth to be feigned since
 Christendom began. For in Greece before Christ's days they
 used not confession, no more the men then, than the beasts now.
 And Aesop was a Greek, and died long ere Christ was born.

But what? who made it, maketh little matter. Nor I envy not that 215
 Aesop hath the name. But surely it is somewhat too subtle for me.

For whom his Lordship understandeth by the lion and the wolf,
 which both twain confessed themselves, of ravin and devouring
 of all that came to their hands, and the one enlarged his conscience
 at his pleasure in the construction of his penance, nor 220

whom by the good discrete confessor that enjoined the one a
 little penance, and the other none at all, and sent the poor ass
 to the bishop, of all these things can I nothing tell. But by the
 foolish scrupulous ass, that had so sore a conscience, for the taking
 of a straw for hunger out of his master's shoe, my Lord's other 225

words of my scruple declare, that his Lordship merrily meant
 that by me: signifying (as it seemeth by that similitude) that of
 oversight and folly, my scrupulous conscience taketh for a great
 perilous thing toward my soul, if I should swear this oath, which
 thing as his Lordship thinketh, were indeed but a trifle. And I 230

suppose well, Margaret, as you told me right now, that so
 thinketh many more besides, as well spiritual as temporal, and
 that even of those, that for their learning and their virtue myself
 not a little esteem. And yet albeit that I suppose this to be true,
 yet believe I not even very surely, that every man so thinketh that 235

so saith. But though they did, Daughter, that would not make
 much to me, not though I should see my Lord of Rochester say
 the same, and swear the oath himself before me too.

'For whereas you told me right now, that such as love me,
 would not advise me, that against all other men, I should lean 240

unto his mind alone, verily, Daughter, no more I do. For albeit,
 that of very truth, I have him in that reverent estimation, that I
 reckon in this realm no one man, in wisdom, learning and long
 approved virtue together, meet to be matched and compared with
 him, yet that in this matter I was not led by him, very well and 245

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plainly appeareth, both in that I refused the oath before it was
 offered him, and in that also that his Lordship was content to
 have sworn of that oath (as I perceived since by you when you
 moved me to the same) either somewhat more, or in some other
 manner than ever I minded to do. Verily, Daughter, I never intend 250
 (God being my good lord) to pin my soul at another
 man's back, not even the best man that I know this day living;
 for I know not whither he may hap to carry it. There is no man
 living, of whom while he liveth, I may make myself sure. Some
 may do for favor, and some may do for fear, and so might they 255
 carry my soul a wrong way. And some might hap to frame himself
 a conscience and think that while he did it for fear God
 would forgive it. And some may peradventure think that they
 will repent, and be shriven thereof, and that so God shall remit
 it them. And some may be peradventure of that mind, that if 260
 they say one thing and think the while the contrary, God more
 regardeth their heart than their tongue, and that therefore their
 oath goeth upon that they think, and not upon that they say, as a
 woman reasoned once, I trow, Daughter, you were by. But in good
 faith, Marget, I can use no such ways in so great a matter: but 265
 like as if mine own conscience served me, I would not let to do
 it, though other men refused, so though other refuse it not, I dare
 not do it, mine own conscience standing against it. If I had (as I
 told you) looked but lightly for the matter, I should have cause
 to fear. But now have I so looked for it and so long, that I purpose 270
 at the least wise to have no less regard unto my soul, than
 had once a poor honest man of the country that was called Company,'
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And with this, he told me a tale, I ween I can scant tell it you
 again, because it hangeth upon some terms and ceremonies of 275
 the law. But as far as I can call to mind my father's tale was
 this, that there is a court belonging of course unto every fair, to
 do justice in such things as happen within the same. This court
 hath a pretty fond name, but I cannot happen upon it, but it beginneth
 with a pie, and the remnant goeth much like the name of a 280
 knight that I have known, I wis, (and I trow you too, for he hath
 been at my father's often ere this, at such time as you were there,)
 a meetly tall black man, his name was Sir William Pounder.
 But, tut, let the name of the court go for this once, or call it if
 ye will a court of pie Sir William Pounder. But this was the matter 285
 lo, that upon a time at such a court held at Bartholomew

fair, there was an escheator of London that had arrested a man
 that was outlawed, and had seized his goods that he had brought
 into the fair, tolling him out of the fair by a train. The
 man that was arrested and his goods seized was a northern man,
 which by his friends made the escheator within the fair to be
 arrested upon an action, I wot ne'er what, and so was he brought
 before the judge of the court of pie Sir William Pounder, and at
 the last the matter came to a certain ceremony to be tried
 by a quest of 12 men, a jury as I remember they call it, or else a
 perjury.

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Now had the clothman by friendship of the officers, found
 the means to have all the quest almost, made of the northern men,
 such as had their booths there standing in the fair. Now was
 it come to the last day in the afternoon, and the 12 men had
 heard both the parties, and their council tell their tales at the bar,
 and were from the bar had into a place, to talk and common, and
 agree upon their sentence. Nay let me speak better in my terms
 yet, I trow the judge giveth the sentence and the quest's tale is
 called a verdict. They were scant come in together, but the northern
 men were agreed, and in effect all the other too, to cast our London
 escheator. They thought they needed no more to prove that he did
 wrong, than even the name of his bare office alone. But then was
 there then as the devil would, this honest man of another quarter,
 that was called Company. And because the fellow seemed but a
 fool and sat still and said nothing, they made no reckoning of
 him, but said, we be agreed now, come let us go give our verdict.

Then when the poor fellow saw that they made such haste, and
 his mind nothing gave him that way that theirs did, (if their
 minds gave them that way that they said) he prayed them to
 tarry and talk upon the matter and tell him such reason therein,
 that he might think as they did: and when he so should do, he
 would be glad to say with them, or else he said they must pardon
 him. For since he had a soul of his own to keep as they had,
 he must say as he thought for his, as they must for theirs. When
 they heard this, they were half angry with him. 'What good fellow'
 (quod one of the northern men) 'where wone thou? Be not we
 eleven here and you but one all alone, and all we agreed? Whereto
 shouldst you stick? What is thy name good fellow?' 'Masters'
 (quod he) 'my name is called Company.' 'Company,' quod they,
 'now by thy truth good fellow, play then the good companion,
 come thereon forth with us and pass even for good company,'

'Would God, good masters,' quod the man again, 'that there lay
no more weight thereby. But now when we shall hence and come
before God, and that he shall send you to heaven for doing
according to your conscience, and me to the devil for doing
against mine, in passing at your request here for good company
now, by God, Master Dickenson, (that was one of the northern
men's name) if I shall then say to all you again, masters, I went
once for good company with you, which is the cause that I go
now to hell, play you the good fellows now again with me, as I
went then for good company with you, so some of you go now for
good company with me. Would ye go, Master Dickenson? Nay
nay by our Lady, nor never one of you all. And therefore must
ye pardon me from passing as you pass, but if I thought in the
matter as you do, I dare not in such a matter pass for good company.
For the passage of my poor soul passeth all good company.'

And when my father had told me this tale, then said he
further thus: 'I pray thee now, good Marget, tell me this, wouldst
you wish thy poor father being at the least wise somewhat
learned, less to regard the peril of his soul, than did there the
honest unlearned man? I meddle not (you wot well) with the
conscience of any man, that hath sworn, nor I take not upon
me to be their judge. But now if they do well, and that their
conscience grudge them not, if I with my conscience to the contrary,
should for good company pass on with them and swear
as they do, when all our souls hereafter shall pass out of this
world, and stand in judgment at the bar before the high Judge,
if he judge them to heaven and me to the devil, because I did as
they did, not thinking as they thought, if I should then say (as the
good man Company said) mine old good lords and friends,
naming such a lord and such, yea and some bishops peradventure
of such as I love best, I swore because you swore, and went
that way that you went, do likewise for me now, let me not go
alone, if there be any good fellowship with you, some of you come
with me: by my troth Marget I may say to thee, in secret council,
here between us twain (but let it go no further, I beseech
thee heartily). I find the friendship of this wretched world so
fickle, that for anything that I could treat or pray, that would
for good fellowship go to the devil with me, among them all
I ween I should not find one. And then by God, Marget, if
you think so too, best it is I suppose that for any respect of them
all were they twice as many more as they be, I have myself a

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respect to mine own soul.'

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'Surely, Father,' quod I, 'without any scruple at all, you may be
bold I dare say for to swear that. But Father, they that think you
should not refuse to swear the thing, that you see so many so
good men and so well learned swear before you, mean not that
you should swear to bear them fellowship, nor to pass with
them, for good company: but that the credence that you may with
reason give to their persons for their aforesaid qualities, should
well move you to think the oath such of itself, as every man
may well swear without peril of their soul, if their own private
conscience to the contrary be not the let: and that ye well ought
and have good cause to change your own conscience, in confirming
your own conscience to the conscience of so many other,
namely being such as you know they be. And since it is also by a
law made by the parliament commanded, they think that you
be upon the peril of your soul, bound to change and reform
your conscience, and confirm your own as I said to other men's.'

'Marry, Marget' (quod my father again), 'for the part that you
play, you play it not much amiss. But Margaret first, as for
the law of the land, though every man being born and inhabiting
therein, is bound to the keeping in every case upon some temporal
pain, and in many cases upon pain of God's displeasure too,
yet is there no man bound to swear that every law is well made,
nor bound upon the pain of God's displeasure, to perform
any such point of the law, as were indeed unlawful. Of which
manner kind, that there may such hap to be made in any part
of Christendom, I suppose no man doubteth, the general council
of the whole body of Christendom evermore in that point except:
which (though it may make some things better than other,
and some things may grow to that point, that by another law
they may need to be reformed, yet to institute anything in
such wise, to God's displeasure, as at the making might not lawfully
be performed, the spirit of God that governeth his church,
never hath it suffered, nor never hereafter shall, his whole catholic
church lawfully gathered together in a general council, (as
Christ hath made plain promises in Scripture).

'Now if it so hap, that in any particular part of Christendom,
there be a law made, that be such as for some part thereof some
men think that the law of God cannot bear it, and some other
think yes, the thing being in such manner in question, that through
diverse quarters of Christendom, some that are good men and

cunning, both of our own days and before our days, think
 some one way, and some other of like learning and goodness
 think the contrary, in this case he that thinketh against the law,
 neither may swear that law lawfully was made, standing his own
 conscience to the contrary, nor is bound upon pain of God's
 displeasure to change his own conscience therein, for any particular
 law made anywhere, other than by the general council or by
 a general faith grown by the working of God universally
 through all Christian nations: nor other authority than one of these
 twain (except special revelation and express commandment
 of God) since the contrary opinions of good men and well learned,
 as I put you the case, made the understanding of the Scriptures
 doubtful, I can see none that lawfully may command and compel
 any man to change his own opinion, and to translate his
 own conscience from the one side to the other.

'For an example of some such manner things, I have I trow
 before this time told you, that whether our Blessed Lady were
 conceived in original sin or not, was sometime in great question
 among the great learned men of Christendom. And whether it
 be yet decided and determined by any general council, I remember
 not. But this I remember well, that notwithstanding that the
 feast of her conception was then celebrated in the Church (at the
 least wise in diverse provinces) yet was holy St. Bernard, which as
 his manifold books made in the laud and praise of our Lady
 do declare, was of as devout affection toward all things sounding
 toward her commendation, that he thought might well be
 verified or suffered, as any man was living, yet (I say) was that
 holy devout man against that part of her praise, as appeareth
 well by an epistle of his, wherein he right sore and with great reason
 argueth thereagainst, and approveth not the institution of that
 feast neither. Nor he was not of this mind alone, but many
 other well learned men with him, and right holy men too. Now
 was there on the other side, the blessed holy bishop, St. Anselm,
 and he not alone neither, but many well learned and very virtuous
 also with him. And they be both twain holy saints in heaven,
 and many more that were on either side. Nor neither part was there
 bound to change their opinion for the other, nor for any provincial
 council either.

'But like as after the determination of a well assembled general
 council, every man had been bound to give credence that way,
 and confirm their own conscience to the determination of the

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council general, and then all they that held the contrary
 before, were for that holding out of blame, so if before such decision
 a man had against his own conscience, sworn to maintain
 and defend the other side, he had not failed to offend God very
 sore. But, marry, if on the other side a man would in a matter 455
 take away by himself upon his own mind alone, or with some
 few, or with never so many, against, an evident truth appearing
 by the common faith of Christendom, this conscience is very
 damnable, yea, or if it be not even fully so plain and evident, yet
 if he see but himself with far the fewer part, think the one 460
 way, against far the more part of as well learned and as good,
 as those are that affirm the thing that he thinketh, thinking
 and affirming the contrary, and that of such folk as he hath no
 reasonable cause wherefore he should not in that matter suppose,
 that those which say they think against his mind, affirm the 465
 thing that they say, for none other cause but for that they so
 think indeed, this is of very truth a very good occasion to
 move him, and yet not to compel him, to confirm his mind
 and conscience unto theirs.

'But Margaret, for what causes I refuse the oath, the thing (as 470
 I have often told you) I will never show you, neither you nor
 nobody else, except the King's Highness should like to command
 me. Which if his Grace did, I have ere this told you
 therein how obediently I have said. But surely, Daughter, I have
 refused it and do, for more causes than one. And for what causes 475
 soever I refuse it, this am I sure, that it is well known, that of
 them that have sworn it, some of the best learned before the oath
 given them, said and plain affirmed the contrary, of some such
 things as they have now sworn in the oath, and that upon their
 troth, and their learning then, and that not in haste nor suddenly, 480
 but often and after great diligence done to seek and find out the
 truth.'

'That might be, Father' (quod I), 'and yet since they might
 see more, I will not' (quod he), 'dispute, daughter Margaret,
 against that, nor misjudge any other man's conscience, which 485
 lieth in their own heart far out of my sight. But this will I say,
 that I never heard myself the cause of their change, by any
 new further thing found of authority, than as far as I perceive
 they had looked on, and as I suppose, very well weighed before.
 Now of the selfsame things that they saw before, seem some 490
 otherwise unto them now, than they did before, I am for their

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sakes the gladder a great deal. But anything that ever I saw
before, yet at this day to me they seem but as they did. And therefore,
though they may do otherwise than they might, yet, Daughter,
I may not. As for such things as some men would haply 495
say, that I might with reason the less regard their change, for
any example of them to be taken to the change of my conscience,
because that the keeping of the prince's pleasure, and the avoiding
of his indignation, the fear of the losing of their worldly substance,
with regard unto the discomfort of their kindred and 500
their friends, might hap make some men either swear otherwise
than they think, or frame their conscience afresh to think
otherwise than they thought, any such opinion as this is, will I
not conceive of them, I have better hope of their goodness than
to think of them so. For if such things should have turned 505
them, the same things have been likely to make me do the same,
for in good faith I knew few so fainthearted as myself. Therefore
will I, Margaret, by my will, think no worse of other folk
in the thing that I know not, than I find in myself. But as I
know well mine only conscience causeth me to refuse the oath, 510
so will I trust in God, that according to their conscience, they
have received it and sworn.

'But whereas you think, Marget, that they be so many more
than there are on the other side that think in this thing as I
think, surely for your own comfort that you shall not take 515
thought, thinking that your father casteth himself away so like a
fool, that he would jeopard the loss of his substance, and peradventure
his body, without any cause why he so should for
peril of his soul, but rather his soul in peril thereby too, to this
shall I say to thee, Marget, that in some of my causes I nothing 520
doubt at all, but that though not in this realm, yet in Christendom
about, of those well learned men and virtuous that are yet
alive, they be not the fewer part that are of my mind. Besides
that, that it were ye wot well possible, that some men in this
realm too, think not so clear the contrary, as by the oath received 525
they have sworn to say.

'Now this far forth I say for them that are yet alive. But go
we now to them that are dead before, and that are I trust in heaven,
I am sure that it is not the fewer part of them that all the time
while they lived, thought in some of the things, the way that I 530
think now. I am also, Margaret, of this thing sure enough,
that of those holy doctors and saints, which to be with God in

heaven long ago no Christian man doubteth, whose books yet at
 this day remain here in men's hands, there thought in some such
 things, as I think now. I say not that they thought all so, but
 surely such and so many as will well appear by their writing,
 that I pray God give me the grace that my soul may follow theirs.
 And yet I show you not all, Margaret, that I have for myself in
 the sure discharge of my conscience. But for the conclusion, daughter
 Margaret, of all this matter, as I have often told you, I take
 not upon me neither to define nor dispute in these matters, nor I
 rebuke not nor impugn any other man's deed, nor I never wrote,
 nor so much as spoke in any company, any word of reproach in
 anything that the Parliament had passed, nor I meddled not with
 the conscience of any other man, that either thinketh or saith he
 thinketh contrary unto mine. But as concerning mine own
 self, for thy comfort shall I say, Daughter, to thee, that mine
 own conscience in this matter (I damn none other man's) is
 such, as may well stand with mine own salvation, thereof am I,
 Meg, so sure, as that is, God is in heaven. And therefore as for
 all the remnant, goods, lands, and life both (if the chance
 should so fortune) since this conscience is sure for me, I verily
 trust in God, he shall rather strengthen me to bear the loss, than
 against this conscience to swear and put my soul in peril, since all
 the causes that I perceive move other men to the contrary, seem
 not such unto me, as in my conscience make any change.'

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When he saw me sit with this very sad, as I promise you,
 Sister, my heart was full heavy for the peril of his person, for
 in faith I fear not his soul, he smiled upon me and said: 'how
 now daughter, Marget? What how mother Eve? Where is your
 mind now? sit not musing with some serpent in your breast, upon
 some new persuasion, to offer father Adam the apple yet once
 again?' 'In good faith, Father,' quod I, 'I can no further go, but
 am (as I trow Criseyde saith in Chaucer) come to Dulcarnon, even
 at my wits end. For since the example of so many wise men
 cannot in this matter move you, I see not what to say more, but
 if I should look to persuade you with the reason that Master
 Harry Patenson made. For he met one day one of our men, and
 when he had asked where you were, and heard that you were in
 the Tower still, he waxed even angry with you and said, "Why?
 What aileth him that he will not swear? Wherefore should he
 stick to swear? I have sworn the oath myself." And so I can
 in good faith go now no further neither, after so many wise men

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whom ye take for no example, but if I should say like Mr. Harry, 206. To A. Alington
 Why should you refuse to swear, Father? for I have sworn myself.' 575
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At this he laughed and said, 'That word was like Eve too, for she
 offered Adam no worse fruit than she had eaten herself.' 'But
 yet Father, ' quod I, 'by my troth, I fear me very sore, that this
 matter will bring you in marvelous heavy trouble. You know 580
 well that as I showed you, Mr. Secretary sent you word as your
 very friend, to remember, that the Parliament lasteth yet.' 'Margaret,'
 quod my father, 'I thank him right heartily. But as I showed
 you then again, I left not this gere unthought on. And albeit I
 know well that if they would make a law to do me any harm, 585
 that law could never be lawful, but that God shall I trust
 keep me in that grace, that concerning my duty to my prince,
 no man shall do me hurt but if he do me wrong (and then
 as I told you, this is like a riddle, a case in which a man may leese
 his head and have no harm), and notwithstanding also that I 590
 have good hope, that God shall never suffer so good and wise a
 prince, in such wise to requite the long service of his true faithful
 servant, yet since there is nothing impossible to fall, I forget
 not in this matter, the counsel of Christ in the gospel, that ere
 I should begin to build this castle for the safeguard of mine 595
 own soul, I should sit and reckon what the charge would be. I
 accounted, Marget, full surely many a restless night, while my
 wife slept, and weened that I had slept too, what peril was possible
 for to fall to me, so far forth that I am sure there can come none
 above. And in devising, Daughter, thereupon, I had a full heavy 600
 heart. But yet (I thank our Lord) for all that, I never thought to
 change, though the very uttermost should hap me that my
 fear ran upon.'

'No, Father (quod I), it is not like to think upon a thing that
 may be, and to see a think that shall be, as ye should (our Lord 605
 save you) if the chance should so fortune. And then should you
 peradventure think, that you think not now and yet then peradventure
 it would be too late.' 'Too late, Daughter,' (quod my father),
 'Margaret?' I beseech our Lord, that if ever I make such a change,
 it may be too late, indeed. For well I wot the change cannot be 610
 good for my soul that change I say that should grow but by
 fear. And therefore I pray God that in this world I never have
 good of such change. For so much as I take harm here, I shall
 have at the least wise the less therefore when I am hence. And if

so were that I wist well now, that I should faint and fall, and for
 fear swear hereafter, yet would I wish to take harm by the
 refusing first, for so should I have the better hope for grace to
 rise again. 615 206. To A. Alington

'And albeit (Marget) that I wot well my lewdness hath been
 such: that I know myself well worthy that God should let me
 slip, yet can I not but trust in his merciful goodness, that as his
 grace hath strengthened me hitherto, and made me content in my
 heart, to leese good, land and life too, rather than to swear against
 my conscience, and hath also put in the King toward me that
 good and gracious mind, that as yet he hath taken from me nothing
 but my liberty (wherewith (as help me God), his grace hath
 done me so great good by the spiritual profit that I trust I take
 thereby, that among all his great benefits heaped upon me so
 thick, I reckon upon my faith my imprisonment even the very chief)
 I cannot, I say, therefore mistrust the grace of God, but that either
 he shall conserve and keep the King in that gracious mind still
 to do me none hurt, or else if his pleasure be, that for mine other
 sins I shall suffer in such a case in sight as I shall not deserve,
 his grace shall give me the strength to take it patiently, and peradventure
 somewhat gladly too, whereby his high goodness shall (by
 the merits of his bitter passion joined thereunto, and far surmounting
 in merit for me, all that I can suffer myself) make
 it serve for release of my pain in purgatory, and over that for
 increase of some reward in heaven. 620 625 630 635

'Mistrust him, Meg, will I not, though I feel me faint, yea,
 and though I should feel my fear even at point to overthrow
 me too, yet shall I remember how St. Peter, with a blast of wind,
 began to sink for his faint faith, and shall do as he did, call upon
 Christ and pray him to help. And then I trust he shall set his
 holy hand unto me, and in the stormy seas, hold me up from
 drowning. Yea and if he suffer me to play St. Peter further, and to
 fall full to the ground, and swear and foreswear too (which our
 Lord for his tender passion keep me from, and let me leese if it
 so fall, and never win thereby:) yet after shall I trust that his
 goodness will cast upon me his tender piteous eye, as he did upon
 St. Peter, and make me stand up again and confess the truth
 of my conscience afresh, and abide the shame and harm
 here of mine own fault. 640 645 650

'And finally Marget, this wot I well, that without my fault he
 will not let me be lost. I shall therefore with good hope commit 655

myself wholly to him. And if he suffer me for my faults to
 perish, yet shall I then serve for a praise of his justice. But in good
 faith Meg, I trust that his tender pity shall keep my poor soul
 safe and make me commend his mercy. And therefore mine own
 good daughter, never trouble thy mind for anything that ever
 shall hap me in this world. Nothing can come but that that
 God will. And I make me very sure that whatsoever that be,
 seem it never so bad in sight, it shall indeed be the best. And
 with this, my good child, I pray you heartily, be you and all your
 sisters and my sons too comfortable and serviceable to your good
 mother my wife. And of your good husbands' minds I have no
 manner doubt. Commend me to them all, and to my good daughter
 Alington, and to all my other friends, sisters, nieces, nephews,
 and allies, and unto all our servants, man, woman, and child,
 and all my good neighbors and our acquaintance abroad. And
 I right heartily pray both you and them, to serve God and be
 merry and rejoice in him. And if anything hap me that you
 would be loath, pray to God for me, but trouble not yourself:
 as I shall full heartily pray for us all, that we may meet together
 once in heaven, where we shall make merry forever, and never
 have trouble after.'

206. To A. Alington

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207. To Dr. Nicholas Wilson. Tower of London, 1534

*A letter written and sent by Sir T. More to Master Doctor
 Nicholas Wilson (then both prisoners in the Tower of London)
 in the year of our Lord God 1534, and in the xxvi
 year of the reign of King Henry the eight. [EW 1443]*

Our Lord be your comfort and whereas I perceive
 by sundry means that you have promised to swear the oath, I
 beseech our Lord give you thereof good luck. I never gave any
 man counsel to the contrary in my days nor never used any
 ways to put any scruple in other folks' conscience concerning
 the matter. And whereas I perceive that you would gladly
 know what I intend to do you wot well that I told you
 when we were both abroad that I would therein neither know
 your mind nor no man's else nor you nor no man else should
 therein know mine, for I would be no partaker with no man
 nor of truth never I will but leaving every other man to their own
 conscience myself will with good grace follow mine. For

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against mine own to swear were peril of damnation and
 what mine own shall be tomorrow myself cannot be sure and
 whether I shall have finally the grace to do according to mine
 own conscience or not hangeth in God's goodness and not in
 mine, to whom I beseech you heartily remember me in your
 devout prayers and I shall and daily do remember you in
 mine, such as they be, and as long as my poor short life shall
 last, anything that I have, your part shall be therein.

207. To Dr. Wilson

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208. To Dr. Nicholas Wilson. Tower of London, 1534

*Another letter written and sent by Sir Thomas More to Master
 Doctor Wilson (then both prisoners in the Tower) in
 the year of our Lord, 1534, and in the xxvi year of the
 reign of King Henry the eight. [EW 1443]*

*Master Wilson in my right hearty wise I recommend
 me to you.*

And very sorry am I to see you besides the trouble that you
 be in by this imprisonment with loss of liberty, goods, revenues
 of your livelihood and comfort of your friends' company,
 fallen also into such agony and vexation of mind through doubts
 falling in your mind, that diversely to and fro toss and trouble
 your conscience to your great heaviness of heart as I (to no little
 grief of mine own mind for your sake) perceive. And so much
 am I for you good Mr. Doctor the more sorry for that it lieth not
 in me to give you such kind of comfort as meseemeth you
 somewhat desire and look for at mine hand.

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For whereas you would somewhat hear of my mind in your
 doubts, I am a man at this day very little meet therefore. For
 this you know well, good Mr. Doctor, that at such time as the
 matter came in such manner in question as mine opinion was
 asked therein amongst other and yet you made privy thereunto
 before me, you remember well that at that time you and I many
 things talked together thereof. And by all the time after by which
 I did at the King's gracious commandment both seek out
 and read and common with all such as I knew made privy
 to the matter to perceive what I might therein upon both sides
 and by indifferent weighing of everything as near as my poor wit
 and learning would serve to see to which side my conscience could

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208. To Dr. Wilson

incline, and as my own mind should give me so to make his
 Highness report which way myself should hap to think
 therein. For other commandment had I never of his Grace in 25
 good faith, saving that this knot his Highness added thereto that
 I should therein look first unto God and after God unto him,
 which word was also the first lesson that his Grace gave me what
 time I came first into his noble service and neither a more indifferent
 commandment nor a more gracious lesson could 30
 there in my mind never King give his counselor or any his
 other servant.

But as I began to tell you by all this long time, I cannot now
 tell how many years, of all those that I talked with of the matter
 and with whom I most conferred those places of Scripture and 35
 of the old holy Doctors that touched either the one side or
 the other, with the councils and laws on either side, that
 speak thereof also, the most, as I trow you wot well, was yourself.
 For with no man communed I so much and so often thereof
 as with you, both for your substantial learning and for your 40
 mature judgment, and for that I well perceived ever in you that
 no man had or lightly could have, a more faithful respect
 unto the King's honor and surety both of body and soul than
 I ever saw that you had.

And yet among many other things which I well liked in 45
 you, one specially was that I well perceived in the thing that
 the King's Grace did put you in trust with, your substantial
 secret manner. For where I had heard (I wot not now of
 whom) that you had written his Highness a book of that
 matter from Paris before, yet in all those years of our long 50
 acquaintance and often talking and reasoning upon the thing,
 I never heard you so much as make once any mention of that
 book. But else (except there were any other things in that
 book that you peradventure thought not on) I suppose that all
 that ever came to your mind, that might in the matter make 55
 for the one side or the other comprised either in the Scripture
 or in the old ancient Doctors, I verily think in my mind
 that you did communicate with me and I likewise with
 you and at the least wise remember well, that of those points
 which you call now newly to your remembrance there was none 60
 at that time forgotten.

I remember well also by your often conference in the matter
 that by all the time in which I studied about it, you and I

were in every point both twain of one opinion and remember
 well that the laws and councils and the words of Saint
 Augustine *De civitate Dei* and the epistle of Saint Ambrose *Ad
 paternum* and the epistle of Saint Basil translated out of Greek
 and the writing of Saint Gregory you and I read together and
 over that the places of the Scripture self both in Leviticus and
 in the Deuteronomy and in the Gospel and in Saint Paul's
 epistles and over this in that other place of Saint Augustine that
 you remember now and besides that other places of his, wherein
 he properly toucheth the matter expressly with the words of
 Saint Jerome and of Saint Chrysostom too, and I cannot
 now remember of how many more. But I verily think that on
 your part, and I am very sure that on my part albeit that it
 had been peradventure overlong to show and read with you
 every man's book that I read by myself whereto the parties
 peradventure that trusted me therewith gave me no leave to show
 their books further as you peradventure used the like manner
 with me, yet in good faith as it was of reason my part in that
 case to do, you and I having both one commandment indifferently
 to consider the matter, everything of Scripture and of the
 Doctors I faithfully communed with you and as I suppose
 verily so did you with me too, so that of me, good Master Doctor,
 though I had all the points as ripe in mind now as I had
 then and had still all the books about me that I then had, and
 were as willing to meddle in the matter as any man could be,
 yet could you now no new thing hear of me, more than you
 have, I ween, heard often before, nor I ween I of you neither.

208. To Dr. Wilson

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But now standeth it with me in far other case. For afterward
 when I had signified unto the King's Highness mine own
 poor opinion in the matter which his Highness very graciously
 took in good part and that I saw further progress in the
 matter wherein to do his Grace service to his pleasure I could
 not, and anything meddle against his pleasure I would not, I determined
 utterly with myself to discharge my mind of any
 further studying or musing of the matter and thereupon I sent
 home again such books as I had saving that some I burned by
 the consent of the owner that was minded as myself was no more
 to meddle of the matter, and therefore now good Master Doctor I
 could not be sufficient and able to reason those points again
 though I were minded thereto since many things are out of my
 mind which I never purpose to look for again nor though

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I would were never like to find again while I live. Besides
 this, all that ever I looked for was, you wot well, concerning two
 or three questions to be pondered and weighted by the study of
 scripture and the interpreters of the same, save for somewhat that
 hath been touched in the same by the cannon laws of the
 Church.

105 208. To Dr. Wilson

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But then were there at that time in the matter other things
 more, diverse faults found in the bull of the dispensation, by
 which the King's Council learned in the spiritual law
 reckoned the bull vicious, partly for untrue suggestion, partly
 by reason of insufficient suggestion. Now concerning those
 points I never meddled. For I neither understand the doctors
 of the law nor well can turn their books. And many things
 have there since in this great matter grown in question wherein
 I neither am sufficiently learned in the law nor full informed
 of the fact and therefore I am not he that either murmur or
 grudge, make assertions, hold opinions or keep dispicions in the
 matter, but like the King's true poor humble subject daily
 pray for the preservation of his Grace, and the Queen's Grace
 and their noble issue and of all the realm, without harm
 doing or intending, I thank our Lord, unto any man living.

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Finally as touching the oath, the causes for which I refused
 it, no man witteth what they be for they be secret in mine
 own conscience, some other peradventure, than those that other
 men would ween, and such as I never disclosed unto any man
 yet nor never intend to do while I live. Finally as I said unto
 you, before the oath offered unto us when we met in London at
 adventure I would be no partaker in the matter but for mine
 own self follow mine own conscience, for which myself must
 make answer unto God, and shall leave every other man to his
 own, so say to you still and I dare say further that no more
 never intended you neither. Many things every man learned
 woteth well there are, in which every man is at liberty without
 peril of damnation to think which way him list till the
 one part be determined for necessary to be believed by a general
 council and I am not he that take upon me to define or determine
 of what kind or nature everything is that the oath containeth,
 nor am so bold or presumptuous to blame or dispraise the
 conscience of other men, their truth nor their learning neither,
 nor I meddle with no man but of myself, nor of no man's conscience
 else will I meddle but of mine own. And in mine own

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conscience, I cry God mercy, I find of mine own life, matters
enough to think on.

208. To Dr. Wilson

I have lived, methinks, a long life and now neither I
look nor I long to live much longer. I have since I came in the
Tower looked once or twice to have given up my ghost ere this and 150
in good faith mine heart waxed the lighter with hope thereof.
Yet forget I not that I have a long reckoning and a great to give
account of, but I put my trust in God and in the merits of his
bitter passion, and I beseech him give me and keep me the mind
to long to be out of this world and to be with him. For I can 155
never but trust that whoso long to be with him shall be welcome
to him and on the other side my mind giveth me verily that
any that ever shall come to him shall full heartily wish to be
with him ere ever he shall come at him. And I beseech him
heartily to set your heart at such rest and quiet as may be to 160
his pleasure and eternal weal of your soul and so I verily trust
that he shortly shall and shall also if it be his pleasure incline the
King's noble heart to be gracious and favorable to you and me
both, since we be both twain of true faithful mind unto
him, whether we be in this matter of one mind both, or of 165
diverse. *Sicut divisiones aquarum, ita cor regis in manu Domini,*
quocunque voluerit, inclinabit illud. And if the pleasure of God
be, on any of us both otherwise to dispose, I need to give you
no counsel nor advice.

But for myself I most humbly beseech him to give me the 170
grace in such wise patiently to conform my mind unto his
high pleasure therein that after the troublous storm of this my
tempestuous time his great mercy may conduct me into the
sure haven of the joyful bliss of heaven, and after at his further
pleasure (if I have any) all mine enemies too, for there shall we 175
love together well enough and I thank our Lord for my part
so do I here too. Be not angry now though I pray not like for you,
you be sure enough I would my friends fare no worse than they,
nor yet they, so help me God, no worse than myself.

For our Lord's sake, good Mr. Wilson, pray for me for I pray 180
for you daily and sometimes when I would be sorry but if I
thought you were asleep. Comfort yourself, good Mr. Doctor,
with remembering God's great mercy and the King's accustomed
goodness, and by my troth I think that all his Grace's
Council favoereth you in their hearts. I cannot judge in my 185
mind any one of them so evil as to be of the mind that you

should do otherwise than well. And for conclusion in God is all. *Spes non confundit*. I pray you pardon my scribbling for I cannot always so well endure to write as I might sometimes. And I pray you when ye see time convenient at your pleasure, send me this rude bill again. *Quia quanquam nihil inest mali, tamen propter ministrum nolim rescire*.

208. To Dr. Wilson

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209. From Margaret Roper. 1534

A letter written and sent by Mistress Margaret Roper, to her father Sir Thomas More then shut up in close prison in the Tower, written in the year of our Lord God 1534, and in the xxvi year of the reign of King Henry the eight, answering to a letter which her father had sent unto her. [EW 1446]

Mine own most entirely beloved Father.

I think myself never able to give you sufficient thanks, for the inestimable comfort my poor heart received in the reading of your most loving and godly letter, representing to me the clear shining brightness of your soul, the pure temple of the Holy Spirit of God, which I doubt not shall perpetually rest in you and you in him. Father, if all the world had been given to me, as I be saved it had been a small pleasure, in comparison of the pleasure I conceived of the treasure of your letter, which though it were written with a coal, is worthy in mine opinion to be written in letters of gold.

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Father, what moved them to shut you up again, we can nothing hear. But surely I conjecture that when they considered that you were of so temperate mind, that you were contented to abide there all your life with such liberty, they thought it were never possible to incline you to their will, except it were by restraining you from the Church, and the company of my good mother your dear wife and us your children and beadsfolk. But Father this chance was not strange to you. For I shall not forget how you told us when we were with you in the garden, that these things were like enough to chance shortly after. Father, I have many times rehearsed to mine own comfort and diverse others', your fashion and words ye had to us when we were last with you: for which I trust by the grace of God to be the better while I live, and when I am departed out of this frail life, which, I pray God, I

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may pass and end in his true obedient service, after the wholesome 25 209. From M. Roper
 counsel and fruitful example of living I have had (good
 Father) of you, whom I pray God give me grace to follow: which
 I shall the better through the assistance of your devout prayers,
 the special stay of my frailty. Father, I am sorry I have no longer
 leisure at this time to talk with you, the chief comfort of my 30
 life, I trust to have occasion to write again shortly. I trust I have
 your daily prayer and blessing.

Your most loving obedient daughter and beadswoman Margaret
 Roper, which daily and hourly is bound to pray for you, for 35
 whom she prayeth in this wise that our Lord of his infinite
 mercy give you of his heavenly comfort, and so to assist you with
 his special grace that ye never in anything decline from his
 blessed will, but live and die his true obedient servant. Amen.

210. To Margaret Roper. Tower of London, 1534

*A letter written and sent by Sir Thomas More to his daughter
 Mistress Roper answering her letter here next before. [EW 1446]*

The Holy Spirit of God be with you.

If I would with my writing, (mine own good daughter)
 declare how much pleasure and comfort, your daughterly
 loving letters were unto me a peck of coals would not suffice to
 make me the pens. And other pens have I (good Margaret)
 none here: and therefore can I write you no long process, nor 5
 dare adventure, good daughter, to write often.

The cause of my close keeping again did of likelihood grow of
 my negligent and very plain true word which you remember.
 And verily whereas my mind gave me (as I told you in the
 garden) that some such thing were likely to happen, so doth 10
 my mind always give me, that some folk yet weened that I was
 not so poor as it appeared in the search, and that it may therefore
 happen, that yet eftsoons after than once, some new sudden searches
 may hap to be made in every house of ours as narrowly as is
 possible. Which thing if ever it so should hap, can make 15
 but game to us that know the truth of my poverty, but if they
 find out my wife's gay girdle and her golden beads. Howbeit I
 verily believe in good faith, that the King's Grace of his benign
 pity will take nothing from her.

I thought and yet think, that it may be that I was shut up 20 210. From M. Roper
 again, upon some new causeless suspicion, grown peradventure
 upon some secret sinister information, whereby some folk haply
 thought, that there should be found out against me some other
 greater things. But I thank our Lord whensoever this conjecture
 hath fallen in my mind, the clearness of my conscience hath 25
 made mine heart hop for joy. For one thing am I very sure
 of hitherto and trust in God's mercy to be while I live, that as
 often I have said unto you, I shall for anything toward my prince,
 never take great harm, but if I take great wrong, in the sight
 of God I say, howsoever it shall seem in the sight of men. For 30
 to the world, wrong may seem right sometimes by false conjecturing,
 sometimes by false witnesses, as that good Lord said
 unto you, which is I dare say my very good lord in his mind,
 and said it of very good will. Before the world also, my refusing
 of this oath is accounted an heinous offence, and my religious 35
 fear, toward God, is called obstinacy toward my Prince. But my
 Lords of the Council before whom I refused it, might well perceive
 by the heaviness of my heart appearing well more ways than
 one unto them, that all sturdy stubbornness whereof obstinacy
 groweth, was very far from my mind. For the clearer proof 40
 whereof, since they seemed to take for one argument of obstinacy in
 me, that refusing of the oath, I would not declare the causes why,
 I offered with a full heavy heart, that albeit I rather would endure
 all the pain and peril of the statute than by the declaring of the
 causes, give any occasion of exasperation unto my most dread 45
 Sovereign Lord and Prince, yet rather than his Highness should
 for not disclosing the causes, account me for stubborn and
 obstinate, I would upon such his gracious license and commandment
 as should discharge me of his displeasure and peril of any
 statute, declare those points that letted my poor conscience to 50
 receive that oath; and would over that be sworn before, that if
 I should after the causes disclosed and declared find them so
 answered as my conscience should think itself satisfied, I
 would thereupon swear the oath that I there refused. To this,
 Master Secretary answered me, that though the King's Grace 55
 gave me such a license, yet it could not discharge me against
 the statutes, in saying anything that were by them upon heinous
 pains prohibited. In this good warning he showed himself my
 special tender friend.

And now you see well Margaret, that it is no obstinacy to leave 60

the causes undeclared, while I could not declare them without
 peril. But now is it accounted great obstinacy that I refuse the
 oath, whatsoever my causes be, considering that of so many
 wiser and better men none stuck thereat. And Mr. Secretary of a
 great zeal that he bore unto me, swore there before them a great
 65 oath, that for the displeasure that he thought the King's Highness
 would bear me, and the suspicion that his Grace would conceive
 of me, which would now think in his mind that all the Nun's
 business was wrought and devised by me, he had liefer than I
 should have refused the oath, that his own only son (which
 70 is a goodly young gentleman of whom our Lord send him
 much joy) had had his head stricken off. This word Margaret,
 as it was a marvelous declaration of Mr. Secretary's great good
 mind and favor toward me, so was it an heavy hearing to
 me, that the King's Grace my most dread Sovereign Lord, were
 75 likely to conceive such high suspicion of me, and bear such
 grievous indignation toward me, for the thing, which without
 the danger and peril of my poor soul, lay not in my hand to
 help, nor doth.

Now have I heard since, that some say that this obstinate manner
 80 of mine, in still refusing the oath, shall peradventure force and
 drive the King's Grace to make a further law for me. I cannot
 let such a law to be made. But I am very sure, that if I died by
 such a law, I should die for that point innocent before God.
 And albeit (good daughter) that I think, our Lord that hath the
 85 hearts of kings in his hand, would never suffer of his high
 goodness, so gracious a Prince, and so many honorable men, and
 so many good men as be in the Parliament to make such an unlawful
 law, as that should be if it so mishapped, yet lest I note that
 point unthought upon, but many times more than one revolved
 90 and cast in my mind before my coming hither, both that
 peril and all other that might put my body in peril of death
 by the refusing of this oath. In devising whereupon, albeit (mine
 own good daughter) that I found myself (I cry God mercy)
 95 very sensual and my flesh much more shrinking from pain
 and from death, than me thought it the part of a faithful Christian
 man, in such a case as my conscience gave me, that in the
 saving of my body should stand the loss of my soul, yet I
 thank our Lord, that in that conflict, the Spirit had in conclusion
 100 the mastery, and reason with help of faith finally concluded,
 that for to be put to death wrongfully for doing well (as I am

210. From M. Roper

very sure I do, in refusing to swear against mine own conscience,
 being such as I am not upon peril of my soul bound
 to change whether my death should come without law, or by
 color of a law) it is a case in which a man may leese his head
 and yet have none harm, but instead of harm inestimable good
 at the hand of God. 210. From M. Roper

And I thank our Lord (Meg) since I am come hither I set
 by death every day less than other. For though a man leese of
 his years in this world, it is more than manifold recompensed
 by coming the sooner to heaven. And though it be a pain to
 die while a man is in health yet see I very few that in sickness
 die with ease. And finally, very sure am I that whensoever the
 time shall come that may hap to come, God wot how soon, in
 which I should lie sick in my deathbed by nature, I shall
 then think that God had done much for me, if he had suffered
 me to die before by the color of such a law. And therefore y
 reason showeth me (Margaret) that it were great folly for me to be
 sorry to come to that death, which I would after wish that I
 had died. Besides that, that a man may hap with less thanks
 of God, and more adventure of his soul to die as violently, and
 as painfully by many other chances, as by enemies or thieves.
 And therefore mine own good daughter I assure you (thanks
 be to God) the thinking of any such albeit it hath grieved me
 ere this, yet at this day grieveth me nothing. And yet I know
 well for all this mine own frailty, and that Saint Peter which
 feared it much less than I, fell in such fear soon after, that at
 the word of a simple girl he forsook and foreswore our Savior.
 And therefore am I not (Meg) so mad, as to warrant myself
 to stand. But I shall pray, and I pray thee mine own good
 daughter to pray with me, that it may please God that hath
 given me this mind, to give me the grace to keep it.

And thus have I mine own good daughter disclosed unto you,
 the very secret bottom of my mind, referring the order thereof
 only to the goodness of God, and that so fully, that I assure you
 Margaret on my faith, I never have prayed God to bring me
 hence nor deliver me from death, but referring all-thing whole
 unto his only pleasure, as to him that seeth better what is best
 for me than myself doth. Nor never longed I since I came
 hither to set my foot in mine own house, for any desire of
 or pleasure of my house, but gladly would I sometimes somewhat
 talk with my friends, and especially my wife and you that

pertain to my charge. But since that God otherwise disposeth, I
 commit all wholly to his goodness and take daily great comfort
 in that I perceive that you live together so charitably and so
 quietly: I beseech our Lord continue it. And thus, mine own
 good daughter, putting you finally in remembrance, that albeit
 if the necessity so should require, I thank our Lord in this
 quiet and comfort is mine heart at this day, and I trust in God's
 goodness so shall have grace to continue, yet (as I said before) I
 verily trust that God shall so inspire and govern the King's
 heart, that he shall not suffer his noble heart and courage to
 requite my true faithful heart and service, with such extreme
 unlawful and uncharitable dealing, only for the displeasure that
 I cannot think so as other do. But his true subject will I live
 and die, and truly pray for him will I, both here and in the
 other world too.

210. From M. Roper

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And thus mine own good daughter have me recommended to
 my good bedfellow and all my children, men, women and all
 with all your babes and your nurses and all the maids and all
 the servants, and all our kin, and all our other friends
 abroad. And I beseech our Lord to save them all and keep them.
 And I pray you all pray for me, and I shall pray for you
 all. And take no thought for me whatsoever you shall hap to
 hear, but be merry in God.

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211. To Margaret Roper. Tower of London, 1534

*Another letter written and sent by Sir Thomas More (in
 the year of our Lord, 1534 and in the 26 year of King
 Henry the eight) to his daughter Mistress Roper, answering
 a letter which she wrote and sent unto him. [EW 1449]*

The Holy Spirit of God be with you.

Your daughterly loving letter, my dearly beloved
 child was and is, I faithfully assure you, much more inward
 comfort unto me, than my pen can well express you, for
 diverse things that I marked therein but of all things most especially,
 for that God of his high goodness giveth you the grace to
 consider the incomparable difference, between the wretched estate
 of this present life, and the wealthy state of the life to come, for
 them that die in God, and to pray God in such a good Christian

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211. To M. Roper

fashion, that it may please him (it doth me good here to rehearse
your own words) 'of his tender pity so firmly to rest our love
in him, with little regard of this world, and so to flee sin and
embrace virtue, that we may say with St. Paul, *Mihi vivere Christus
est et mori lucrum. Et illud, Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo.*' 10

I beseech our Lord, my dearly beloved daughter, that wholesome
prayer that he hath put in your mind, it may like him to give
your father the grace, daily to remember and pray, and yourself 15
as you have written it, even so daily devoutly to kneel and
pray it. For surely if God give us that, he giveth us and will
give us therewith, all that ever we can well wish. And therefore
good Marget, when you pray it, pray it for us both: and I shall 20
on my part the like, in such manner as it shall like our Lord
to give me poor wretch the grace, that likewise as in this
wretched world I have been very glad of your company and
you of mine, and yet would if it might be (as natural charity
bindeth the father and the child) so we may rejoice and enjoy 25
each other's company, with our other kinsfolk, allies and friends
everlastingly in the glorious bliss of heaven: and in the meantime,
with good counsel and prayer each help other thitherward.

And where you write these words of yourself, 'But good
father, I wretch am far, far, farthest of all other from such 30
point of perfection, our Lord send me the grace to amend my
life, and continually to have an eye to mine end, without grudge
of death, which to them that die in God, is the gate of a wealthy
life to which God of his infinite mercy bring us all. Amen. Good
Father strengthen my frailty with your devout prayers.' The 35
father of heaven mote strengthen thy frailty, my good daughter and
the frailty of thy frail father too. And let us not doubt but he
so will, if we will not be slack in calling upon him therefor. Of
my poor prayers such as they be ye may be bold to reckon. For
Christian charity and natural love and your very daughterly 40
dealing *funiculo triplici*, ut ait scriptura, *difficile rumpitur*,
both bind me and strain me thereto. And of yours I put as little
doubt.

That you fear your own frailty Marget, nothing misliketh
me. God give us both twain the grace, to despair of our own 45
self, and whole to depend and hang upon the hope and strength
of God. The blessed apostle St. Paul found such lack of strength
in himself, that in his own temptation he was fain thrice to
call and cry out unto God, to take that temptation from him. And

yet sped he not of his prayer, in the manner that he required. For 50 211. To M. Roper
 God of his high wisdom, seeing that it was (as himself saith)
 necessary for him to keep him from pride, that else he might peradventure
 have fallen in, would not at his thrice praying, by and
 by take it from him, but suffered him to be panged in the pain
 and fear thereof, giving him yet at the last this comfort against 55
 his fear of falling (*Sufficit tibi gratia mea*). By which words it
 well seemeth, that the temptation was so strong (whatsoever
 kind of temptation it was) that he was very feared of falling,
 through the febleness of resisting that he began to feel in himself.
 Wherefore for his comfort God answered (*Sufficit tibi gratia 60*
mea) putting him in surety, that were he of himself never
 so feeble and faint, nor never so likely to fall, yet the grace of God
 was sufficient to keep him up and make him stand. And our Lord
 said further, (*Virtus in infirmitate proficitur*). The more weak
 that man is, the more is the strength of God in his safeguard 65
 declared. And so St. Paul saith (*Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat*).
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Surely Meg a fainter heart than thy frail father hath, canst
 you not have. And yet I verily trust in the great mercy of God,
 that he shall of his goodness so stay me with his holy hand, 70
 that he shall not finally suffer me to fall wretchedly from his
 favor. And the like trust (dear daughter) in his high goodness
 I verily conceive of you. And so much the more, in that there is
 neither of us both, but that if we call his benefits to mind, and
 give him often thanks for them, we may find tokens many, to 75
 give us good hope for all our manifold offences toward him, that
 his great mercy, when we will heartily call therefor, shall not be
 withdrawn from us. And verily, my dear daughter, in this is
 my great comfort, that albeit, I am of nature so shrinking from
 pain, that I am almost afeard of a filip, yet in all the agonies 80
 that I have had, whereof before my coming hither (as I have
 showed you ere this) I have had neither small nor few, with
 heavy fearful heart, forecasting all such perils and painful
 deaths, as by any manner of possibility might after fall unto me,
 and in such thought lain long restless and waking, while my 85
 wife had weened I had slept, yet in any such fear and heavy pensiveness
 (I thank the mighty mercy of God) I never in my
 mind intended to consent, that I would for the enduring of the
 uttermost, do any such thing as I should in mine own conscience
 (for with other men's I am not a man meet to take upon 90

me to meddle) think to be to myself, such as should damnably
 cast me in the displeasure of God. And this is the last point that
 any man may with his salvation come to, as far as I can see,
 and is bound if he see peril to examine his conscience surely by
 learning and by good counsel and be sure that his conscience be
 such as it may stand with his salvation, or else reform it. And if
 the matter be such, as both the parts may stand with salvation,
 then on whither side his conscience fall, he is safe enough before
 God. But that mine own may stand with my own salvation, thereof
 I thank our Lord I am very sure. I beseech our Lord bring all
 parts to his bliss.

211. To M. Roper

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It is now, my good daughter, late. And therefore thus I commend
 you to the holy Trinity, to guide you, comfort you and
 direct you with his Holy Spirit, and all yours and my wife with
 all my children and all our other friends.

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Thomas More, Knight.

212. Lady More to Henry VIII. <c. Christmas 1534>

In lamentable wise, beseech your most noble Grace
 your most humble subjects and continual beadfolk, the poor
 miserable wife and children of your true, poor, heavy subject
 and beadsman Sir Thomas More Knight, that whereas the same
 Sir Thomas being your Grace's prisoner in your Tower of London
 by the space of eight months and above, in great continual
 sickness of body and heaviness of heart, during all which
 space notwithstanding that the same Sir Thomas More had by
 refusing of the oath forfeited unto your most noble Grace all
 his goods and cattles and the profit of all his lands, annuities
 and fees that as well himself as your said beadswoman his wife
 should live by, yet your most gracious Highness of your most
 blessed disposition suffered your said beadswoman, his poor wife,
 to retain and keep still his moveable goods and the revenues
 of his lands to keep her said husband and her poor household
 with.

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So it is now, most gracious Sovereign, that now late by reason
 of a new act or twain made in this last past prorogation of
 your Parliament, not only the said former forfeiture is confirmed,
 but also the inheritance of all such lands and tenements
 as the same Sir Thomas had of your most bountiful gift,
 amounting to the yearly value 60 L, is forfeited also. And

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thus (except your merciful favor be showed) your said poor
 beadswoman his wife, which brought fair substance to him,
 which is all spent in your Grace's service, is likely to be utterly
 undone and his poor son, one of your said humble suppliants,
 standing charged and bound for the payment of great
 sums of money due by the said Sir Thomas unto your Grace,
 standeth in danger to be cast away and undone in this world
 also. But over all this the said Sir Thomas himself, after his
 long true service to his power diligently done to your Grace, is
 likely to be in his age and continual sickness, for lack of comfort
 and good keeping, to be shortly destroyed, to the woeful
 heaviness and deadly discomfort of all your said sorrowful suppliants.
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212. To Henry VIII

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In consideration of the premises, for that his offence is
 grown not of any malice or obstinate mind, but of such a
 long continued and deep rooted scruple, as passeth his power
 to avoid and put away, it may like your most noble Majesty
 of your most abundant grace to remit and pardon your most
 grievous displeasure to the said Sir Thomas and to have tender
 pity and compassion upon his long distress and great heaviness,
 and for the tender mercy of God to deliver him out of
 prison and suffer him quietly to live the remnant of his life
 with your said poor beadswoman his wife and other of your
 poor suppliants his children, with only such entertainment of
 living as it shall like your most noble Majesty of your gracious
 alms and pity to appoint him. And this in the way of
 mercy and pity, and all your said poor beadfolk shall daily
 during their lives pray to God for the preservation of your
 most Royal estate.

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213. To Master Leder. Tower of London, Saturday, 16 January 1534/5

*A letter written by Sir Thomas More to one Master Leder
 a virtuous priest the 16 day of January in the year of our
 Lord 1534 after the computation of the church of England,
 and in the 26 year of the reign of King Henry the 8.
 [EW 1450]*

The tale that is reported, albeit I cannot but thank
 you though you would it were true, yet I thank God it is a
 very vanity. I trust in the great goodness of God, that he shall

never suffer it to be true. If my mind had been obstinate indeed
 I would not let for any rebuke or worldly shame plainly to
 confess the truth. For I purpose not to depend upon the
 fame of the world. But I thank our Lord that the thing that I
 do is not for obstinacy but for the salvation of my soul, because I
 cannot induce mine own mind otherwise to think than I do
 concerning the oath. 214. To Leder

As for other men's consciences I will be no judge of, nor I
 never advised any man neither to swear nor to refuse, but as for
 mine own self if ever I should mishap to receive the oath
 (which I trust our Lord shall never suffer me) ye may reckon
 sure that it were expressed and extorted by duress and hard
 handling. For as for all the goods of this world, I thank our
 Lord I set not much more by, than I do by dust. And I trust
 both that they will use no violent forcible ways, and also that
 if they would, God would of his grace and the rather a great
 deal through good folks' prayers give me strength to stand.
Fidelis Deus (saith St. Paul) *qui non patitur vos tentari supra id
 quod potestis ferre, sed dat cum tentatione proventum ut possitis
 sustinere.* For this I am very sure, that if ever I should swear it,
 I should swear deadly against mine own conscience. For I
 am very sure in my mind that I shall never be able to change
 mine own conscience to the contrary, as for other men's I
 will not meddle of.

It hath been showed me that I am reckoned willful and
 obstinate because that since my coming hither I have not written
 unto the King's Highness and by mine own writing made some
 suit unto his Grace. But in good faith I do not forbear it of
 any obstinacy, but rather of a lowly mind and a reverent,
 because that I see nothing that I could write but that I fear me
 sore that his Grace were likely rather to take displeasure with me
 for it than otherwise, while his Grace believeth me not that my
 conscience is the cause but rather obstinate willfulness. But surely
 that my let is but my conscience, that knoweth God to whose
 order I commit the whole matter. *In cuius manu corda regum sunt.*
 I beseech our Lord that all may prove as true faithful subjects
 to the King that have sworn, as I am in my mind very sure
 that they be, which have refused to swear.

In haste, the Saturday the 16th day of January by the hand
 of your beadsman,

Thomas More, Knight and prisoner.

214. To Margaret Roper. Tower of London, 2 or 3 May 1535

214. To M. Roper

*A letter written and sent by Sir Thomas More to his daughter
Mistress Roper, written the second or third day of May, in
the year of our Lord 1535 and in the 27 year of the reign of
King Henry the 8. [EW 1451]*

Our Lord Bless you.

My dearly beloved Daughter.

I doubt not but by the reason of the Councilors resorting
hither, in this time (in which our Lord be their comfort)
these fathers of the Charterhouse and Master Reynolds of Syon
that be now judged to death for treason, (whose matters and causes
I know not) may hap to put you in trouble and fear of mind 5
concerning my being here prisoner, especially for that it is not
unlikely but that you have heard that I was brought also before
the Council here myself. I have thought it necessary to
advertise you of the very truth, to the end that you neither
conceive more hope than the matter giveth, lest upon other turn 10
it might aggrieve your heaviness, nor more grief and fear than
the matter giveth of, on the other side. Wherefore shortly ye
shall understand that on Friday the last day of April in the
afternoon, Mr. Lieutenant came in here unto me, and showed me
that Mr. Secretary would speak with me. Whereupon I shifted 15
my gown, and went out with Mr. Lieutenant into the gallery
to him. Where I met many, some known and some unknown
in the way. And in conclusion coming into the chamber
where his Mastership sat with Mr. Attorney, Mr. Solicitor, Mr.
Bedyll and Mr. Doctor Tregonwell, I was offered to sit with them, 20
which in no wise I would.

Whereupon Mr. Secretary showed unto me, that he doubted
not, but that I had by such friends as hither had resorted to me
seen the new statutes made at the last sitting of the Parliament.
Whereunto I answered: ye verily. Howbeit forasmuch as 25
being here, I have no conversation with any people, I thought
it little need for me to bestow much time upon them, and therefore
I redelivered the book shortly and the effect of the statutes
I never marked nor studied to put in remembrance. Then he
asked me whether I had not read the first statute of them, of the 30

King being Head of the Church. Whereunto I answered, yes. Then his Mastership declared unto me, that since it was now by act of Parliament ordained that his Highness and his heirs be, and ever right have been, and perpetually should be, Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England under Christ, the King's pleasure was, that those of his Council there assembled should demand mine opinion, and what my mind was therein. 35

Whereunto I answered that in good faith I had well trusted that the King's Highness would never have commanded any such question to be demanded of me, considering that I ever from the beginning well and truly from time to time declared my mind unto his Highness, and since that time I had (I said) unto your Mastership Mr. Secretary also, both by mouth and by writing. And now I have in good faith discharged my mind of all such matters, and neither will dispute Kings' titles nor Popes', but the King's true faithful subject I am and will be, and daily I pray for him and for all his, and for you all that are of his honorable Council, and for all the realm, and otherwise than thus I never intend to meddle. 40 45

Whereunto Mr. Secretary answered that he thought this manner answer should not satisfy nor content the King's Highness, but that his Grace would exact a more full answer. And his Mastership added thereunto, that the King's Highness was a prince not of rigor but of mercy and pity, and though that he had found obstinacy at some time in any of his subjects, yet when he should find them at another time confirmable and submit themselves, his Grace would show mercy. And that concerning myself, his Highness would be glad to see me take such confirmable ways, as I might be abroad in the world again among other men as I have been before. 50 55 60

Whereunto I shortly (after the inward affection of my mind) answered for a very truth, that I would never meddle in the world again, to have the world given me. And to the remnant of the matter, I answered in effect as before, showing that I had fully determined with myself, neither to study nor meddle with any matter of this world, but that my whole study should be, upon the passion of Christ and mine own passage out of this world. 65

Upon this I was commanded to go forth for a while, and after called in again. At which time Mr. Secretary said unto me that though I was prisoner and condemned to perpetual prison, 70

214. To M. Roper

yet I was not thereby discharged of mine obedience and allegiance unto the King's Highness. And thereupon demanded me whether that I thought, that the King's Grace might exact of me such things as are contained in the statutes and upon like pains as he might of other men. Whereto I answered that I would not say the contrary. Whereto he said, that likewise as the King's Highness would be gracious to them that he found conformable, so his Grace would follow the course of his laws toward such as he shall find obstinate. And his Mastership said further, that my demeanor in that matter was of a thing that of likelihood made now other men so stiff therein as they be.

Whereto I answered, that I give no man occasion to hold any point one or other, nor never gave any man advise or counsel therein one way or other. And for conclusion I could no further go, whatsoever pain should come thereof. I am, quoth I, the King's true faithful subject and daily beadsman and pray for his Highness and all his and all the realm. I do nobody harm, I say none harm, I think none harm, but wish everybody good. And if this be not enough to keep a man alive in good faith I long not to live. And I am dying already, and have since I came here, been divers times in the case that I thought to die within one hour, and I thank our Lord I was never sorry for it, but rather sorry when I saw the pang past. And therefore my poor body is at the King's pleasure, would God my death might do him good.

After this Mr. Secretary said: well ye find no fault in that statute, find you any in any of the other statutes after? Whereto I answered, Sir, whatsoever thing should to me other than good, in any of the statutes or in that statute either, I would not declare what fault I found, nor speak thereof. Whereunto finally his mastership said full gently that of anything that I had spoken, there should none advantage be taken, and whether he said further that there be none to be taken, I am not well remembered. But he said that report should be made unto the King's Highness, and his gracious pleasure known.

Whereupon I was delivered again to Mr. Lieutenant, which was then called in, and so was I by Mr. Lieutenant brought again into my chamber, and here am I yet in such case as I was, neither better nor worse. That that shall follow lieth in the hand of God, whom I beseech to put in King's Grace's mind

that thing that may be to his high pleasure, and in mine, to
mind only the weal of my soul, with little regard of my
body. 214. To M. Roper 115

And you with all yours, and my wife and all my children
and all our other friends both bodily and ghostly heartily well to
fare. And I pray you and all them pray for me, and take no
thought whatsoever shall happen me. For I verily trust in the
goodness of God, seem it never so evil to this world, it shall
indeed in another world be for the best. 120

Your loving father,
Thomas More Knight

215. Lady More to Thomas Cromwell. May 1535

Right Honorable, and my especial good Master Secretary

In my most humble wise I recommend me unto your
good Mastership, acknowledging myself to be most deeply bounden
to your good Mastership, for your manifold goodness, and loving
favor, both before this time, and yet daily, now also showed
towards my poor husband and me. I pray Almighty God continue
your goodness so still, for thereupon hangeth the greatest
part of my poor husband's comfort and mine. 5

The cause of my writing, at this time, is to certify your especial
good Mastership of my great and extreme necessity; which,
on and besides the charge of mine own house, do pay weekly
15 shillings for the board wages of my poor husband, and his
servant; for the maintaining whereof, I have been compelled, of
very necessity, to sell part of mine apparel, for lack of other
substance to make money of. Wherefore my most humble petition
and suit to your Mastership, at this time, is to desire your
Mastership's favorable advice and counsel, whether I may be
so bold to attend upon the King's most gracious Highness. I
trust there is no doubt in the cause of my impediment; for the
young man, being a ploughman, had been diseased with the ague
by the space of three years before that he departed. And besides this,
it is now five weeks since he departed, and no other person diseased
in the house since that time; wherefore I most humbly
beseech your especial good Mastership (as my only trust is, and
else know not what to do, but utterly in this world to be undone)
for the love of God to consider the premises; and thereupon, of 10 15 20 25

your most abundant goodness, to show your most favorable help to the comforting of my poor husband and me, in this our great heaviness, extreme age, and necessity. And thus we, and all ours, shall daily, during our lives, pray to God for the prosperous success of your right honorable dignity.

215. To Cromwell

By your poor continual Oratrix,

Dame Alice More.

To the Right Honorable, and her especial good Master, Master Secretary.

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216. To Margaret Roper. <Tower of London, 3 June 1535>

Another letter written and sent by Sir Thomas More to his daughter Mistress Roper, written in the year of our Lord 1535, and in the 27 year of the reign of King Henry the 8. [EW 1452]

Our Lord bless you and all yours.

Forasmuch, dearly beloved daughter, as it is likely that you either have heard or shortly shall hear that the Council was here this day, and that I was before them, I have thought it necessary to send you word how the matter standeth. And verily to be short I perceive little difference between this time and the last, for as far as I can see the whole purpose is either to drive me to say precisely the one way, or else precisely the other.

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Here sat my Lord of Canterbury, my Lord Chancellor, my Lord of Suffolk, my Lord of Wiltshire and Mr. Secretary.

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And after my coming, Mr. Secretary made rehearsal in what wise he had reported unto the King's Highness, what had been said by his Grace's Council to me, and what had been answered by me to them at mine other being before them last. Which thing his Mastership rehearsed in good faith very well, as I acknowledged and confessed and heartily thanked him therefor.

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Whereupon he added thereunto that the King's Highness was nothing content nor satisfied with mine answer, but thought that by my demeanor I had been occasion of much grudge and harm in the realm, and that I had an obstinate mind and an evil toward him and that my duty was, being his subject, and so he had sent them now in his name upon mine allegiance

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to command me to make a plain and terminate answer
 whether I thought the statute lawful or not and that I should
 either acknowledge and confess it lawful that his Highness should
 be Supreme Head of the Church of England or else to utter
 plainly my malignity. 25

Whereto I answered that I had no malignity and therefore I
 could none utter. And as to the mater I could none other answer
 make than I had before made, which answer his Mastership
 had there rehearsed. Very heavy I was that the King's
 Highness should have any such opinion of me. Howbeit if
 there were one that had informed his Highness many evil things
 of me that were untrue, to which his Highness for the time gave
 credence, I would be very sorry that he should have that opinion
 of me the space of one day. Howbeit if I were sure that other
 should come on the morrow by whom his Grace should know
 the trough of mine innocence, I should in the meanwhile
 comfort myself with consideration of that. And in like wise
 know though it be great heaviness to me that his Highness have
 such opinion of me for the while, yet have I no remedy to
 help it, but only to comfort myself with this consideration
 that I know very well that the time shall come, when God shall
 declare my truth toward his Grace before him and all the
 world. And whereas it might haply seem to be but small
 cause of comfort because I might take harm here first in the
 meanwhile, I thanked God that my case was such in this
 matter through the clearness of mine own conscience that though
 I might have pain I could not have harm, for a man may in
 such case leese his head and have no harm. For I was very sure
 that I had no corrupt affection, but that I had always from the
 beginning truly used myself to looking first upon God and
 next upon the King according to the lesson that his Highness
 taught me at my first coming to his noble service, the most
 virtuous lesson that ever prince taught his servant, whose Highness
 to have of me such opinion is my great heaviness but I
 have no means as I said to help it but only comfort myself
 in the meantime with the hope of that joyful day in which
 my truth towards him shall well be known. And in this matter
 further I could not go nor other answer thereto I could not
 make. 60

To this it was said by my Lord Chancellor and Master Secretary
 both that the King might by his laws compel me to make

216. To M. Roper

a plain answer thereto, either the one way or the other.

216. To M. Roper

Whereunto I answered I would not dispute the King's authority, 65
 what his Highness might do in such case, but I said
 that verily under correction it seemed to me somewhat hard.
 For if it so were that my conscience gave me against the statutes
 (wherein how my mind giveth me I make no declaration)
 then I nothing doing nor nothing saying against the statute 70
 it were a very hard thing to compel me to say either precisely
 with it against my conscience to the loss of my soul, or precisely
 against it to the destruction of my body.

To this Mr. Secretary said that I had ere this when I was 75
 Chancellor examined heretics and thieves and other malefactors
 and gave me a great praise above my deserving in that
 behalf. And he said that I then, as he thought and at the least wise
 Bishops did used to examine heretics, whether they believed
 the Pope to be head of the Church and used to compel
 them to make a precise answer thereto. And why should not 80
 then the King since it is a law made here that his Grace is Head
 of the Church here compel men to answer precisely to the
 law here as they did than concerning the Pope.

I answered and said that I protested that I intended not to 85
 defend any part or stand in contention, but I said there was
 a difference between those two cases because that at that time as
 well here as elsewhere through the corps of Christendom the
 Pope's power was recognized for an undoubted thing which
 seemeth not like a thing agreed in this realm and the contrary
 taken for truth in other realms whereunto Mr. Secretary answered 90
 that they were as well burned for the denying of that, as
 they be beheaded for denying of this, and therefore as good
 reason to compel them to make precise answer to the one as
 to the other.

Whereto I answered that since in this case a man is not by a 95
 law of one realm so bound in his conscience, where there is a
 law of the whole corps of Christendom to the contrary in matter
 touching belief, as he is by a law of the whole corps though
 there hap to be made in some place a law local to the contrary,
 the reasonableness or the unreasonableness in binding a 100
 man to precise answer, standeth not in the respect or difference
 between heading or burning, but because of the difference
 in charge of conscience the difference standeth between heading
 and hell.

Much was there answered unto this both by Mr. Secretary 105 216. To M. Roper
and my Lord Chancellor overlong to rehearse. And in conclusion
they offered me an oath by which I should be sworn to make
true answer to such things as should be asked me on the
King's behalf, concerning the King's own person.

Whereto I answered that verily I never purposed to swear 110
any book oath more while I lived. Then they said that was very
obstinate if I would refuse that, for every man doth it in the
Star Chamber and everywhere. I said that was true but I had
not so little foresight but that I might well conjecture what
should be part of my interrogatory and as good it was to 115
refuse it at the first, as afterward.

Whereto my Lord Chancellor answered that he thought I
guessed truth, for I should see them and so they were showed
me and they were but twain. The first whether I had seen the
statute. The other whether I believed that it were a lawful made 120
interrogatory or not. Whereupon I refused the oath and said
further by mouth, that the first I had before confessed, and to
the second I would make none answer.

Which was the end of the communication and I was thereupon
sent away. In the communication before it was said that 125
it was marveled that I stuck so much in my conscience while
at the uttermost I was not sure therein. Whereto I said that I
was very sure that mine own conscience so informed as it is
by such diligence as I have so long taken therein may stand
with mine own salvation. I meddle not with the conscience of 130
them that think otherwise, every man *suo domino stat et cadit*.
I am no man's judge. It was also said unto me that if I had as
lief be out of the world as in it, as I had there said, why
did I not speak even out plain against the statute. It appeared
well I was not content to die though I said so. Whereto I answered 135
as the truth is, that I have not been a man of such
holy living as I might be bold to offer myself to death, lest
God for my presumption might suffer me to fall, and therefore
I put not myself forward but draw back. Howbeit if God
draw me to it himself, then trust I in his great mercy, that he 140
shall not fail to give me grace and strength.

In conclusion Mr. Secretary said that he liked me this day
much worse than he did the last time, for then he said he pitied
me much and now he thought that I meant not well, but God
and I know both that I mean well and so I pray God do by 145

me.

216. To M. Roper

I pray you be you and mine other friends of good cheer
whatsoever fall of me, and take no thought for me but pray
for me as I do and shall do for you and all them.

Your tender loving father,

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Thomas More Kg.

217. To Antonio Bonvisi, Tower of London, 1535

*Sir Thomas More a little before he was arraigned was condemned
(in the year of our Lord 1535, and in the 27 year
of the reign of King Henry the eight) being shut up so close
in prison in the Tower that he had no pen nor ink, wrote
with a coal an epistle in Latin to Master Anthony Bonvisi
(merchant of Luke and then dwelling in London), his old
and dear friend, and sent it unto him, the copy whereof
here followeth. [EW 1455]*

The translation into English of the Latin epistle next before.

*Good Master Bonvisi of all friends most friendliest, and
to me worthily dearly beloved, I heartily greet you.*

Since my mind doth give me (and yet may chance
falsely but yet so it doth), that I shall not have long liberty to write
unto you, I determined therefore while I may, to declare unto
you by this little epistle of mine, how much I am comforted with
the sweetness of your friendship, in this decay of my fortune. 5

For before (right Worshipful Sir) although I always delighted
marvelously in this your love towards me, yet when I consider
in my mind, that I have been now almost this forty years, not a
guest, but a continual nursling in master Bonvisi house, and in
the mean season have not showed myself in requiting you 10
again, a friend, but a barren lover only my shamefastness verily
made, that that sincere sweetness, which otherwise I received of the
revolving of your friendship somewhat waxed sourish, by
reason of a certain rustical shame as neglecting of my duty toward
you. But now I comfort myself with this, that I never had 15
the occasion to do you pleasure. For such was always your great
wealth, that there was nothing left, in which I might be unto
you beneficial. I therefore (knowing that I have not been unthankful

to you by omitting my duty toward you, but for
 lack of occasion and opportunity, and seeing moreover all hope of
 recompense taken away, you so to persevere in love toward me,
 binding me more and more to you, ye rather so to run forward
 still, and as it were with a certain indefatigable course to
 go forth, that few men so fawn upon their fortunate
 friends, as you favor, love, foster and honor me, now overthrown,
 abjected, afflicted, and condemned to prison) cleanse
 myself both from this bitterness (such as it is) of mine old
 shamefastness, and also repose myself in the sweetness of this
 marvelous friendship of yours.

And this faithful prosperity of this amity and friendship of
 yours towards me (I wot not how) seemeth in a manner to counterpoise
 this unfortunate shipwreck of mine, and saving the
 indignation of my Prince, of me no less loved than feared, else
 as concerning all other things, doth almost more than counterpoise.
 For all those are to be accounted amongst the mischances
 of fortune. But if I should reckon the possession of so constant
 friendship (which no storms of adversity hath taken away,
 but rather hath fortified and strengthened) amongst the brittle gifts
 of fortune, then were I mad. For the felicity of so faithful and
 constant friendship in the storms of fortune (which is seldom
 seen) is doubtless a high and a noble gift proceeding of a certain
 singular benignity of God. And indeed as concerning myself, I
 cannot otherwise take it nor reckon it, but that it was ordained by
 the great mercy of God, that you good master Bonvisi amongst
 my poor friends, such a man as you are and so great a friend,
 should be long before provided, that should by your consolation,
 swage and relieve a great part of these troubles and griefs of
 mine, which the hugeness of fortune hath hastily brought upon
 me. I therefore my dear friend and of all mortal men to me
 most dearest, do (which now only I am able to do) earnestly
 pray to Almighty God, which hath provided you for me, that
 since he hath given you such a debtor as shall never be able to
 pay you, that it may please him of his benignity, to requite this
 bountifulness of yours, which you every day thus plenteously
 pour upon me. And that for his mercy sake he will bring
 us from this wretched and stormy world, into his rest, where
 shall need no letters, where no wall shall dissever us, where no
 porter shall keep us from talking together, but that we may have
 the fruition of the eternal joy with God the Father, and with

217. To Bonvisi

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his only begotten Son our Redeemer Jesu Christ, with the
 holy spirit of them both, the Holy Ghost proceeding from
 them both. And in the mean season, Almighty God grant
 both you and me good Master Bonvisi and all mortal men
 everywhere, to set at naught all the riches of this world,
 with all the glory of it, and the pleasure of this life also, for the
 love and desire of that joy. Thus of all friends most trusty,
 and to me most dearly beloved, and as I was wont to call you the
 apple of mine eye, right heartily fare ye well. And Jesus Christ
 keep safe and sound and in good health, all your family,
 which be of like affection toward me as their master is.

Thomas More: I should in vain put to it, yours, for thereof
 can you not be ignorant, since you have bought it with so
 many benefits. Nor now I am not such a one that it forceth
 whose I am.

218. To Margaret Roper. Tower of London, 5 July 1535

*Sir Thomas More was beheaded at the Tower hill in London
 on Tuesday the sixth of July in the year of our Lord
 1535, and in the 27 year of the reign of King Henry
 the eight. And on the day next before, being Monday and
 the fifth day of July, he wrote with a coal a letter to his daughter
 Mistress Roper, and sent it to her, (which was the last
 thing that ever he wrote). The copy whereof here followeth.
 [EW 1457]*

Our Lord bless you good daughter and your good
 husband and your little boy and all yours and all my children
 and all my godchildren and all our friends. Recommend me
 when you may to my good daughter Cecily, whom I beseech
 our Lord to comfort, and I send her my blessing and to all
 her children and pray her to pray for me. I send her an handkerchief
 and God comfort my good son her husband. My
 good daughter Daunce hath the picture in parchment that
 you delivered me from my Lady Coniers, her name is on the
 backside. Show her that I heartily pray her that you may send
 it in my name to her again for a token from me to pray for me.

I like special well Dorothy Coly, I pray you be good unto her.
 I would wit whether this be she that you wrote me of. If not
 I pray you be good to the other, as you may in her affliction
 and to my good daughter Joan Aleyn to give her I pray you

some kind answer, for she sued hither to me this day to pray
you be good to her.

218. To M. Roper

I cumber you good Margaret much, but I would be sorry, if
it should be any longer than tomorrow, for it is St. Thomas
eve, and the utas of Saint Peter and therefore tomorrow long 20
I to go to God, it were a day very meet and convenient for
me. I never liked your manner toward me better than when you
kissed me last for I love when daughterly love and dear charity
hath no leisure to look to worldly courtesy.

Farewell my dear child and pray for me, and I shall for 25
you and all your friends that we may merrily meet in heaven.
I thank you for your great cost.

I send now unto my good daughter Clement her algorism
stone and I send her and my good son and all hers God's
blessing and mine. 30

I pray you at time convenient recommend me to my good
son John More. I liked well his natural fashion. Our Lord
bless him and his good wife my loving daughter, to whom I
pray him be good, as he hath great cause, and that if the
land of mine come to his hand, he break not my will concerning 35
his sister Daunce. And our Lord bless Thomas and Austen
and all that they shall have.