

## THE TWELVE PROPERTIES OR CONDITIONS OF A LOVER

To love one alone and contemn<sup>1</sup> all other for that one.  
To think him unhappy that is not with his love.  
To adorn himself for the pleasure of his love.  
To suffer all things, though it were death, to be with his love.  
To desire also to suffer harm for his love, and to think that hurt sweet.  
To be with his love ever<sup>2</sup> as he may, if not in deed, yet in thought.  
To love all things that pertaineth unto his love.  
To covet the praise of his love, and not to suffer any dispraise.<sup>3</sup>  
To believe of his love all things excellent, and to desire that all folk should think the same.  
To weep often with his love: in presence for joy, in absence for sorrow.  
To languish<sup>4</sup> ever, and ever to burn in the desire of his love.  
To serve his love, nothing thinking of any reward or profit.

*The Twelve Properties we have at length more openly  
Expressed in Balade as it Followeth.*

The first point is to love but one alone,  
And for that one all others to forsake:  
For whoso<sup>5</sup> loveth many loveth none:<sup>6</sup>  
The flood that is in many channels take  
In each of them shall feeble streams make:  
The love that is divided among many  
Uneath<sup>7</sup> sufficeth that any part have any.

So thou that hast thy love set unto God  
In thy remembrance this imprint<sup>8</sup> and grave:  
As He in sovereign dignity is odd,<sup>9</sup>  
So will He in love no parting fellows<sup>10</sup> have:  
Love Him therefore with all that He thee gave:  
For body, soul, wit, cunning, mind and thought,  
Part will He none, but either all or naught.<sup>11</sup>

*The Second Property.*

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<sup>1</sup> “Contemn:” “To treat as of small value, treat or view with contempt; to despise, disdain, scorn, slight” (OED).

<sup>2</sup> “Ever” means “always, at all times; in all cases” (OED).

<sup>3</sup> “Dispraise” is a noun, meaning “the action or fact of dispraising; the expression of disappointment; blame, censure” (OED).

<sup>4</sup> “Languish”: “Of living beings (also of plants or vegetation): To grow weak, faint, or feeble: to lose health, have one’s vitality impaired; to continue in a state of feebleness and suffering” (OED). Of course, More means that this condition results from being in love. Aquinas mentions several other similar affects of love: *Liquefactio* (melting), *fruitio* (pleasure), *languor ed fervor* (languor and fever) are qualities of the “lover.” See 1a.2ae.28,5 of the Blackfriars edition of St. Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologiae* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> “Any one who” (OED).

<sup>6</sup> A bit of proverbial wisdom: the nature of love is exclusive, and, therefore, one who claims to love many, does not love at all.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest “hardly” for “uneath.”

<sup>8</sup> More uses “imprint” in a figurative sense: “To impress on or fix in the mind, memory, etc.; formerly often, to impress on one’s own mind, consider or remember carefully” (OED).

<sup>9</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest “unique” for “odd.”

<sup>10</sup> I.e., those of divided loyalties.

<sup>11</sup> One should love God with his whole being, not just his wit, or cunning. Any partial love of God is inadequate.

Of his love, lo, the sight and company  
To the lover so glad and pleasant is,  
That whoso hath the grace to come thereby  
He judgeth him in perfect joy and bliss:  
And whoso of that company doth miss,  
Live he in never so prosperous estate,<sup>12</sup>  
He thinketh him wretched and infortunate.

So should the lover of God esteem that he  
Which all the pleasure hath, mirth and disport,  
That in this world is possible to be,  
Yet till the time that he may once resort  
Unto that blessed, joyful, heavenly port  
Where he of God may have the glorious sight,  
Is void of perfect joy and sure delight.

*The Third Property.*

The third point of a perfect lover is  
To make him fresh to see that all things been<sup>13</sup>  
Appointed well and nothing set amiss  
But all well fashioned, proper, goodly, clean:  
That in his person, there be nothing seen  
In speech, apparel, gesture, look or pace<sup>14</sup>  
That may offend or diminish<sup>15</sup> any grace.

So thou that wilt with God get into favor  
Garnish<sup>16</sup> thyself up in as goodly wise  
As comely<sup>17</sup> be, as honest in behaviour,  
As it is possible for thee to devise:  
I mean not hereby that thou shouldest arise  
And in the glass upon thy body prowl,<sup>18</sup>  
But with fair virtue to adorn thy soul.

*The Fourth Property.*

If love be strong, hot, mighty and fervent,  
There may no trouble, grief, or sorrow fall,  
But that the lover would be well content  
All to endure and think it also<sup>19</sup> too small,

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<sup>12</sup> "Estate": "State or condition in general, whether material or moral, bodily or mental" (OED).

<sup>13</sup> The original is "bene," which is an obsolete infinitive and third person plural of the verb to be (OED). More means "all things are appointed."

<sup>14</sup> "Pace:" "The action, or (usually) manner, of stepping, in walking or running; gait, step, walk, way of walking or progression" (OED).

<sup>15</sup> "Diminish" replaces the original "minish."

<sup>16</sup> "Garnish" can mean "to furnish or equip," or "to equip or arm (oneself)" or "to dress, clothe, especially in an elegant fashion" (OED). Because of the use of "comely" in the next line, the third definition best applies.

<sup>17</sup> "Comely": "Handsomely, nicely, suitably; in a seemly or becoming manner" (OED).

<sup>18</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest "search, look eagerly" for "prowl."

<sup>19</sup> "Also" replaces the archaic "eke" here.

Though it were death, so he might therewithal  
The joyful presence of that person get  
On whom he hath his heart and love set.<sup>20</sup>

Thus should of God the lover be content  
Any distress or sorrow to endure,  
Rather than to be from God absent,  
And glad to die, so that he may be sure  
By his departing hence for to procure,  
After this valley dark, the heavenly light,  
And of his love the glorious blessed sight.

*The Fifth Property.*

Not only a lover content is in his heart  
But coveteth also and longeth to sustain  
Some labor, incommodity,<sup>21</sup> or smart,<sup>22</sup>  
Loss, adversity, trouble, grief, or pain:  
And of his sorrow joyful is and fain,<sup>23</sup>  
And happy thinketh himself that he may take  
Some misadventure<sup>24</sup> for his lover's sake.

Thus shouldest thou, that lovest God also,  
In thine heart wish, covet and be glad  
For Him to suffer trouble, pain and woe:  
For Whom if thou be never so woe bestead,<sup>25</sup>  
Yet thou ne shalt sustain (be not adread)<sup>26</sup>  
Half the dolour,<sup>27</sup> grief and adversity  
That He already suffered hath for thee.

*The Sixth Property.*

The perfect lover longeth for to be  
In presence of his love both night and day,  
And if it haply so befall that he  
May not as he would, he will yet as he may  
Ever be with his love, that is to say,  
Where his heavy body will not<sup>28</sup> be brought  
He will be conversant<sup>29</sup> in mind and thought.

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<sup>20</sup> "Set" replaces "yset."

<sup>21</sup> "Incommodity" means "incommodious quality, condition, or state of things; inconvenience, disadvantage, discomfort" (OED).

<sup>22</sup> "Smart": "Sharp physical pain, especially such as is caused by a stroke, sting, or wound" (OED).

<sup>23</sup> "Fain": "Glad, rejoiced, well-pleased" (OED).

<sup>24</sup> "Misadventure" is a noun, meaning "ill-luck, bad fortune. Nearly always in a particularized use: A piece of bad luck; a mishap or misfortune" (OED).

<sup>25</sup> "Bestead": "Placed in some situation, situated, circumstanced; generally with ill, and the like" (OED). In context, to be in a situation full of woe.

<sup>26</sup> "Adread" is a variant of "adrad," which means "frightened, greatly afraid, put in dread" (OED).

<sup>27</sup> "Dolour" means "physical suffering, pain" (OED).

<sup>28</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest that "will not" replace the archaic "nil."

Lo in like manner the lover of God should,  
At the least in such wise as he may,  
If he may not in such wise as he would,  
Be present with God and conversant always;  
For certes, whoso list,<sup>30</sup> he may purvey,<sup>31</sup>  
Though all the world would him therefrom bereaven<sup>32</sup>  
To bear his body in earth, his mind in heaven.<sup>33</sup>

*The Seventh Property.*

There is no page or servant, most or least,<sup>34</sup>  
That doth upon his love attend and wait,  
There is no little worm, no simple beast,  
Nor<sup>35</sup> none so small a trifle or conceit,  
Lace, girdle, point,<sup>36</sup> or proper<sup>37</sup> glove strait,<sup>38</sup>  
But that if to his love it has<sup>39</sup> been near,  
The lover hath<sup>40</sup> it precious, lief<sup>41</sup> and dear.<sup>42</sup>

So every relic, image or picture  
That doth pertain to God's magnificence,  
The lover of God should with all busy cure<sup>43</sup>  
Have it in love, honor and reverence  
And specially give them pre-eminence  
Which daily done His blessed body wurche,<sup>44</sup>  
The quick<sup>45</sup> relics, the ministers of His Church.

*The Eighth Property.*

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<sup>29</sup> "Conversant": "Living or associating within familiar intercourse; having regular or frequent intercourse with (together); on terms of familiarity with" (OED).

<sup>30</sup> "List" is an archaic form of "to like" or "to desire" or "to choose" (OED).

<sup>31</sup> "Purvey" means "to foresee" (OED).

<sup>32</sup> "Bereaven" is a "by-form of bereaved, occasional in the poets," and "bereaved" means "deprived or robbed; taken away by force" (OED).

<sup>33</sup> I.e., "For certainly, any one who desires may foresee, even though the world rob him from all its goods, it is better to bear one's body in earth with his mind on heaven."

<sup>34</sup> Greater or lesser.

<sup>35</sup> "Nor" replaces "ne."

<sup>36</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest "fastening" for "point."

<sup>37</sup> "Proper": "Such as a thing of the kind should be; excellent, admirable, commendable, capital, fine, goodly, of high quality" (OED).

<sup>38</sup> "Strait": "Of a garment, etc.: Tight-fitting, narrow" (OED).

<sup>39</sup> "Has" replaces the original "have."

<sup>40</sup> Holds for "hath."

<sup>41</sup> In addition to meaning existence, "lief" could also connote a "spiritual" existence, or a special kind of verve, energy, or vivacity (OED).

<sup>42</sup> There are universal gestures of love, such as keeping and relishing a token from one's beloved. By analogy, holding in reverence relics or religious images work in the same way.

<sup>43</sup> OED places "cure" within the context of a phrase: "To do one's busy pain (diligence, cure): to exert oneself diligently, to do what one can."

<sup>44</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest "cause to work, become active" for "wurche."

<sup>45</sup> "Quick" means "living, endowed with life, in contrast to what is naturally inanimate." Or of things: "Having some specific characteristic or suggestive of a living thing" (OED).

A very lover above all earthly things  
Coveteth and longeth evermore to hear  
The honour, laud, commendation and praising,  
And everything that may the fame clear<sup>46</sup>  
Of his love: he may in no manner  
Endure to hear that therefrom mighten vary  
Or anything sound into<sup>47</sup> the contrary.

The lover of God should covet in likewise  
To hear His honor, worship, laud and praise,  
Whose sovereign goodness none heart may comprise,<sup>48</sup>  
Whom hell, earth, and all the heaven obeys,  
Whose perfect lover ought by no manner ways  
To suffer the cursed words of blasphemy,  
Or anything spoken of God unreverently.

*The Ninth Property.*

A very lover believeth in his mind  
On whomsoever he hath his heart bent,<sup>49</sup>  
That in that person men may nothing find  
But honorable, worthy and excellent,  
And also<sup>50</sup> surmounting far in his intent<sup>51</sup>  
All other that he hath known by sight or name:  
And would that every man should think the same.

Of God likewise, so wonderful and high,  
All things esteem and judge his lover ought,  
So reverence, worship, honor and magnify,<sup>52</sup>  
That all the creatures in this world wrought<sup>53</sup>  
In comparison should he set at nought,  
And glad be if he might the mean devise  
That all the world would think in likewise.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Clear”: “To make clear; become clear; get clear of” (OED). The lover prizes it when fame makes clear all the outstanding attributes of one’s beloved.

<sup>47</sup> “Into” means “in reference to a state or condition” (OED). We might substitute “unto” here to capture the meaning in modern English.

<sup>48</sup> “Comprise”: “To ‘take in’ (mentally), perceive, comprehend, conceive” (OED). In context, no one can conceive of the God’s sovereign goodness; it is too much for human intelligence.

<sup>49</sup> “Bent” replaces the archaic “ybent.”

<sup>50</sup> “Also” replaces “eke.”

<sup>51</sup> “Intent” replaces the archaic “entent.”

<sup>52</sup> “Magnify means “to speak or act for the honor or glory of (a person or thing); to glorify, extol” (OED). A lover should “magnify” all things of God.

<sup>53</sup> “Wrought” replaces the archaic “ywrought,” which means “worked, wrought, made” (OED).

<sup>54</sup> I.e., that everyone would think in a similar way to how the lover does.

*The Tenth Property.*

The lover is of color dead and pale;  
There will no sleep into his eyes stalk;  
He favoureth neither meat, wine, nor ale;  
He mindeth not what men about him talk;  
But eat he, drink he, sit, lie down or walk,  
He burneth ever as it were with a fire  
In the fervent heat of his desire.

Here should the lover of God example<sup>55</sup> take  
To have Him continually in remembrance,  
With him in prayer and meditation wake,  
While others play, revel, sing, and dance:  
None earthly joy, disport, or vain plesance<sup>56</sup>  
Should him delight, or anything remove  
His ardent mind from God, his heavenly love.

*The Eleventh Property.*

Diversely passioned<sup>57</sup> is the lover's heart:  
Now pleasant hope, now dread and grievous fear,  
Now perfect bliss, now bitter sorrow smart;  
And whether his love be with him, or elsewhere,  
Oft from his eyes there falleth many a tear,  
For very joy, when they together be;  
When they be sundered, for adversity.

Like affections<sup>58</sup> feeleth also<sup>59</sup> the breast  
Of God's lover in prayer and meditation:  
When that his love liketh in him rest  
With inward<sup>60</sup> gladness of pleasant contemplation,  
Out break the tears for joy and delectation;<sup>61</sup>  
And when his love list eft to part him fro,<sup>62</sup>  
Out break the tears again for pain and woe.

*The Twelfth Property.*

A very lover will his love obey:

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<sup>55</sup> "Example" replaces the archaic "ensample."

<sup>56</sup> "Plesance" means "the condition or feeling of being pleased; enjoyment, delight, pleasure, joy" (OED). More means that earthly pleasures should not delight the lover of God.

<sup>57</sup> "Diversely" means "in a diverse manner, in a different way" etc. (OED). In context, "diversely passioned" means the lover experiences a range of intense passions.

<sup>58</sup> I.e., similar sentiments are felt by the lover of God.

<sup>59</sup> "Also" replaces the original "eke."

<sup>60</sup> "Inward" is an adjective that More may use in one of the two following ways: 1) "Applied to the mind, thoughts, and mental faculties as located within the body; hence to mental or spiritual conditions and actions, as distinguished from bodily or external phenomena, and so=mental or spiritual"; 2) "Spiritually minded, devout, pious" (OED).

<sup>61</sup> "Delectation": "The act of delighting; delight, enjoyment, great pleasure" (OED).

<sup>62</sup> I.e., And when his love decides afterwards to part from him.

His joy it is and all his appetite  
To pain himself in all that ever he may,  
That person in whom he set hath his delight<sup>63</sup>  
Diligently to serve both day and night  
For very love, without any regard  
To any profit, guerdon<sup>64</sup> or reward.

So thou likewise that hast thine heart set<sup>65</sup>  
Upward to God, so well thyself endeavor,  
So studiously that nothing may thee let  
Not for His service any wise disserve:  
Freely look also that thou serve thereto,<sup>66</sup> never  
Trust of reward or profit do thee bind,  
But only faithful heart and loving mind.

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Wageless to serve, three things may us move:<sup>67</sup>  
First, if the service self be desirable:  
Second, if they whom that we serve and love  
Be very good and very, amiable:  
Thirdly, of reason be we serviceable  
Without the gaping<sup>68</sup> after any more  
To such as have done much for us before.

Serve God for love, then, not for hope of meed:<sup>69</sup>  
What service may so desirable be  
As where all turneth to thine own speed?  
Who is so good, so lovely also<sup>70</sup> as He  
Who hath already done so much for thee,  
As He that first thee made, and on the rood<sup>71</sup>  
Eft<sup>72</sup> thee redeemed with His precious blood?

#### A PRAYER OF PICUS MIRANDULA UNTO GOD

O holy God of dreadful majesty,

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<sup>63</sup> I.e., that person in whom he set [his love] has his delight [alone].

<sup>64</sup> “Guerdon” means “a reward, requital, or recompense” (OED).

<sup>65</sup> “Set” replaces the archaic “yset.”

<sup>66</sup> The actual phrase is “Freely look eke thou serve that thereto. . .”.

<sup>67</sup> Without the incentive of money (wageless), three things may move us to serve.

<sup>68</sup> “Gape” is a verb that may mean “to open the mouth wide, especially in order to bit or swallow anything. Said of the mouth.” Or “to gape on or upon, now more commonly to gape at: to stare at with open mouth, to gaze upon in curiosity or wonder” (OED). In either case, More is using the word in its figurative sense, evoking concupiscence. One should stop trying to eat up all the worlds’ pleasures, or staring at them with desire.

<sup>69</sup> “Meed”: “In early use: That which is bestowed in requital of labor or service, or in consideration of (good or ill) desert; wages, hire; recompense, reward. Now only poetical or rhetorical, in a narrower sense: A reward, guerdon, or prize awarded for excellence or achievement; one’s merited portion of (praise, honor, etc.)” (OED).

<sup>70</sup> “Also” replaces “eke.”

<sup>71</sup> A “rood” is “a cross, as an instrument of execution” (OED).

<sup>72</sup> “Eft” probably means “afterwards” (OED).

Verily one in three and three in one,  
Whom angels serve, Whose work all creatures be,  
Which heaven and earth directest all alone,  
We Thee beseech, good Lord, with woeful moan,  
Spare us wretches and wash away our guilt,  
That we be not by Thy just anger spilt.

In strait<sup>73</sup> balance of rigorous judgment  
If Thou shouldst our sin ponder and weigh:  
Who able were to bear Thy punishment?  
The whole engine<sup>74</sup> of all this world, I say,  
The engine that endure shall for aye,  
With such examination might not stand  
Space of a moment in Thine angry hand.

Who is not born in sin original?  
Who doth not actually sin in sundry wise?  
But thou, good Lord, art he that sparest all,  
With piteous mercy tempering justice:  
For as thou dost reward us device<sup>75</sup>  
About our merit / so dost thou dispense  
Thy punishment far under our offence.

More is thy mercy far than<sup>76</sup> all our sin,  
To give them also that unworthy be,  
More godly is and more mercy therein,  
Howbeit worthy enough are they pardee,<sup>77</sup>  
Be they never so unworthy, whom that he  
Chooses<sup>78</sup> to accept, which where so ever he taketh,  
Whom he unworthy findeth, worthy maketh.

Wherefore, Good Lord, that always<sup>79</sup> merciful art,  
Unto thy grace and sovereign dignity,  
We silly<sup>80</sup> wretches cry with humble heart  
Our sin forgot and our malignity,  
With piteous yes of thy benignity,

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<sup>73</sup> “In collocation with narrow, especially in phrase straight and narrow path, a course of conventionally moral and law-abiding behavior” (OED).

<sup>74</sup> As noted, “engine” can mean “a snare, wile; also, in weaker sense, an appliance, means” (OED). Here More means the temptations or snares of the world.

<sup>75</sup> “Device” means “the action of devising, contriving, or planning; the faculty of devising, inventive faculty; invention, ingenuity” (OED). In context, ‘God does reward us, planning on our merit.’

<sup>76</sup> “Far than” replaces the original “farre then.”

<sup>77</sup> “Pardee” is a variant of “pardie,” which means “a form of oath:= ‘By God!’; hence as an asseveration: Verily, certainly, assuredly, indeed” (OED).

<sup>78</sup> “Chooses” replaces the original “list.”

<sup>79</sup> “Always” replaces “ay.”

<sup>80</sup> The original word is “sely,” which is a variant of “seely.” Seely can mean “spiritually blessed, enjoying the blessing of God. Said of persons, their condition, or experiences.” Or it can mean “silly,” as in “deserving of pity or sympathy; pitiable, miserable, ‘poor’; helpless, defenseless. See also silly” (OED). The second meaning fits best, although the first cannot be ruled impossible. Perhaps More meant to pun upon both senses.

Friendly look on us once,<sup>81</sup> thine own we be,  
Servants or sinners whether it liketh thee.

Sinners if thou our crime behold certain,  
Our crime the work of our uncourteous<sup>82</sup> mind  
But if thy gifts thou behold again,  
Thy gifts noble, wonderful, and kind,  
Thou shalt us then the same persons find,  
Which are to thee and have be long space,<sup>83</sup>  
Servants by nature, children by thy grace.

But this thy goodness wringeth<sup>84</sup> us alas,  
For we whom grace had made thee children dear,  
Are made thy guilty folk by our trespass,  
Sin hath us guilty made this many a year,  
But let thy grace, thy grace that hath no peer.  
Of our offence surmount<sup>85</sup> all the preace,  
That in our sin thine honor may increase.

For thou, thy wisdom though thy sovereign power,  
May otherwise appear sufficiently,  
As things which thy creatures every hour,  
All with one voice declare and testify,  
Thy goodness: yet thy singular mercy,  
Thy piteous heart thy gracious indulgence  
No thing so clearly showeth as our offence.

What but our sin hath showed that mighty love,  
Which able was thy dreadful majesty,  
To draw down into earth from heaven above,  
And crucify god, that we poor wretches we,  
Should from our filthy sin cleansed<sup>86</sup> be,  
With blood and water of thine own side,  
That streamed from thy blessed wounds wide.

Thy love and pity thus, O heavenly King,  
Our evil maketh matter of thy goodness,  
O love, O pity, our wealth ay providing,  
O goodness serving thy servants in distress,  
O love, O pity, well nigh now thankless  
O goodness mighty gracious and wise,

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<sup>81</sup> "Once" replaces "onys."

<sup>82</sup> The original word is "uncorteyle" for which I can find no definition. More might have meant "uncourteous," which is an adjective that means "wanting in courtesy; discourteous: of persons" (OED). He might also have written a variant of "uncourtly," which means "not adapted or suited to Court; especially, not sufficiently polished or refined" (OED). Such an adjective was used in regard to persons or their attributes.

<sup>83</sup> "Have be long space"=have been for a long time.

<sup>84</sup> According to the OED, "wring" could be another of More's neologisms; the first recorded use of this word, at least, comes from More's "Dialogue" (1528). "Wring" means "to incline or dispose (a person); to bend or divert to something" (OED).

<sup>85</sup> Campbell and Reed suggest "trim, fighting condition" for "preace."

<sup>86</sup> The original word is "iclensed," which is probably an obsolete variant of "cleansed."

And yet almost now vanquished with our vice.

Grant I thee pray such heat into mine heart,  
That to this love of thine may be egall.<sup>87</sup>  
Grant me from Sathanas<sup>88</sup> service to astart,<sup>89</sup>  
With whom me rueth<sup>90</sup> so long to have be thrall,<sup>91</sup>  
Grant me good Lord and creator of all,  
The flame to quench of all sinful desire,  
And in thy love set all mine heart afire.

That when the journey<sup>92</sup> of this deadly life  
My silly<sup>93</sup> ghost hath finished and thence  
Departed must without his<sup>94</sup> fleshly wife  
Alone into his lord's high presence  
He may thee find: O well of indulgence,  
In thy lordship not as a lord: but rather  
As a very tender loving father.

Amen.

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<sup>87</sup> "Egall"= "equal" (OED).

<sup>88</sup> "Sathanas" is probably a variant of "Satanas," which meant "Satan" (OED).

<sup>89</sup> "Astart" means "to start off, get away, escape. b. To remove, withdraw, desist" (OED). In context, then, the line reads: "Grant me from Satan's service to escape."

<sup>90</sup> Obsolete form of "ruth," which means "contrition, repentance; remorse" (OED).

<sup>91</sup> "So long to have be thrall"=So long to have been enslaved.

<sup>92</sup> There is no entry for the original "iornay," but it is probably and obsolete variant of "journey," especially in its figurative sense: "the 'pilgrimage' or passage through life" (OED).

<sup>93</sup> "Silly" as in pitiable. The original word is "syly." See note 164.

<sup>94</sup> "His" refers to the "ghost" or "soul" of the speaker. So the use of the third person pronoun should not lead us to believe More is speaking about a wife other than his own.

