

# LETTER

Thomas Howard (1536–1572), Duke of Norfolk

to Philip Howard (1557–1595), his son

*Many members of the Howard family showed open sympathy to, or even embraced, Catholicism throughout the Tudor period. Thomas Howard, however, received a solidly Protestant upbringing; his tutors included the famed Protestant martyrologist John Foxe. As heir to the Duke of Norfolk and as cousin to Queen Elizabeth, Howard received important positions of trust in Elizabeth's government, including service as Earl Marshal of England and Lord Lieutenant in the North.*

*In 1569, after the death of his third wife, Howard (by then Duke of Norfolk) began negotiating to wed Mary, Queen of Scots, for which plans Elizabeth imprisoned Norfolk. After his release, he joined Roberto di Ridolfi in plotting to depose Elizabeth and restore Catholicism in England. The government's intelligence network quickly discovered the conspiracy and arrested Norfolk, among others. After a trial, England's only living Duke received the sentence of death, carried out on 2 June 1572, and he forfeited all his lands and titles to the Crown.*

The Tower of London, 20 January 1572

This is the last letter that ever I think to write to you, and therefore if you loved me, or that you will seem grateful to me for the special love that I have ever borne unto you, then remember and follow these, my last lessons.

O Philip, serve and fear God above all things! I find the fault in myself that I have, God forgive me, been too negligent in this point. Love and make much of your wife,<sup>1</sup> and therein, considering the great adversity you are now in by reason of my fall, is your greatest present comfort and relief, besides your happiness in having a wife which is endowed with so great towardness in virtue and good qualities and in person comparable with the best sort.

Follow these two lessons and God will bless you; and without these, as you may see by diverse examples out of the Scripture, and also by ordinary worldly proof, where God is not feared all goes to wreck; and where love is not between husband and wife, there God does not prosper.

My third lesson is that you show yourself loving and natural to your brothers and sisters, and sisters-in-law. Though you be very young in years, yet you must strive, with consideration, to become a man; for it is your own presence and good government of yourself that must get friends. And, if you take that course, then I have been so careful a father unto you, as I have taken such order as you, by God's grace, shall well be able, besides your wife's lands, to maintain yourself like a gentleman.

The world is greedy and covetous; and if the show of the well-government of yourself do not fear and restrain the greedy appetite, it is like that, by indirect means, they will either put you from that which law lays upon you, or else drive you to much trouble in trying and holding your right. When my grandfather died, I was not much above a year elder than you are now; and yet, I thank God, I took such order with myself as you shall reap the commodity of my so long-passed travel if you do now imitate the like.

Help to strengthen your young and raw years with good counsel. I send you herewith a brief schedule whom I wish you to make account of as friends, and whom as servants; and I charge you, as a father may do, to follow my direction therein. My experience can better tell what is fit for you than your young years can judge of.

I would wish you, for the present, to make your chief abode at Cambridge, which is the place fittest for you to prosecute your learning in and, besides, is not very far hence, whereby you may, within a day's warning, be here to follow your own causes, as occasion serves. If, after a year or two, you spend your time in some house of the

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Dacre (1557–1630); at this time, Philip and his wife were estranged.

law, there is nothing that will prove more to your commodity considering how, for the time, you shall have continual business about your own law-affairs; and thereby also, if you spend your time well, you shall be ever after better able to judge in your own causes. I too late repent that I followed not this course that now I wish to you; for if I had, then my case, perchance, had not been in so ill state as now it is.

When God shall send you to those years as that it shall be fit for you to company with your wife (which I had rather were sooner than that, by ill company, you should fall into any ill rule), then I would wish you to withdraw yourself into some private dwelling of your own. And if your hap may be so good as you may so live without being called to higher degree—Oh Philip! Philip! Then shall you enjoy that blessed life, which your woeful father would fain have done, and never could be so happy.

Beware of high degree. To a vain-glorious, proud stomach it seems as the first sweet. Look into all chronicles, and you shall find that, in the end, it brings heaps of cares, toils in the state, and most commonly in the end, utter overthrow. Look into the whole state of the nobility in times past, and into their state now, and then judge whether my lessons be true or no.

Assure yourself, as you may see by the books of my accounts, and you shall find that my living did hardly maintain my expenses; for all the help that I had by Tom's lands, and somewhat by your wife's and sister-in-law's, I was ever a beggar. You may, by the grace of God, be a great deal richer and quieter in your low degree, wherein, once again, I wish you to continue. They may, that shall wish you the contrary, have a good meaning: but believe your father, who of love wishes you best, and with the mind, that he is at this present fully armed to God, who sees both states, both high and low, as it were even before his eyes.

Beware of the court, except it be to do your prince service, and that, as near as you can, in the meanest degree; for that place has no certainty. Either a man, by following thereof, has too much of worldly pomp, which in the end throws him down headlong, or else he lives there unsatisfied, either that he cannot attain to himself that he would or else that he cannot do for his friends as his heart desires.

Remember these notes, and follow them; and then you, by God's help, shall reap the commodity of them in your old years.

If your brothers may be suffered to remain in your company still, I would be most glad thereof, because continuing still together should still increase love between you. But the world is so catching of everything that falls, as I believe Tom<sup>1</sup> being, after my death, the Queen's Majesty's ward, shall be begged by one or another. But yet, you are sure to have your brother William<sup>2</sup> left still with you; because, poor boy, he has nothing to feed cormorants withal; to whom you will as well be a father as a brother; for, upon my blessing, I commit him to your charge to provide for, if that which I have assured him by law shall not be so sufficient as I meant it.

If law may take place, your sisters-in-law<sup>3</sup> be surely enough conveyed to the behoof of your brothers; and then I would wish them brought up with some friend of mine; as, for the present, I allow best of Sir Christopher Heydon, if he will so much friend you as to receive them to sojourn with him. If not, then in some other place, as your friends shall best allow of.

And touching the bestowing of your wife and Meg, who I would be loath should be out of your wife's company; for, as she should be a good companion for Nan, so I commit Meg of special trust to her. I think good, till you lie together, if my Lady Sussex<sup>4</sup> might be entreated to take them to her as sojourners, there were no place so fit,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Howard (1561–1626). As eldest son of their father's second marriage, to Margaret Audley, young Thomas had already inherited significant properties from his maternal grand-father.

<sup>2</sup> William Howard (1563–1640), younger son of their father's marriage to Margaret Audley.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Howard's third marriage was to Elizabeth Leyburne (–1567), widow of Baron Dacre. To secure the vast Dacre estates, the three daughters from her first marriage married Thomas' three sons from his previous two marriages—Anne (1557–1630) to Philip Howard, Mary (1563–1578) to Thomas Howard, and Elizabeth (1564–1639) to William Howard.

<sup>4</sup> Frances Radclyffe (1531–1589). Countess of Sussex. The Earls of Sussex were cousins of Thomas Howard.

considering her kindred unto you, and the assured friend that I hope you shall find of her; besides, she is a good lady. If it will not be so brought to pass, then, by the advice of your friends, take some other order. But in no case I would wish you to keep any house till you and your wife lie together.

Thus I have advised you as my troubled memory can presently suffer me. Beware of pride, stubbornness, lechery, taunting, and sullenness, which vices nature does somewhat kindle in you, and therefore you must, with reason and discretion, make a new nature in yourself. Give not your mind too much and greedily to gaming; make a pastime of it, and no toil.

And lastly, delight to spend some time in reading of the Scriptures, for therein is the whole comfort of man's life; all other things are vain and transitory. And if you be diligent in reading of them, they will remain with you continually to your profit and commodity in this world, and to your comfort and salvation in the world to come, whither, in grace of God, I am now with joy and consolation preparing myself.

And, upon my blessing, beware of blind Papistry, which brings nothing but bondage to men's consciences. Mix your prayers with fasting, not thinking thereby to merit, for there is nothing that we of ourselves can do that is good; we are but unprofitable servants. But fast, I say, thereby to tame the wicked affections of the mind, and trust only to be saved by Christ's precious blood; for, without your perfect faith therein, there is no salvation. Let works follow your faith, thereby to show to the world that you do not only say you have faith, but that you give testimony thereof to the full satisfaction of the godly. I write somewhat the more herein, because, perchance, you have heretofore heard or, perchance, may hereafter hear, false bruits that I was a papist. But trust unto it; I never, since I knew what religion meant (I thank God), was of other mind than now you shall hear that I die in; although (I cry God, mercy) I have not given fruits and testimony of my faith as I ought to have done; the which is the thing that I do now chiefliest repent.

When I am gone, forget my condemning and forgive, I charge you, my false accusers as, I protest to God, I do; but have nothing to do with them, if they live. Surely, Bannister dealt no way but honestly and truly. Higford<sup>1</sup> did not hurt me in my conscience willingly, nor did not charge me with any great matter that was of weight otherways than truly. But the Bishop of Ross,<sup>2</sup> and specially Barker,<sup>3</sup> did falsely accuse me, and laid their own treasons upon my back. God forgive them, and I do, and once again I will you to do. Bear no malice in your mind.

And now, dear Philip, farewell. Read this my letter sometimes over; it may chance make you remember yourself the better; and by the same, when your father is dead and rotten, you may see what counsel I would give you if I were alive. If you follow these admonitions, there is no doubt but God will bless you, and I, your earthly father, do give you God's blessing and mine, with my humble prayers to Almighty God, that it will please Him to bless you, and your good Nan; that you may both, if it be His will, see your children's children to the comfort of you both; and afterward that you may be partakers of the heavenly kingdom.

Amen, Amen.

Written by the hand of your loving father, and father-in-law, now being ready and willing to part out of this world, I hope unto life everlasting,

M.A. Tierney, *The History and Antiquities of the Castle and Town of Arundel* (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1834), II:362–367.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Higford, secretary to the Duke of Norfolk. Charged with treason at the same time as his master, he pled guilty.

<sup>2</sup> John Lesley (1527–1596), Roman Catholic Bishop of Ross, Scotland (1565–1592). He attempted to arrange a marriage between Mary (1542–1587), Queen of Scots, and the Duke of Norfolk, which led to the imprisonment of both men.

<sup>3</sup> William Barker, secretary to the Duke of Norfolk. He, too, was charged with treason during the investigation of his master and provided incriminating testimony against the Duke.