An Annotated Translation of the Letters of John of Salisbury

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE LETTERS OF JOHN OF
SALISBURY: LETTERS 292-335

by

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VITA

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CHAPTER I
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE LETTERS

During the lifetime of John of Salisbury at least two of the governments of Europe were feeling the first strong impulse for complete independence in the realm of temporal affairs from the Church of Rome, a Church that still claimed "an ultimate predominance among the powers that governed the world." It was this struggle between the spiritual-temporal authority that had guided Europe through the Dark Ages and the national consciousness, which had only recently been awakened some time between the first and second crusade, that so profoundly influenced and determined the course of John's adult years. In England, which was the scene of most of the problems that John deals with in the following letters the Church retained many privileges and exemptions from the civil authority; furthermore, it still played a major role in the government of the country. The Archbishop of Canterbury, "who sat on the right side of the king," together with the rest of the English hierarchy, was a power that must be reckoned with by a king who sought autocracy. And in this period of clashing interests and mutual hostility John of Salisbury stood out as one of the principal protagonists on behalf

of the rights of the Church, although he always remained the power "behind the throne."³

We have but little data on John's early life, and what we do possess has been largely gleaned from references to it in his own writings. He was born in the old city of Salisbury, today known as Old Sarum, probably between the years 1115 and 1120. We learn from one of John's letters to Peter of Celle⁴ that his mother was still living in 1170 when he returned to England from his exile, but we have no other record that tells us more of her than this; of his father we know nothing. His brother Richard played a fairly important part in John's correspondence, and through this we can trace at least the broadest outline of his career, a career that eventually led to his becoming an Austin Canon Regular in the Monastery of Merton in Surrey.

John tells us that while he was still a lad he was sent to study under a priest who practiced "speculariam magicam,"⁵ but we have no more information of his student career than this until 1135. From 1135 or 1136, when he went to France to continue his studies, we possess what is probably a fairly complete record of his teachers; this period of John's life, which lasted for either ten or twelve years, has been thoroughly treated by Clement Webb in his life of John.⁶ In all probability it was at this time that John became acquainted with Peter of Celle, later to become one of his most intimate

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³ Webb, vi.

⁴ Letter 306/300

⁵ Polycraticus ii.28, Migne P.L. cxcix, 889, A.

⁶ Cf. Webb, 4-12; also Reginald L. Poole, Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Lee, London, 1908, 876. ("John of Salisbury")
friends and correspondents; Webb believes that John, who did not have a sufficient income of his own to permit him to pursue his studies without some financial assistance, served in the capacity of Peter’s tutor.  

We know that John was attached to Pope Eugene’s household as a clerk from at least the spring of 1148, for he served in this capacity at the Council of Rheims held in that year; Poole is of the opinion that John probably accepted that post in 1146. In either 1153 or 1154 he left the Roman Curia for England, where he took up the duties of secretary to Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. He had been introduced to Theobald by St. Bernard at the Council of Rheims, and on his return to England presented the Archbishop with a letter of recommendation from Bernard. Canterbury was to be his nominal home for the next twenty years, for he retained the post of secretary for three consecutive incumbents of the archbishopric. Here he became thoroughly familiar with the civil as well as the spiritual government of England, for "after the accession of Henry II the king’s long absences on the continent threw into the archbishop’s hands a large share in the government of the country." It was at this time that he became the intimate friend of the best known member of the primatial household, Thomas Becket, who in that same year was ordained deacon and received as his

7 Webb, 8.

8 Dr. Reginald L. Poole, The English Historical Review, xxviii, no. clix, July, 1923, 322-324. ("John of Salisbury at the Papal Court")

9 St. Bernard to Theobald, letter 361, Migne P.L. 182, i. 562: "...providete ei, unde honeste, imo honorabiliter vivere possit; sed et hoc velociter, quia non habet quo se vertat."

10 Reginald Poole, Dictionary of National Biography, 877.
benefice the Archdeaconry of Canterbury. Here too began his close association with the monks of Canterbury; although John was a secular priest he was able to become thoroughly conversant with the financial affairs and regimen of the community, and as a result, in later years, could feel fully justified in demanding their financial aid for the Archbishop.

We know that John made at least three trips to the Papal Court for Archbishop Theobald during the next five years; he himself records in 1159 that he had crossed the Alps ten times. It was on his last trip to Rome, during the winter of 1158-1159, that he incurred the resentment of King Henry II. John had gone to the pope in the defence of Archbishop Theobald, whose fealty to the Apostolic See had apparently been called into question; John's prosecution of this affair was reported to the King as being in some way prejudicial to the royal dignity. In a letter to Peter of Celle John complains that he had been singled out as the one person responsible for the English hierarchy's opposition to Henry's attempted restriction of the Church's liberty, and scoffs at the idea of the Archbishop's being guided in

11 A community of Benedictine monks. Their community seems to have numbered about 100 at the time, though this number is based to a large extent upon conjecture. Cf. Josia Cox Russel, 188.

12 Cf. letters 292/289 (p. 25 in this translation); 296/303, (43), 295/302, (48), 302/296 (65), 305/299 (76).


his undertakings by the directions of a mere secretary. John, as he was to continue to do later during his period of exile, strove through all the means at his disposal to reinstate himself in the graces of the King; to this end he obtained testimonial letters from the Pope and Archbishop, and implored his old friend Thomas Becket, then the royal chancellor, to support him. Still and all, although John emerged from his difficulties soon afterwards, the antipathy that the King had conceived for him was, in all probability, never completely resolved until he left the Kingdom to take up his episcopal duties at Chartres in 1176. And Henry's prejudices against John, whether or not they were well founded, were to have considerable bearing upon John's future, as we shall presently see. An immediate effect of his scrape with the King was that Theobald employed John much less in the transaction of his public affairs; this period of partial leisure provided John with ample opportunity for completing his two major works, the Poliorcatus and the Metalogicon.

In that same year of 1159 another event took place on the continent in which John was to take some part, and it was one that was going to have some influence upon the future relations between Archbishop Thomas Becket and King Henry. For in September, after the death of Pope Adrian IV, Cardinal Roland Bandinelli was elected to the papacy as Pope Alexander III; within the week, under the instigation of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Cardinal Octavian was elected anti-pope with the title of Victor IV. 15 The support

15 Webb, 112.
of Alexander by King Henry, "the most powerful prince of his time,"16 was in some part, although very indirectly, due to the exertions of John; "no doubt his [John's] influence told in determining Theobald's acceptance of his candidate; and Theobald in turn secured Alexander's recognition by the English episcopate at a synod held in London."17 It is interesting to note here the paradoxical fact that John's effective espousal of Alexander's claims was, in the future, to be in one sense a cause for Alexander's hesitancy in giving his energetic support to Archbishop Thomas against the King—support that both John and Thomas felt they had every right to expect.18

The history of John and that section of his letters contained in this translation are, from this period, so intimately bound up with the story of Thomas Becket that it is best to review briefly the part that Thomas played in them.

Thomas Becket was born in London on December 21, probably in the year 1118. His parents were well to do, and gave their son a fine education, first in Merton Abbey, then in Paris. When his schooling was finished Thomas took up secretarial work for Sir Richer de L'Aigle, then with his

16 Webb, 177; also William Stubbs, Historical Introduction to the Roll's Series, ed. Hassall, Longmans & Co., London, 1902, 93: "In power and character, by position and alliances, the arbiter of Western Europe in both war and peace.... The most successful politician of his time, and thoroughly unscrupulous about using his power to his own ends...." For a complete, documented analysis of Henry's physical make-up and character, cf. idem, 104-107.

17 Webb, 20.

18 Cf. p.10. In this series of his letters John seems always to presume that Thomas has the unqualified support of the Pope (vd.293/301, p.32; 297/298, p.45; 298/302, p.48; and 300/293, p.56ff.); this, however, seems to have been contradictory to Alexander's policy.
relative Osbert Huitdeniers. Later he became a clerk of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury. Theobald sent him to Bologne and Auxerre to study canon law for a year; upon his return to England in 1154 he was ordained deacon, and received the Archdeaconry of Canterbury.

King Stephen died in November of 1154, and young Henry II ascended the throne of England; in that same year he chose Thomas, then thirty-six, to be his chancellor. Thomas became an intimate and trusted friend of Henry, and seems to have been the chief organizer of Henry's expedition to Toulouse in 1159; we read that he distinguished himself by his courage and daring throughout the campaign, traits that he was afterwards to turn against Henry.

Archbishop Theobald died in 1161, and John tells us that one of his last wishes was that he be succeeded by Thomas Becket; a year later King Henry also chose Thomas to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. Thomas was alarmed at the prospect of accepting this dignity, for he was no doubt well aware of the royal plans concerning the curtailment of the Church's liberty and privileges in England, and realized that, as Archbishop, he would be obliged in conscience to oppose the King whose highest favor he then enjoyed; furthermore, he knew that opposition to the King's interests could only result in protracted bitterness between the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities in the Kingdom. But in spite of his objections and fears he


20 Entheticus, 1295.

21 Stubbs, in the Historical Introduction to the Rolls Series, 107, gives us the key to this vindictiveness in Henry's character: "...he was a
was induced by Cardinal Henry of Pisa to accept the proffered archbishopric for the welfare of the Church. He was ordained on June 2, 1162, and consecrated bishop the following day.

Upon being installed in his new office, and although Henry strenuously opposed it, Thomas resigned his chancellorship. From this time on many misunderstandings arose between the two. The King, still mindful of the charges that had been leveled against John in 1159, considered John's influence over the Archbishop partially responsible for Thomas's opposition to the royal plans. This became clear in January of 1163, when Henry returned to England after a five year absence. In that year John and his brother Richard left the country because of a royal edict against them, for the King, wounded by his ex-chancellor's consistent championship of Church privileges, wanted John and his influence removed from Thomas.

John traveled over into France, was received by King Louis, and eventually settled with his old friend Peter of Celle, who by that time had become the Abbot of St. Remy in good and kind master, who chose his servants well, but neither trusted them too much, nor ever forgave their neglect to his interests...."

22 Cf. pp. 4-5.

23 Poole, Dictionary of National Biography, 879.

24 Willelmo Filio Stephani (William Fitz Stephen), Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, ed. J. C. Robertson, Longman & Co., London, 1877, iii, para. 35, p. 46. ("Vita S. Thomae"): "Rex etiam statim a principio, ex quo iram adversus eum altius conceperat, procuravit longius ab eo amovere duos probos et honestos clericos nutritos ab adulescentia de bonis ipsius archiepiscopi, quorum unus erat thesaurarius Eboracensis, et alter cononicus Sarum, et uterque Joannes dictus erat, ne in opportunitatibus suis archiepiscopus illorum consilio vel auxilio uteretus; alterumque eligi et ordinari episcopum Pictavensem, alterum vero exsulare inssit."
Rheims.

But in spite of the King's precautionary removal of John relations between the Archbishop and himself grew steadily worse. A crisis was finally reached in 1164 when Henry proposed the Constitutions of Clarendon, which included what he called his "grandfather's customs," for the approbation of the English hierarchy. 25 One of the objects of these articles was to subject all clerics who had been found guilty of serious crimes by ecclesiastical tribunes, and who had been degraded on this account, to another trial by the King's courts. Thomas took an uncompromising stand against these so-called customs as being derogatory to the rights of the Church, and urged his fellow bishops to refuse their approbation. After a period of persecution and continual quarrels with the King, in which he refused to yield an inch, Thomas was finally forced to flee from London on October 13, 1164, and sailed in disguise from Sandwich on November 2 of the same year.

Louis VII of France welcomed him warmly, and shortly afterwards Thomas had an audience with Pope Alexander, who was then at Sens. Because of the peculiar set of circumstances in which they were both involved, Alexander felt that he could do little to help Thomas. For the quarrel between Thomas and Henry was really nothing more than a lesser reproduction upon the English stage of what was taking place between Alexander and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the spiritual and temporal heads of all Christianity. Because of the similarity between these two disputes (in which Thomas was playing the pope's role in the English version), as well as because of

25 For a list of the articles the King wanted approved cf. Willelmo Filio Stephani, pars. 35, pp. 47-49. There are references to these in letters 297 (45), 306 (79), 307 (88).
Thomas's constant championship of Alexander's claims to the papacy, the Pope, would certainly, under normal circumstances, have supported the Archbishop against the King; and yet, at the same time, Alexander could not afford to antagonize the most powerful King in Europe. As it was, Henry must have been seriously tempted to withdraw his support from Alexander, who refused to aid him against Thomas, and give his royal approval to the claims of Victor IV. Besides, his allegiance to Alexander brought him into an alliance with Louis of France, and relations between these two were never exactly cordial. Then too, if he were to switch his backing he would be a fellow-at-arms with Frederick, a more powerful and influential king than Louis, and one whose interests were less likely to clash with his own. It is to the credit of Alexander that he was able to maintain this complicated balance of power throughout those troubled years, although his hesitancy must have been exceedingly annoying to Thomas and John.

For over six years Thomas and John remained in exile. On November 30 of his first year in France Thomas accepted the hospitality of the Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny in Burgundy, but a year later the long arm of Henry forced his departure, for his royal majesty threatened to take vengeance upon the whole Cistercian Order if the monks of Pontigny continued to harbor

26 Stubbs, Historical Introduction to the Rolls Series, 95: "He [Henry] hated Lewis the Seventh, he had every right to hate him, both as injurer and as injured. He was more or less at variance with him as long as he lived; he knew him to be weak and contemptible, and yet to be the source of all his own deepest unhappiness."

27 Eventually Alexander was able to obtain all that Thomas fought for, including the revocation of the Constitution of Clarendon, which, in his hour of defeat, Henry confessed he "considers of very little or no value." Letter 309, p. 108.
his enemy. John remained with his friend Peter of Celle from 1166 to 1169, and apparently spent some time with the monks of Saint Oustrille. 28

Meanwhile John strove with all his energies to affect a reconciliation between the Archbishop and King, and for this purpose had audiences with both the Pope and King of France in 1165. 29 He constantly urged moderation on the part of the head-strong Archbishop in his dealings with Henry, and is probably responsible to a great extent for Henry's never having incurred an excommunication nor his kingdom an interdict. Even in the following letters, written during the most trying days of his exile, we find John speaking quite often in terms of respect for Henry; on one occasion he even attributes the King's predicament to the bad advice of his counsellors, and conjectures upon the King's reluctance to take the steps he was more or less unwillingly forced to take. 30 This desire to conciliate the King at any cost other than the sacrifice of principle was not a sign of weakness on the part of John; rather, he was merely a practical man who could realize what was demanded by the circumstances. John was also undoubtedly one of the "wise men" who urged Thomas to make no mention of the customs, which were one of the more serious questions rankling in the breasts of both Thomas and the King, during the negotiations for a peaceful settlement. It was the wiser course to have peace settled first, and then obtain all that justice demanded. 31

28 This would seem to be indicated by the statement of these same monks in letter 325/F, p.147.

29 Webb, 111.

30 Letter 299, p.52.

31 Letter 294, p.36.
the meanwhile intimidation is not out of place,\(^{32}\) and he takes care that the papal commissioners are urged to give the King no quarter.\(^ {33}\)

After two unsuccessful papal commissions in 1167 and 1169,\(^ {34}\) a reconciliation was finally affected in 1170,\(^ {35}\) without, however, any understanding in regard to the Constitutions. John's own story of his return to England and the disappointment he experienced at what he found there, as well as the story of Thomas's return is contained in this section of John's letters.\(^ {36}\) Thomas landed on December 1, 1170, and was received with great popular acclaim, although John writes that the King's officers were believed to have intended to injure him.

But trouble with the King was resumed almost at once over the absolution of two excommunicated bishops and the return of Thomas's castle at Saltwood. Thomas and his followers were restricted by an edict of the King from leaving their premises at Canterbury, and they remained there until the death of Thomas. John was apparently present in the Cathedral on December 29, 1170, when Thomas was martyred, and he describes the circumstances very vividly in his letter to Bishop John Belmeis of Poitiers.\(^ {37}\)

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32 Letter 303, p. 73.
33 Letter 295, p. 40.
34 Letter 298, p. 48, was sent to the Monks of Canterbury at this time.
35 Letter 305, p. 76.
36 Letter 306, p. 79.
After the death of Thomas, John "probably resumed the position which he had held before his exile on the episcopal staff." This would seem to be indicated from his letters at this time, for we know from them that John took a leading part in trying to have worthy men elected to the vacant bishoprics of England, a task that would have fallen to the secretary of the primatial see of the kingdom.

John also took a leading part in urging the canonization of Thomas, and wrote at length of the miracles that were attributed to him before his inclusion in the catalogue of the Saints. The actual canonization of St. Thomas Becket was finally realized on February 21, 1173, while Alexander III was still reigning. Because of the universal indignation that the story of Thomas's martyrdom stirred up against Henry, that royal person performed humiliating penances at the martyr's tomb in 1174.

John was eventually summoned to the Bishopric of Chartres in 1176, and he retained this see until his death on October 25, 1180. During this period we have little information about his activities, for his new duties curtailed his writing. We know that he was present as a witness to the treaty made on September 21, 1177 between Henry and Louis, and that he held a

38 Webb, 122.
39 Letters 313-324, pp. 119-145.
40 Letter 310, p. 105.
41 Letters 307, 310, pp. 88, 105.
43 Letters 327, p. 150, and 328, p. 160.
commission from Pope Alexander at the Third Lateran Council in 1199. These incidents, together with his narration of the later miracles of St. Thomas in France, and his official letters constitute the only record that is left of his last years. If credence is to be placed in the Necrology of the Church of Chartres, John emulated some of the rigorous mortifications upon his own body that he recorded as having been discovered under the pontifical robes of St. Thomas at the time of the Saint's funeral service.

44 Webb, 124.
45 Letter 332, p.142.
48 Gallia Christiana. Ex typographia regia, Parisiis, MDCCXLIV, viii, 1148: ("Necrologium Carnotense") "...obit piae recordationis pater noster Joannes prius B. Thomae Cantuariensis archiepiscopi & martyris a secretis, postea huius misericordissimae Dei matris ecclesiae episcopus venerabilis, vir magnae religionis, totiusque scientiae radiis illustratus, erbo, vita, moribus pastor omnibus amabilis, soli sibi nimis crudelis, a pedibus usque ad collum cilicio semper carnem domante."
CHAPTER II
THE STYLE OF LETTERS 292-335

After the brief summary of the background of these letters it is only fitting that we present, for the benefit of those who are acquainted with John's works only in translation, as well as for those who are about to begin reading their Latin text, a short analysis of his style of writing. It is certainly a sad mistake to fail to read the original text in favor of a translation, for this course will certainly deprive the student of John of Salisbury of much of the richness and charm that gives these letters their literary value—a richness that cannot be adequately reproduced in any translation. And, with all due respect for their importance in the history of the twelfth century, it cannot be denied that half their value and charm lies in John's particular style.

Reginald L. Poole, one of the outstanding authorities on the history and works of John of Salisbury, wrote that "no writer in the middle ages can be placed beside him in the extent and depth of his classical reading," and that in his writings John "has all the virtues of the humanists of the 15th century, but is free from their vices." Clement Webb, in his life of John,

1 All references in this chapter are to the Latin text of these letters edited by the Reverend William J. Millor, S.J. Consult Section I of the Bibliography for additional information.

2 Poole, Dictionary of National Biography, 881. ("John of Salisbury")

3 Ibid., 882.
calls him "the best letter writer of his day," and likens him, for his ability to instill his own character into his letters, to Cicero, Madame de Sevigne and Cowper; of these he most closely resembles Cicero, with whose letters, he hastens to add, John was not actually acquainted.

These letters of John are, to a great extent, "business" letters, in which he exhorts loyalty to the Archbishop, asks for money, pleads for assistance of men in authority, instructs and lashes the timid—letters, in a word, which by their very nature and urgency would not seem to lend themselves to a lofty style. And yet, in spite of this obstacle, their remarkable and uniform excellence only demonstrates more clearly John's familiarity and lineage with the best of Latin literature and thought. John's formal study of the classics apparently began at Chartres about the year 1137 under a certain William of Conches, but there is every reason to believe that his reading and study of them ended only with his death.

John himself deplores the "crude style" of his writing, but this statement we can dismiss as merely an instance of that false humility that is affected by many a subordinate while he addresses himself to some high

5 Ibid., 138.
6 It is interesting to note that John's use of the formal address in beginning his letters is apparently quite arbitrary before May of 1173; but all of his letters contained in this edition that were written in his own name after that date were begun formally. (But cf. letter 324)
7 Webb, 5-6.
8 Letter 315, 21. Throughout these letters John is also given to belittling himself from time to time, cf. 302, 3; 302, 45; 329, 2; 325, 4; 316, 8; 315, 9; 324, 25.
superior, for at this time John was writing to Pope Alexander III.

In pointing out John's indebtedness to the greatest of ancient authors we are compelled to cite a few examples of the rhetorical and mechanical devices he employs in those of his letters contained in this paper. The selection of only a few citations is dangerous, in a sense, since the instances that are explicitly mentioned will tend to insinuate to the reader the false idea that these are singular cases; for this reason it is necessary to bear in mind that our references are arbitrary choices, both as to species and individual selections, out of the numerous examples included in this section of John's letters.

John regularly makes use of rhetorical figures of speech and other artifices to give his letters the elements of change and emphasis and grace he wants them to have.

Of all these letters probably 307 stands out as the finest example of his art. Lines 43-94, in which he praises the virtues of the Archbishop and indicts the sins of his persecutors, can certainly be compared favorably with the best of Cicero's denunciations. Within this section we have the very effective comparison between the circumstances of Christ's death and the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas; here the wrath of John is clearly expressed by the short, bitter and pulsating enumeration of the charges against the murderers. Many sentences of this letter would seem to have been written with an eye to their being read aloud; lines 43-49 are an excellent example of this, with its flowing rhythm and internal rhyme: "Nec

Letter 307, 64-94.
ad modicum et quasi ad horam credens, et in articulo tentationis recedens, adversa perpessus est, sed exsilium et acerbam proscriptionem in annum septimum protelauit, tanta quidem virtute constantiae regia via incendens et Christi et apostolorum virorum sequens vestigia, ut inuictus eius animus nec fortunae saeuientis impetu posset frangi nec blanditiis emolliri."¹⁰

John makes frequent use of metaphors in these letters;¹¹ many of them as in the case of letter 294, 1-5, defy translation: "Actiones gratiarum debitas parturit animus, ...'parturiens' ... in partum ... gestiat...." In another place he tells us that the "sword of Peter" is drawn out to cut down the enemies of the Church;¹² later, to avoid the possibility of any misunderstanding, he tells us that the sword is the sentence of anathema. The Church is a ship, and it will enter the port of peace after its shipwreck;¹³ the person he recommends for an office in the Church is one of its strongest columns,¹⁴ or a wall put up against its enemies;¹⁵ the defender of the Church is the "malleus impiorum,"¹⁶ while, on the other hand, its enemy in England is the "Anglicanae ecclesiae malleus."¹⁷

¹⁰ For another example of John's exceptional skill in telling a story cf. Letter 332, 15-79.

¹¹ Letters 292, 106; 292, 111-112; 294, 1-5 and 8; 297, 1; 298, 16-18 and 39-40; 299, 44-45; 300, 38; 302, 52; 312, 39; 313, 16; 316, 32; 318, 29; 322, 18.

¹² Letter 298, 16-18.

¹³ Letters 299, 44-45; 313, 16; 316, 32.

¹⁴ Letter 318, 29.

¹⁵ Letter 322, 18.


¹⁷ Letter 294, 8.
There are also many instances of metonymy\textsuperscript{18} and synecdoche\textsuperscript{19} in these letters. The peace and friendship that is offered to Thomas and his faithful followers in exile to entice them into acting in a way opposed to the dictates of their conscience become "kisses and embraces;"\textsuperscript{20} the schism is "the other gospel,"\textsuperscript{21} but the true faith is the "way of the Lord."\textsuperscript{22} There is also an occasional tendency on John's part for expressing the effects of "sorrow" or "suffering" in triplicate\textsuperscript{23} or duplicate.\textsuperscript{24} All the cases of synecdoche referred to above are concerned with the "eyes," "mouths" or "ears" of the subjects under discussion—all of which, however, obviously refer to the person.

John's fondness for the alliterative juxtaposition of words is evident from the many places in which he employs this device;\textsuperscript{25} these same instances often also manifest his skill in choosing the precise counterpoint the occasion calls for. For instance, he writes to Hugh of Gant that his gratitude has been prevented from attaining its normal effect ("effectus"), but nothing can stifle its affect (if we might use the obsolete meaning of

\textsuperscript{18} Letters 292, 13; 297, 8; 299, 47.

\textsuperscript{19} Letters 305, 9; 311, 4; 311, 9; 326, 61; 326, 91.

\textsuperscript{20} Letter 299, 47-48.

\textsuperscript{21} Letters 292, 13; 297, 8.

\textsuperscript{22} Letter 292, 13.

\textsuperscript{23} Letters 306, 171-172; 307, 125.

\textsuperscript{24} Letter 307, 173.

\textsuperscript{25} Letters 294, 304; 295, 8; 302, 29-31; 307, 85-87 and 96; 311, 48; 312, 18-19; 323, 7; 325, 36.
this term to translate "affectum") for expressing itself. In Letter 295, 8 John makes what we might term a pun upon the name of Gratian, referring to him as "the son of grace." Letter 302, 29-41 has a triple alliteration: "fidelius et familiaris ... plane et plane ... accensa uel incensa." God has acted "sapienter et sulubriter" while permitting men to act so "imprudenter et impudenter," and He will certainly either "convertet aut conteret" the perpetrators of the murder of Thomas. He accentuates the difference between the martyr Thomas who has been glorified by so many unheard of miracles, and the Archbishop of York who is obviously "mendosus et mendax." For an extended alliteration there is the reference to the "merita martyris multipliciter," with its repeated r's and t's.

Occasionally, in a way that is reminiscent of Livy, John will use entirely different words to express ideas that could have been included under a general term; there are two very similar examples of this concerned with the change from sorrow to joy contained in these letters.

John is well aware of the overpowering effect of a ponderance of evidence either for or against a person, and rather than generalize with the use of a term such as "hardships" or "merits" or "miracles" will momentarily

26 Letter 294, 3-4.
28 Letter 307, 96.
29 Letter 311, 48.
30 Letter 325, 36.
31 Letters 310, 5-7; 332, 65-68.
stop in the course of his narrative to catalogue an imposing list of particular examples.32

In quite the opposite way John will at times utilize the valuable influence of suggestion: "these few points that I have mentioned are not all but it would take far too much time to recount...."33 After sowing the seed of suggestion in the minds of his readers he wisely leaves the picturing of the details to their imaginations--which have been impregnated by the facts he has recounted.

John also makes extensive use of rhetorical questions to accentuate the point at issue.34 In letter 307, and again in letter 310, we encounter the device of which John is fond, emulating in this his master Cicero.35 In letter 307, 14 we have an excellent example of this; John writes that it is not necessary to repeat the story of Thomas's martyrdom since it is certainly well-known throughout the whole Latin world--and, besides, he does not have much time for writing. With this preface John begins a very detailed account of the martyrdom--and in what is far and away the longest letter of this section.

John's sarcasm is a formidable weapon, sharp and biting.36 At one time

32 Letters 307, 27-32; 307, 55-57; 307, 188-193; 307, 195-196; 310, 16-17; 311, 37-40; 311, 62-64; 312, 30-32; 313, 41-44; 318, 14-18 and 321, 9-15, which are verbatim--as are many other parts of these two letters; 325, 37-38.


34 Letters 307, 6-7, 116, 125, 173-175; 310, 18-20, 21-22, 44-45, 48-49; 311, 58-59; 313, 44-46.

35 Letters 307, 14; 312, 3-13.

he refers to the Archbishop of London as a "vir prudens et religiosus" for possibly wanting to restore the cult of Jove; as he wrote this he may have been thinking of the parable of the unjust steward who was commended for his "prudentia." 37

In letter 300, 104 John uses symbolism to explain the increase of persecution against Thomas's followers; now that the Church's enemies realize that their time is rapidly drawing to a close they naturally increase the ferocity of their attacks upon faithful Christians--for that part of winter immediately preceding the pleasantness of spring is the most violent of all.

For emphasis John occasionally uses the device of saying one thing, and then immediately following it up with a stronger statement: "Our Lord Pope advises this--in fact, he even commands it." 38

But besides these rhetorical devices John also puts to use the mechanical devices employed by prose writers and poets of Ancient Rome's Golden and Silver Ages.

The use of chiasmus for force and grace of expression is found time and again in the works of the best writers of Ancient Rome, and only rarely, or never, in works of a decadent Latinity; John employs it regularly as a normal form of expression. 39 A good example is Letter 292, 80 with its repeated "m" and "s" sounds: "Sed fortasse pertimescetis minas insidiantium et tentationum labores et dolores." In letter 307, 195 we have an instance of

37 Cf. Luke 16.8
38 Letter 298, 50; cf. also Letter 302, 137.
39 Letters 295, 8-10; 295, 34-35; 299, 80; 300, 117-118; 302, 6; 307, 27-32; 307, 195; 325, 67; 292, 80.
a rhythmic, balanced, double chiasmus: "veritatem fidei, zelum iustitiae, confessionis uirtutem et inuictae constantiae perseuerantiam." Letter 299, 56 has an even more ornate form: genitive, ablative, verb, and then, after an "et" to serve as a fulcrum, this order is carefully reversed.

Anaphora also occurs time and again.40 In letter 311, 75-78 John uses a progressive anaphora: "misero, deinde miseriori ..., et tandem miserrimum ...."

There is such a considerable use of anastrophe41 and hyperbaton42 that we can limit ourselves to the first eight letters for our examples of them. An effective example of the former is letter 292, 61 with its repeated "m" ending: "Non quod tenacitatem aut inhumanitatem vestram accusem haec scribo!

A representative case of hyperbaton is contained in lines 20-23 of the same letter, and here we also find bound up with it one of the rare cases of John's use of zeugma in these letters: "Sunt aliqui ... qui, caeca ducti ambitione, dum uobis appetunt dominari, blandis promissionibus dolis circumueniunt innocentiam vestram."

In the first two letters we find asyndeton.43 Polysyndeton is quite common throughout the entire course of these letters.44 In letter 292, 105-111 these two are arranged together in sequence; after a flood of eight "ets"

40 Letters 300, 99; 305, 19-20; 311, 62; 311, 75; 317, 8-11.

41 Letters 292, 61-62; 293, 36; 294, 2-3; 294, 26.


43 Letters 292, 110-111; 293, 9.

44 Letters 292, 107-109; 299, 16-17; 300, 43; 302, 33; 302, 98-100; 306; 165-167.
we run into four consecutive parallel phrases without a single connective. Letter 306, 165-167 had another case of multiple polysyndeton with five "ets."

Other mechanical devices employed by John are hendiadys, alliteration, repetition of the same ending, and eclipsis.

The scope of this chapter does not warrant any discussion of John's use of quotations from and allusions to both the Bible and classical authors, quotations which he often includes in his text as the perfect expression of his own thought; at any rate, the foot-note references to these sources are an eloquent enough testimony of his familiarity with both. However, we might mention in conclusion an element in John's letters for which the letters of Charles Lamb are noted. This is his occasional employment of a quotation in a place where it is not applicable in the literal sense that the original author had in mind. This element of the unexpected is certainly calculated to make the borrowed quotation all the more provocative and effective.

45 Letter 305, 6-7; 305, 15; 307, 183-184; 311, 82-83.
46 Cf. p. 19, note 25, where we combined this device with the examples of John's fondness for play on words.
48 Letters 292, 40; 292, 80; 299, 71; 325, 59.
49 Letter 294, 2.
I grieve, dearest brethren, and grieve deeply over the reports I have received about your fraternity, since there are such dissensions among you that you are no longer united in the Lord in thought or word; for (as they maintain who are credited with having been more intimately acquainted with your conversation, and are believed to have understood it better) one or another of you says, "I'm with the King, I'm with Ranulf, I'll see what happens and will side with the ones who win." With all these differences of opinion it will certainly be a rare individual, if indeed there will be anybody at all, who mindful of his promise, recalls that he has an Archbishop whom he must obey, and Archbishop who faithfully preaches the word of God and has the courage to declare publicly that God must be obeyed before men.

1 Summary: John writes to William Brito, sub-prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, deploring the dissensions among the monks and bitterly attacking Bishop Gilbert Foliot. He exhorts the monks to resist Gilbert, and to come to the aid of Archbishop Thomas. The letter was probably written in the latter half of 1169, for John mentions that the Archbishop has been in exile for five years. Thomas left England in November, 1164.

2 Ranulf: Ranulf de Broc, who had seized the possessions of Canterbury.

3 Cf. Acts 5:29
I am astonished (if these charges are really true—and I wish that they appeared to be false!) that you are so easily led away from the way of the Lord into that other Gospel which destroys the authority of the Church, and freely grants the society of the faithful to those who have been handed over to the harsh demands of Satan, and teaches men to take part in the sinfulness of thieves, robbers, fornicators, and simonists to share in their sensual pleasure or material gain. This condition is believed to have come about because there are some among you who disturb your peace of mind, as well as others outside, led on by blind ambition, while seeking to control you, they assail your innocence with tempting promises and clever deceits to lead it from the common rule of your Order. But if you are not of such dull perception that surpasses the wildest animals in stupidity you can readily see towards what goal their efforts are directed. Why even the Bishop of London, to the sorrow of the faithful, has publicly declared that no obedience is due to the primatial seat of England, that is, to the Church of Canterbury, and that he will undertake the transference of the metropolitan see from that place to where he imagines (I will not say that he feigns this belief) it ought to be—that is, to the Church of London, where, he boasts, the archflamen presided when the cult of Jove was practiced! And perhaps this wise and religious man is arranging the re-establishment of the cult of Jove, so that if he cannot become an Archbishop in any other way, he might at least attain to the name and title of archflamen. Nevertheless, he bases his con-

4 Cf. Psalms 49.18
5 Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London, 1163-1188
ention upon the oracle of Merlin⁶ who, filled with some sort of spirit, is said to have prophesied before the coming of St. Augustine, the Apostle of the English, that the Christian religion would be destroyed, and would be restored again when the grandeur of London adorned Canterbury. But because this Merlinian philosopher recognizes how worthless the authority of his prophet is, he is said to have had recourse to more efficacious aids; presuming upon the King's power, the weakness of the Church, the avarice of the Romans, your own timidity, the poverty of the Archbishop and his own great wealth, he feels confident in his vanity that he will prevail against the wisdom and justice of God.⁷

What, then, will you say or do in the face of all these accusations? Do you fear so much those above mentioned patrons of yours, or, to speak more truthfully, those enemies of your duties towards God and the Church, that you will give way before him who labours with such parricidal ungodliness at the task of slashing your mother's throat? Is not this the hour when not only the resources of the Church must be expended, but even blood must be shed in order to resist him and save the authority of the Church?

I hope your sense of what is holy is shamed at having offered no kindly encouragement up to now to your father, who is exiled and condemned, and at having given nothing, or, as you may better know, so very little, when almost the whole Latin world clearly realizes that the grounds for his banishment and condemnation is his zeal for the justice of God and the freedom of

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⁷ Psalms 51.9
the Church. And so for five years he has accepted contributions from other churches (I will not say confiscated, for they gave freely and willingly of their necessities for his difficulties) to maintain your peace, liberty, honor and glory. I do not write all this to upbraid your niggardliness or unkindness, for perhaps you were very busy, but to exhort you as my dearest brethren to let your faith be renewed and flourish in works of charity from time to time, so that you need not feel ashamed in the time of peace, which I hope will be restored very soon, but in joy and triumph will receive with great interest the reward for the charity you showed. For the fulness of the time is coming when Satan will no longer be permitted to rage with such great fury against the Church; and your father receives from the Lord the power to be able "to spare those who are subject to him, and subdue the proud." 8

Oh, if only I could behold you justly honored beyond all others for consoling those who are suffering with us! Oh, if only in the days of our return I can embrace you with a closer bond of love as the companions of our joy! Oh, if only your interest were sown in the poverty of your needy brothers, and especially in the heart of your father, so that afterwards you might reap in joy! You know who it was who said, "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings shall also reap blessings." 9

"Reaps what?" you may ask. Eternal life with temporal grace. But per-

8 Vergil, Aeneid, 6.853
9 II Corinthians, 9.6
haps you fear the threats of those who plot against you and threaten you with hardships and sorrows so that you do not dare to sow in tears what the occasion and need of the Church demands; and yet only those who sow in tears reap in joy. To the present time you have wanted for nothing; divine grace has granted you wealth and plenty, while others labor in want and tribulations in the defense of the Church. But now at last, if you choose to do so and in your wisdom you judge it fitting, you may show by your open exertions the compassionate charity which you have so long maintained you felt for your brothers in their trials; and yet not so as to lessen their hardships to your own distress, but rather in a spirit of justice, so that your present abundance will be a support, if not for the needs of your brothers (as indeed it ought), at least for those of your father. Otherwise there will be an obvious injustice when there is no equality among equals; for of those who are joined together in one spirit in the house of the Lord it has been written: "He that had much, had nothing over; and he that had little, had no want." Have not you alone wasted your legitimate gomer in the Lord's camp in the desert? For if manna, a truly heavenly gift and the bread and nourishment of angels, which is kept against the will of the Lord becomes corrupted and wormy, what decay and worminess will that rotteness contract which is retained at the expense of charity and against the will of the Lord, and at the cost of hunger and nakedness to your brothers? Certainly not

11 II Corinthians 8.15
12 Exodus 16.16-20
13 I Corinthians 4.11
because they may be hungry or naked, but because you—unless your love for them be further increased by grace—have exposed them to hunger, nakedness, and all dangers. Consider these and other similar reflections, and let them be the subjects of your conversations, and "set your heart to consider your ways," and your father's journeys and their cause, and the ways of your enemies; consider the decision that will be drawn from them under the scrutiny and judgment of God. And let no one among you be the champion of Ranulf, and another of Jamne, and another of Mambres, and another of Achitophel or other seers like him, but let each one examine his own conscience and consult the law of God.

And now, enlightened by the reasons I have given, may you really be restored to one mind through grace; since mercy is the fullness of virtue, turn away from your old ways, and be merciful towards him who, when God wills it, will be able to reply in great strength, and will crush in his might those who are crushing him.

May the Spirit of Wisdom be with you and guide your hearts so that you will be ever mindful of your own welfare. Under the scrutiny, witness and judgment of God love has drawn forth all these words from my heart and lips to my most beloved and revered brothers; and so never let it be imputed

14 Aggaeus 1.5, 7
15 II Timothy 3.8
16 2 Kings 15
17 Exodus 23.22
18 Isaias 11.2
to me as a fault before God, whom I envoke as witness and judge of all these matters, if you refuse to listen to me when I give you such sound advice.
LETTER 293/301

JOHN TO ARCHDEACON BALDWIN OF EXETER

The Church is in a most distressing situation with difficulties pressing down upon it from all sides as a result of the quarrel between the royal authority and the priesthood; for she is defending the freedom that the King destroys, and if she were to choose to give up the defense of her position and comply with the commands of tyrants she would on the spot incur the wrath of the Apostolic See. But, since it is far better to fall into the hands of men than to fail in the observance of the laws of God, I think it the best and wisest course to risk not only our possessions and the gifts of deceptive fortune in the defense of liberty and the laws of our faith as the saints have done, but even our very bodies. For no matter how many lashes may

1 Summary: John writes to Archdeacon Baldwin about the difficulties of the Church, and sends him a rescript of a letter which the Bishop of Worcester had received from the Pope. During the summer of 1168 Henry had sent the Archdeacons Geoffrey Ridel of Canterbury and Richard Ilchester of Poitiers and other royal officials to England with orders to convene a meeting of the bishops, who were to agree to measures which would free England from all subjection to the Pope. The meeting was a failure, and several of the bishops who had been lukewarm to the cause of Thomas, now openly declared that they would obey the archbishop. Among these were the Bishops of Winchester, Exeter and presumably Worcester, for this letter indicates that Worcester was now in the bad graces of Henry. The letter therefore may be placed in the autumn of 1169.

2 Daniel 13.23
bruise it, no matter how many tortures tyrants may inflict upon it in this life, whether our persecutors decree it or not, Christ, in Whose obedience and faith it is now profitably risked or laid down, will raise it up in the last day stronger and more beautiful according to its merits. And even if the anger of tyrants should prevail that far, "it is an easy thing to do without a sepulchre"\(^3\) where: "he who is without an urn is sheltered by the heavens."\(^4\)

There is room for deliberation only in doubtful matters, and there must be no doubt in what the divine law prescribes; for not even the least of God's commandments (if there actually is any one among them of lesser moment, which I can hardly believe) can be deliberately set aside for the sake of this temporal life; much less could it be neglected for the sake of worldly goods, or for a deceptive peace. Even the least commandments that we observe gain life, and quite often even merit the glory of martyrdom; but those that are neglected because of a sin of disobedience or contempt bring everlasting death. The Lord commands that a small bird which is caught with its young is not be be slain,\(^5\) adding that the reward for observing this commandment, if it is obeyed, is that you will live a long life. You cannot determine so easily the rewards that are to be granted for the observance of the other commandments, except where He commands that father and mother be honored.\(^6\)

\(^{3}\) Virgin, \textit{Aeneid} 2.646

\(^{4}\) Lucan, \textit{Phars.} 7.819

\(^{5}\) Deuteronomy 23.6-7

\(^{6}\) Exodus 20.12
And so he has added the same reward to that great commandment, which seems to be the least of them, to teach us that the loving observance of the least is capable of meriting life.

Has it not been written that "he who contemneth small things, shall fall little by little,"7 and "he who has been faithful in little things, shall be placed over many?"8 Nor do I say "let all men take this word,"9 or that I have carefully observed the least commandments—I who have fallen so often and so grievously in matters of great, and even the greatest importance. Surely, if obedience is the greatest commandment, no one will attain to the safety of greater advancement unless he observes it very carefully; "for obedience is better than victims,"10 and besides it is like "the sin of witchcraft to rebel: and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey." And to dispose you better to the virtue of obedience the authority of our Lord the Pope supports you, as you can see from the letter11 which he recently wrote to the Bishop of Worcester,12 who had enquired whether he ought to return to his episcopate and comply with the King's desire, or support our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, who was bravely enduring the gravest dangers to himself and his partisans for the sake of the liberty of the Church.

7 Eccl. 19.1
8 Luke 19.17
9 Matthew 19.11
10 I Kings 15.22-23; Greg. Mag. Mor. xxxv. 12, Migne P.L. xv. 28
11 For this letter cf. Becket Materials vi. 390
12 Roger Fitz Count, bishop of Worcester, 1164-1179
the defense of the divine law. You will find a copy of the letter enclosed.

May the Lord make you a doer of his will, and bestow upon you strength and perseverance in the faith, so that you will be able to strengthen successfully in the fear of the Lord and the respect for justice your present associates and those who come after you.
LETTER 294/288

JOHN TO HUGH OF GANT

I labor to give you your due thanks, but as the prophet says, "the woman in labor hath not strength," for until now, the violence of persecution has prevented the expression of gratitude. But there is no power that is able, or will be able, to prevent this desire from striving to break out in the expression of its thanks.

And, indeed, by the favor of God the cause of Christ has finally attained to that state where it cannot be again endangered, for the leaders of the schism have lost their strength, and the hammer of the English Church, caught in his own works, is unable to find another upon whom he can rely. It has finally come to that stage where his condition is dangerous, since, having striven to incite both the Curia as well as the schismatics, that is, Frederick and his accomplices, and aware that in this way he is unable to

1 SUMMARY: John thanks Hugh of Gant for his kindness, and informs him of the intrigues of King Henry with the Italian cities, the Pope and the King of Sicily. They have all failed, he reports, and he bids Hugh to be of good heart for the Church is certain of victory. The letter may be placed in the autumn of 1169. Hugh of Gant may have been a member of the Gant family, founders of Bardney Abbey in Lincolnshire. Cf. Monast. Angl. i. 833.

2 4 Kings 19.3

3 Psalms 9.17
accomplish anything "against the Lord, and against his Christ," he has sent off his ambassadors and he himself has fled to the cities of Italy. He promised the Milanese three thousand marks and the complete restoration of their walls, he did this so that, together with the other cities he is trying to buy over to his schemes, they might obtain from the Pope and the Roman Church the removal or transfer of the Archbishop of Canterbury; for the same reason he promised two thousand marks to the inhabitants of Cremona, one thousand to the citizens of Parmas, and as many to those of Bologna. He even offered to free the Pope, for a certain sum, from the demands of all the Romans, and would even add ten thousand marks of his own, and would go so far as to grant him the right to ordain whatever pastors he chose to the Church of Canterbury as well as to the other vacancies of England.

But because his many promises weakened faith in his word, and because his request contained a manifest injustice, he was rebuffed; and what he was unable to obtain by himself he tried to extort by the strength of the King of Sicily.

But not even he, although the Bishop of Syracuse and Count Robert of Bassenuilla together with many other mediators bent all their efforts to this end, "was heard for his reverence," or power, or esteem, although he had very much in the city of Rome. And so his couriers were sent back without a

4 Psalms 2.2
5 King William II
6 Richard Palmer bishop of Syracuse, 1157-1183
7 Hebrews 5.7
promise, having obtained only this, that our Lord Pope would send representatives to settle the peace namely, the Sub-deacon Gratian and Master Vivian, Archdeacon of Orvieto, who used to hold the office of lawyer in the Curia. But beforehand, after he had determined the conditions of the peace, he bound them by a sacred vow not to go beyond the limits he had set down, adding to his orders that they accept no expenses from the King until the peace of the Church was obtained, and that they make no delay beyond the day fixed for them. The articles of the peace, as they were explained to the Archbishop, contain nothing dishonorable nor anything that would be unbecoming to the Church or any person; nor does it lessen in any way his right, with every excuse and right of appeal revoked, to bring such ecclesiastical punishment as he chooses upon the kingdom and the persons of the kingdom, according as he deems it expedient for himself and the Church of God.

The advice of his friends, and these are wise men, is that he act very meekly and leave many matters unnoticed while the terms of the peace are being discussed; and afterwards if (as we hope will not happen) peace is not established, he will resume his authority and act more vigorously to defeat the persecutors of the Church.

And so have hope, my friend, and do not be dismayed by anything you may hear in the meantime, for God has seen to the safety of his cause. Perhaps you will hear of the pride of Moab, but remember that his pride was greater than his courage; for the "sinners of Sion are afraid, and trembling hath seized upon the hypocrites" who, unless they turn from their sins, will be

8 Isaias 16.6; Jeremias 48.29
9 Isaias 33.14
expelled and will not be able to retain their rank. For even now the axe is laid to their roots and the angel holds in his hand the winnowing-fork to separate the grain from the chaff.\footnote{Matthew 3.10-12; Luke 3.9, 17}

The above mentioned couriers have arrived before the King, but we have not heard as yet what they learned from him. This, however, is certain: the King has bound himself both orally and in writing to follow out the advice and command of our Lord the Pope; his written promise is kept in readiness; and if he fails to abide by it he will be readily convicted. Under the present circumstances the Church does not consider him worthy of belief until he confirms his promise by the proof of the deed.

Acknowledging your greetings, The Archbishop pays his deepest respect to you, and hopes for your love and respect.
LETTER 295/291

JOHN TO BISHOP JOHN BELMEIS OF POITIERS

I am very glad, if the rumours that are spreading abroad can be relied upon, that the King has recalled you from the very threshold of that journey he had destined you for so that you can now observe the progress and conclusion of his dealings with Canterbury—or rather, against the Church. Oh, if only he will accept your advice and the advice of wise men! And if only Gratian will carry on with firmness, as he is said to have begun. The King may finally agree to a sensible plan, even though he do it unwillingly. Many hope that the son of grace (from which his name comes), and nephew of Eugene, will continue on in a straight line towards the truth of the Gospel, the glory of the Apostolic See, and the integrity and peace of the laboring Church. For he knows beyond all doubt that if he only continues in this way he will merit eternal glory before God and man. And because he finds but few upon whom he can rely with any confidence, I beseech you to encourage and strengthen him in the Lord.

God willing, the King is to be entirely acquitted, but it is evident that the sins of the impenitent cannot be forgiven; if an article that is stolen

1 SUMMARY: John urges Bishop John of Poitiers to counsel Gratian, the papal commissioner, so that he may do nothing against the honor of the Holy See and the Church. The letter may be placed in the autumn of 1169, when the new commissioners were engaged in conference with the opposing parties.

2 Gratian was the son of Pope Eugene III's sister.
can be returned and is not, you have a case not of real but of feigned penitence. For what does absolution profit the excommunicated if they make no satisfaction for their injustices and thefts and manifest disobedience? Crimes obvious to all by their very nature have scandalized the entire Church and what is committed in the light ought not be forgiven in the dark, especially so since there is nothing that will not be revealed and proclaimed at the cross-roads and upon the house-tops. To forgive such individuals without a promise would be a serious act against the public form and an injury to the Church; unless he has properly promised beforehand to make restitution, a disastrous example will be set for princes and tyrants both of our time as well as in times to come. If the King succeeds in having secured the authority of the state in the agreement, he has vindicated his past actions by merely changing their name, and has banished all the authority of the Roman Church from England. But none of these developments must come about: I am certain that our Lord Bishop of Canterbury prefers to remain in exile forever rather than have the Church hurt and the privilege of the Apostolic See set at naught by the terms of peace. So urge Lord Gratian to watch out for himself in all his dealings with the King, and especially in these articles, lest (God forbid!) "the craftiness concealed beneath the fox deceive" him. Now, unless I am mistaken, he can be well aware that "a de-

3 Gratian II. xiv.6. c. 1, C. I. C. ed. Friedberg, i. 742.
4 Matthew 10.26-27
5 Horace, Ars Poetica 437: "Nunquam te fallant animi sub ulpe latentes."
ceitful tongue loves words of ruin."" There is," says the wise man, "no safety in sleeping next to a serpent;" and in the abode of Satan there certainly dwell ostriches and scorpions with those who hold the doctrine of Balaam.

Farewell!

6 Psalms 51.6
7 Eccli. 10.11
8 Apocalypse 2.13-14
LETTER 296/303

JOHN TO WILLIAM BRITO,

SUB-PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

John, to his friend Brito, greetings and good prospects for the future:

From what has been written to the whole world you can determine what you must do. And you must not allege the worthless excuses you have used up to now, for the time has come for your Church to suffer alone or to suffer with us; for if it will but share in providing for the needs of its father it will soon prosper again in the rewards which we confidently hope for from the merciful God. And I really do not think there has been any time in the past hundred years when it could so easily recover its former privileges, if it would only choose to assist manfully and effectually its father who is busily engaged in these points, and share in his necessary expenses. But I cannot see how you hope to gain these ends without difficulty or responsibility, since it is certain that "great things are sought after with the greatest exertion."²

So far, by the grace of God, the hard labors of this poor and outlawed man have been sufficient to accomplish what, I do not doubt, his predecessor

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1 SUMMARY: John writes to William Brito, sub-prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, about helping the archbishop with gifts, and instructs him as to what to do if the Bishop of London should visit the Pope. The letter was written in the autumn of 1169.

2 The source of this quotation has not been found.

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would have spent two thousand marks in procuring, had the occasion arisen.

It is said that you have sold a candelabra for profane uses, perhaps not without being conscious of a sacrilege, and still you are so exceedingly niggardly in providing for the needs of the Church and in re-establishing its honors! Stir up your brothers with these considerations, and if they are foolish enough to disdain them, then you remember to provide for the Church and your own good.

If the Bishop of London\(^3\) undertakes a journey to the Curia, see to it, as you have been instructed, that two monks are well enough prepared to accompany him when they are summoned.

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Your page diffuses an odor of charity, and your devoted industry has merited the thanks that I do not know how to express to you at present. But He who is mighty will give the reward, He who breathed grace into your heart that it might comfort the forsaken and bear witness of the truth to Christ's followers. And so we (to express the wishes of my fellow exiles in plural form) rejoice and exult because we see the pillars of the Church standing firm against the onslaughts of the enemies who are trying to lead us over into another gospel. They prefer the purity of the faith to ease and power, and thereby prove clearly and effectually that the traditions of men are to be subordinated to the divine law. The ones who pursue so fiercely those who flee, give way very readily before those who resist, if only their sham is revealed by the faithful and openly shown, just as wolves that are seen in time do not injure those who approach them. Why has he given the horns to the sinner from the beginning, except that all have disappeared before the face of the oppressor, and there was no one to aid the Church in its

1 SUMMARY: John thanks Master Herbert, evidently a clerk of Winchester, and praises Bishop Henry of Winchester for the stand he had taken against Henry. This was in the summer of 1169 (cf. summary of letter 293). The letter may be dated in the late summer or early autumn of 1169.

2 Luke 1.49

3 I Machabees 2.48
struggle against all that has been represented under the pretext of a law of long standing or ancient customs, or customs that will have the force of long standing? But surely those who have endeavored beyond everything else to find favor with men, and even coveted the company of thieves, have been confounded and caught in the works of their own hands; and they have been more confounded by the divine mercy that guides and helps us, for God despises them as long as they go about under the pretense of religion. The safety of the elect seems to stand before the doors, but, Good willing, you will soon witness their glory and the glory of those who have decided to obey God rather than men. And so, with all possible joy, I congratulate the Lord Bishop of Winchester who, summoned before the judges and elders of the land, responded in a way that was worthy of Christ, and then sent out a rescript suitable to his age, profession, honor and family, and, as far as he was able, encouraged his fellow priests. For even they, in a most praiseworthy way, have avoided the traps of those who sought to ensnare them, and if they are summoned, will speak the word of faith with assurance of the truth; openly maintaining that our Lord the King, following until now a disastrous course, has been seduced to where there was no passing, and out of the way, and they will urge him (oh, if only they could convince him!) to make his peace with the Church of God, and return to the road outside of which there

4 Psalms 9.7
5 Acts 5.29
6 Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester 1129-1171
7 Psalms 106.40
is no salvation or honor for a prince.

And do not be misled by the vain boasting of those who, seeking in this way some comfort for their wretchedness, publicly assert that the Pope considers absolved those excommunicated by the Archbishop, because he is said to have entrusted their cause to them with a blessing, and this after they had been anathematized. For ignorance, which makes him as yet unaware of their latae sententiae excommunication, excuses the Pope; nor would he be induced either by entreaty or by bribery to release one of them from the hand of the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, but would bear down upon them with a severe punishment according to the extent of their guilt.

You can be sure, my dear friend, that the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, prefers to die in exile rather than to return without the liberation of the Church; nor, and God is my witness, will he make any peace other than one useful to his successors and deserving of the respect of the people of our day and in the future.

But if the enemies of the Church decide to continue in their evil ways, he, since he has received the fullness of power, will go even further, and will spare absolutely no one in seeing that justice be done before God.

Farewell.

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8 Cf. Letter 291, note on line 40
LETTER 298/302

JOHN TO THE MONKS OF CANTERBURY

I have often reminded you, as you will recall, to assist in your charity (as you ought) your father and Lord Archbishop who has been forced by necessity to draw out his struggle for the liberty of the Church into its sixth year (I have reminded you) to share in the necessary expenses of those who have endured the bitterness of exile, the injustice of proscription, the lies of their detractors, and the annoyances (I will not say rage) of their persecutors out of obedience to the Lord. My one wish is that you had listened to me when I urged you to do what is right and decent, or at least listen to me now, lest--I hope not--you will regret your unbelief and hardheartedness too late; for until now, although I have spoken only the truth, I am taken for an insane person as was the case of Cassandra and the Trojans, and the unbelieving say: "That fellow prophesies out of his own heart," and, in order to draw simpletons with him into error and misfortune.

1 SUMMARY: John again asks the monks of Canterbury to help the Archbishop financially. Hitherto they had not believed his prophecies, he writes, but they were now actually seeing them fulfilled. Further censures are to be expected, and he exhorts them to change their attitude. The letter was written in October 1169. John mentions that an agreement had not been reached on September 29; and the meeting at Montmartre on November 18 had not yet occurred.

2 Thomas had gone into exile in November 1164.

3 Virgil, Aeneid 2.247

4 Ezechiel 13.2
he frightens them with foolish prophecies. At one time he threatens with calamities those who think rightly, and at another promises wonderful favors to those who take his advice." But behold, Peter's sword\textsuperscript{5} is aimed with great strength at the neck of the enemies of the Church, and unless he avoids the blow, it will cut off Malchus's right ear. You know to whom "Malchus"\textsuperscript{6} refers in the Latin language, for I am speaking to men who know, hold, love, and embrace the law. They did not believe that the Bishop of London\textsuperscript{7} and the other authors and inciters of the schism would be struck down by the sword of anathema, but even now the Church rejects and excludes them from its body. They did not believe that the Roman Pontiff would approve their condemnation, but it is clear that the sentence has been confirmed since delegates have been sent by the Apostolic See to absolve them, after they had taken the usual oath of the Church, but only under the conditions prescribed by the Pope. When hope of this was assured the Archdeacon of Canterbury\textsuperscript{8} and those who were overseas with him received absolution after they took the precautionary oath. But because a peaceful settlement was not arrived at before the feast of St. Michael\textsuperscript{9} (which was the agreement), they fell back again into the same sentence of anathema according to the agreement. And so it is obvi-

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\textsuperscript{5} Cf. John 18.10; Matthew 26.51

\textsuperscript{6} The word is Chaldaic, and means king. Cf. Jerome, Comm. in Matthew 26.51, Migne P. L. xxiii. 56.

\textsuperscript{7} Gilbert Foliot, who had been excommunicated on April 13, 1169. Cf. Letter 291, note on line 40.

\textsuperscript{8} Geoffrey Ridel

\textsuperscript{9} September 29
ous how dangerous it is to take part with them, for those who should have been absolved were actually excommunicated. But your attention should be called to a further consideration—the inheritance of the Lord cannot be freed from the hand of His enemies in any way other than by force. In this struggle the Lord certainly knoweth who are His, and who prefer the flesh-pots of the Egyptians to the Bread of Heaven, that is, to the Word of God Who giveth life to the world. And these, whoever they be, will receive the sentence of damnation with the others whom the earth swallowed alive; for those who share in another's sins will also share in his death.

Therefore leave their society, I beg you, and set "your hearts upon your ways," and you who have been for the most part (I am filled with shame and sorrow to say it) only stepsons until now change over, finally, into the role of sons, sharing in your father's expenses, accepting the fruits of penitence and obedience, and driving this disgrace from the Church, which (may God forbid) your hardness of heart will cause to be continued forever unless you take heed of it. Our Lord the Pope has advised—even commanded—this; but not even he was heard for his reverence. Will you, like infidels, say to Christ when He suffers again for the Church, "We have no

10 II Timothy 2.19
11 Exodus 16.3
12 John 6.33
13 Psalms 57.10
14 Aggaeus 1.5, 7
15 Hebrews 5.7
High-priest or Pope but Caesar?" Are you so afraid of him who, by his heavenly given authority, is able to abuse, but not to destroy, the body that you will despise Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell? He has certainly commanded us to obey our prelates as children honor their parents, and provide for their needs out of the most willing charity; certainly one does not prove that he has this charity if he does not console his brother in misery as he is able. The greatest proof of a good intention is the testimony of the deed.

May your sense of filial devotion ever thrive, and in the matters I have warned you of, may it consult the good of the word of God rather than the advantage of your neighbours.

16 John 19.15
17 Matthew 10.28
18 Ephesians 6.1-9
LETTER 299/295
JOHN TO MASTER GERARD PUCELLE

My Lord the Archbishop was very much upset that you, who have the key of learning and are constantly employed in publicly teaching the law of the Lord, so much so, that you reject all secular studies and profess the sacred subjects of truth and justice alone, scandalously dared to communicate with the Archdeacon of Canterbury whom you know to be solemnly excommunicated. Your conduct is a blot on your good reputation no less than an injury to your conscience. It would not be easy to account for such an irregularity on the part of one less learned, not to speak of one who should be a model of virtue to his students in his life no less than in his teaching. But because it is easier to believe that you sinned from human weakness than from any spiteful malice, although what you have committed is very serious, at his command I am replying to your letter in the following, and I send you a copy of the letter of excuse he sent to the Lord Bishop of Séez, who had advised him that

1 SUMMARY: John reproves Master Gerard Pucelle for communicating with Geoffrey Ridel, the excommunicated Archdeacon of Canterbury, and gives the archbishop's reasons against attending further peace conferences, especially after the failure of King Henry to keep the appointment at Pontoise. The archbishop, however, is ready to receive the penitents, he says, and he warns Gerard to be more cautious. The letter may be dated early in March 1170. The Pontoise conference was cancelled by Henry when he hurried to England in March 1170.

2 Archdeacon Geoffrey Ridel of Canterbury had been excommunicated by the Archbishop in 1169. Cf. Letter 291, note on line 40.

3 Frogerius, Bishop of Séez, 1157-1184
the Lord Bishop of Paris would hasten to his aid in time of distress.

But, as you are aware, he cannot so easily prepare carriages and money and companions, who are scattered throughout the kingdom, for such sudden and useless excursions. He should have taken an estimate of those wise men who so readily give their word. But you have been more careful; with only one day's warning you proposed a certain day on which he should set forth with a letter of recommendation to meet the Bishop of Seez and the Archdeacon of Canterbury. But you know very well under what kind of obligation your words and letter place the Archbishop, and he recalls how he was recently deceived by a letter from the same Bishop and by the advice of others into summoning his associates and uselessly incurring many expenses. He had prepared for the journey and had exhausted many men when he learned from common hearsay that he had returned to Normandy, undecided whether the Archbishop was worthy of being notified by letter or messenger. Perhaps the affairs of the Church are so insignificant that they should be dealt with only indirectly, or incidentally, and should be lightly touched upon rather than completely settled by those who rush through them. But let whoever despises those who are so seriously injured remember that this is the cause of Christ, Who checks the surgings of the sea, and releases their power as He pleases. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the protector of the Church, and he will urge our Lord the King to check the liberty which was divinely granted him, and no torment the Church which, for no reason, has been tormented enough contrary

4 The conference was to be held at Pontoise
5 Psalms 92.4
to every right and measure, and which has advanced, supported and protected both him and his predecessors like a loving mother. He is too wise to bring about the decrease of his own safety and the ruin of his son, nor are we unaware of what his messengers may have sought for and obtained from the Apostolic See. Let us put a stop to all threats, for the Church of God sails into the port through His mercy; nor should we shrink from the public path that Christ has pointed out, especially to those who felt very clearly the peace of God in such a bitter exile.

You promise us kisses and embraces if we act in a purely human way; and He who is the model of all Christians heard from the tempter: "All this I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." Let Him judge his cause, and bring to forgiveness our Lord the King, who driven on by the advice of evil men, has completely forgotten the native kindness he used to have, and, while he complies more impetuously with the desires of the enemies of the Church, takes on himself the role of an enemy. Nor do I doubt that he was disgusted with himself while he did these things, but more or less unwillingly was driven on by the cries of fools and drawn along by the snares of the ungodly.

You add, moreover, that our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury should go to meet the above mentioned Bishop and Deacon of Canterbury—as if he were going to receive him, much less go meet him whom he has condemned with a solemn anathema, and upon whom the Apostolic See has confirmed the sentence passed! It is very strange that the above mentioned Bishop of Seez and other respec-

6 Matthew 4.9
table men who are prelates of the Church would have anything to do with him while he remains unabsolved. They know that the reasons for their conduct will be demanded from them in a strict examination, and perhaps will not be overlooked by the present Church.

But it is absolutely certain that our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury will receive with paternal affection and will console both the Bishop of London and the above mentioned Archdeacon of Canterbury from the moment they behave as sons, and he will embrace with sincere love all those who are excommunicated and whom he can licitly absolve, once they enter upon the way of the Faith. Why waste time? There is no desire on our Lord the King that he is not willing to grant, provided only that the state of the Church is not injured, once he is aware of the complete restoration of respect for himself and his associates.

In the future fulfill your duties more carefully, and when you have earnestly sought forgiveness, be very careful to avoid all association with those who are excommunicated, unless you want to be expelled from the Church at once and take part in their anathema. Really, the recent disaster should make you more careful than ever, and the settlement of the second one will be even more difficult, if (God forbid!) after repeated warnings and dangers you do not have enough discretion to avoid the fall.

I send you his choicest greetings, as he would want me to.

I am sending you the letters that his delegates recently sent from the Curia to our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury so that you may be able to act more cautiously, and not conform yourself so readily to every shifting of the winds. Much is said by the promoters of either side against each other, and each of them attempts to enlist on its side those it can and in whatever way it is able. Each seek the favor of the Apostolic See, and (as it seems to me) those who least deserved or actually acquired it pride themselves on having obtained their wish; they boast that they have obtained this and that, but I know that, especially in matters that seem to have been acquired unjustly, no intelligent person will trust their word until they produce the authentic and original documents.

1 SUMMARY: John writes a detailed account to Archdeacon Baldwin of Exeter of the plans and happenings of the first three months of 1170. The letter was written shortly before Easter (April 5) of 1170. At the end of 1169 the papal legates, Vivian and Gratian, gave up their fruitless task, and on January 19, 1170 Pope Alexander issued a new commission to the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers ordering them to secure a reconciliation between Henry and Thomas. An interdict was to be placed on Henry's Continental dominions if he refused to come to terms; but if there was any hope of reconciliation, the commissioners were to absolve the excommunicates. Cf. Becket Materials vii.198. On February 12, Alexander wrote another letter authorizing the absolution of Gilbert Foliot. Foliot received this letter at Milan, as he was on his way to Rome to prosecute his appeal. He turned back and was absolved by the Archbishop of Rouen on Easter Day, April 5, 1170. Cf. the Archbishop's letter to Thomas, Becket Materials vii.275.
One thing I know, and I state it freely and without hesitancy although the world rejects it, that he who is faithful to Christ will not regret it in the end. The joy of the wicked\(^2\) is brief and like an instant, and in a short time the moth will be strewn under them and worms will be their covering;\(^3\) and the Lord will comfort his elect, and will not permit a double suffering to afflict them.

All men hope for the peace of the Universal Church and nearly the whole world longs for it, and I cannot believe that there are any exceptions other than those who are tormented by the consciousness of sin, which shows them that they deserve the sentence of their damnation; for even the former Augustan Emperor himself\(^4\) has learned very clearly that he cannot return to his augustan dignity unless he makes peace with the Church. He is willing to enter into a treaty with the Italians under the fair terms offered him.

The consuls of the cities, summoned to make peace with his delegates, are now considering and forming articles in the Curia, and are drawing up precautions that will have considerable weight in the future. Our Lord Bishop of Sens\(^5\) is awaiting the conclusion of this negotiation, and he believes and hopes that he will observe the Easter solemnity\(^6\) at home. The administrators of the Church of Canterbury will return with him to share his life. They have written to say their petitions to their Lord Archbishop and were received in

\(^2\) Job 20.5

\(^3\) Isaias 14.11 "Subter te sternetur tinea."

\(^4\) Frederich Barbarossa

\(^5\) Archbishop William of Sens went to the Papal Court in November 1169.

\(^6\) Easter was on April 5 in 1170.
a more cordial way than they had hoped, although they previously seemed very certain of the protection and continued support of our Lord the Pope. The delegates of our Lord the King, Master Reginald the Archbishop of Salisbury, Master Richard Barre, and Radulf the Archdeacon of Landavensis went ahead of them, but before he received his delegate Gratian, and in spite of their earnestness, they were unable to have our Lord the Pope send them away except disconcerted. With his arrival their powers were checked and put to naught, and the cause of the Church, with the truth more fully revealed became stronger and stronger; for their conspiracy, which was made to become something like a schism in England, was serving the Church against which it was provided with every advantage. Other representatives of the King came afterwards, namely Archdeacons Giles of Rouen and John of Seez, with the well-known witness the Dean of Salisbury; retracted the appeals of their predecessors they said that our Lord the King entrusted the quarrel which is in progress between himself and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the conditions of the peace that must be shaped between them, entirely to the judgment of our Lord the Pope. They produced a letter from the King himself with his seal to this effect. Our Lord the Pope heard this very graciously, and wrote a congratulatory letter to the King, a copy of which I am sending to you. In the meantime the King, through the mediation of the Archbishop of Tyre, negotiated with another king about taking up the cross, and per-

7 Gratian and Vivian had formed the papal commission in 1169.
8 Archdeacon Giles of Rouen was afterwards bishop of Evreux, 1170-1179.
9 John of Oxford, Dean of Salisbury
10 Frederick, Archbishop of Tyre, 1163-1174
suaded him, under certain conditions (which should not be revealed out of reverence for his person), to be prepared to undertake the journey for a period of one year from the Coming Easter.

And so, under this pretext, he had the Most Christian Prince to aid him in putting his territory in order, until the secret alliance that was entered into with Herve over the Mount Mirabilis put him under suspicions as to what was his real intention, and then under greater suspicion because he strove to prevent the meeting and agreement of the King of France with the Count of Flanders. In order to make his intention of taking up the cross seem more probable, he negotiated with the Church on the matter of peace through great and religious men and many close friends (as you will see from their letters), employing the position of the Lord Bishop of Tyre for this purpose, giving as pledges first of all God, and then (as is customary) Christianity, in the presence of archbishops, bishops, abbots, and many noble men who were called together.

Thereupon he made his uncle, the King of Jerusalem, and all who had come together, witnesses that he would faithfully and sincerely from the bottom of his heart put aside all complaints and anger and bitterness against the Archbishop of Canterbury and his associates, asking that they return in peace and safety to receive all that was theirs. He would demand only that the Archbishop give the King what was his due, and he the King, would give, what he ought to the Archbishop. He sent Cistercian Abbot and Brother

11 Count Philip of Flanders
12 Amaury I, King of Jerusalem, 1163-1174
13 Alexander
Geoffrey, Master of the Temple at Fulcher, and Geoffrey of Angers to Sens to bring the aforesaid Archbishop of Canterbury with the Bishop of Seez\textsuperscript{14} to him by means of this message. But when the Archbishop, believing what was promised, came to Pontoise the Lord Archbishop of Rouen\textsuperscript{15} warned him not to go any farther, because the King was going to return to England\textsuperscript{16} in the greatest haste, leaving the peace unsettled. For he had received two of his delegates, Master Richard Barre and the Archdeacon of Landavensis, upon whose return the peace was impeded by the interference (as rumor has it) of Geoffrey and Archdeacon of Canterbury, whom God will one day repay according to his merits.

At that time the boast was made that the King's messengers had obtained the absolution of the Bishop of London and the others, and that the power of punishing the King and his country, or even the people of his Kingdom, had been withdrawn from the Archbishop. These lies were immediately exposed by the arrival of a letter from our Lord the Pope even before the Bishop of London could begin his journey to the Curia, who, doubtlessly, would have spared himself the labor and expense if he could have been absolved without any great difficulty, as certain individuals had falsely asserted.

There is a well-circulated rumor about that the aforesaid Archdeacon of Canterbury induced the King to sail back to England to torture the bishops and clergy who refused to take the oath against our Lord the Pope and their

\textsuperscript{14} Frogerius, Bishop of Seez, 1157-1184
\textsuperscript{15} Rotrou, Archbishop of Rouen, 1165-1183
\textsuperscript{16} Henry went to England on March 3, 1170
own mother Church of Canterbury. There are fears and tedious difficulties on every side, and the strength of those whom we must avoid is brought to bear upon us; but it is better to fall into the hands of men than to give up the law of God.\(^\text{17}\) For one path always leads to hell, the other to victory and everlasting glory; and they are blessed who suffer persecution for the sake of justice,\(^\text{18}\) since the struggle purifies, wins approval and ennobles, and the end of the struggle brings a reward without end. Satan becomes all the more furious when he sees his own destruction hastened and that part of winter which goes before the pleasant days of the approaching spring is the hardest to endure. Look back over history, consider the measures taken by tyrants, and you will clearly see that in times of difficulty the Church is enlarged, and that the fiercer the persecution the quicker it is settled.

The King has undoubtedly been advised by his friends and other messengers who were dispatched before them to be aware that unless he makes his peace with the Church as our Lord Pope has directed, and at his own request, and this before the first of May he will in no way be able to delay the ecclesiastical punishment from being brought upon his own person, as well as upon his territory both on this and the other side of the sea. I think that this has been the cause of the present increase of bitterness (may God repress it quickly, according as he knows for the good of the Church!) of those who hate peace, and who are constantly gathering the fuel of hatred and the causes of an outbreak; they know that in the future they will be marked

\(^{17}\) Daniel 13.23

\(^{18}\) Matthew 5.10
with perpetual dishonor, and their example of schism and apostasy will be held up for hatred. The bearer of this letter, if you care to listen to him, will supply you with much more news.

When they whose coming we hope for in the near future return, I will not (God willing!) delay writing you of the new developments that will arise; and may I be speedily informed of your state, and may God bless it with success!
LETTER 301/294

JOHN TO ROBERT,

SACRISTAN OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

Your messenger has told me at great length of the affection you have for me, and this imposes no small obligation upon me of thanking you as much as mere words will permit.

Since friends of long standing have completely forgotten and despised me during my long exile, those who have at least written sympathetically to us who are outlawed and despised by others, especially since there was no opportunity of consoling us by deeds, seem to have done all that they could to maintain their friendship and merit greater gratitude. If common sense really considers the value of good intentions no less than the deeds, it must consider of very great value a plate filled with solid charity, and which shows the vanity of material possessions and the picture of feigned love lolling in ease, and holds them up for all to see.

And so continue on faithfully in what you have undertaken, and as often as there is opportunity openly show the affection which you should have for

1 SUMMARY: John thanks Robert, the sacristan of Christ Church, Canterbury, for his kindness, and tells him not to be disturbed by the fact that the papal commissioners, Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen and Bishop Bernard of Nevers have gone to England, but to trust them to act honorably in the cause of the Church. The letter was probably written in March, 1170, for it is likely that the Commissioners followed Henry to England shortly after his arrival there in the early part of March.
your father and the suffering Church by the constant display of your charity, and so merit for yourselves the rich reward you will have deserved from God and the Archbishop; which, God willing, will be in the near future, for we do not believe that the peace of the Church can be put off for long. But we believe that this will bring about the honor of God and the good of the Church, not (as some have falsely asserted) the humiliation of our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and of those who have determined, if it be necessary, to give up their lives for the sake of justice.

So do not be dismayed if the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers should come to England, for just as surely as they can do very much for the Church so too they can do absolutely nothing to harm it, nor the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and his friends; we do not believe that they want to do any harm, but rather will work with all their energies for an honorable and just peace.

I have written this so as not to appear to have despised the report of your messenger; and I stand ready, when the opportunity presents itself, to pay you my personal respects.

Farewell!
LETTER 302/296

JOHN TO THE MONKS OF CANTERBURY

To his beloved brothers and dearest friends who are joined together in the Holy Church of Canterbury and enjoy religious unity, John of Salisbury, the least of those outlawed, sends his fondest hopes that they will always walk in happiness before him:

It is only fitting, dearest brothers, that I rejoice in your progress, am worried by your dangers, suffer with you in your losses and injuries, and, as far as a Christian may, am overcome with anguish if by any chance there should ever be a danger (and may there not be!) of your falling away. But really it is not enough merely to mourn the downfall of enemies simply because we recall that even in their defeat just men have acted according to the laws of God, for the death of the virtue of charity bears witness to the death of the Holy Ghost. This loss must not be accompanied by indifferent tears and passing sorrow, but life itself must be earnestly restored through penitence and the fruits of good works. Do not be surprised if the Holy Ghost, who is doubtlessly immortal and the blessed life of the just, is said

1 SUMMARY: John reproves the monks of Canterbury for their indifference to the neglect of Archbishop Thomas' cause, and he urges them to redeem themselves by presenting the letters forbidding the young King Henry's coronation by the Archbishop of York. The young King was crowned at Westminster on June 14, 1170, and this letter was written sometime between that date and the middle of March, when Pope Alexander's letter of February 26 forbidding the coronation would have been received.
to die in certain individuals, for you have heard St. Paul saying: "Extinguish not the Spirit, despise not prophesies."² And I wish that you had heard with some effect the wise man reminding us that "not the hearers, but the doers of the work are just before god."³ Nor do we believe that these words are written for your ignominy, for the Holy Ghost is a witness that they were expressed more from charity, which He alone Who is Charity gives,⁴ than for the purpose of harming any Christian; but I do believe that some among you, because of what they have committed against the Spirit and brotherly love, ought to be threatened with a justly deserved destruction, not that they may perish, but that they may be frightened for their own good.

Let each one look back and study the book of his own conscience; in case of doubt, if there be any, let him seek out a judge and invoke the Holy Ghost, "he that teacheth man knowledge"⁵ and reveals the hidden truth. Under His guidance let him know himself more truthfully and intimately, and (as I believe) discover more clearly and fully that he has deserved for himself by his burning or inflamed love, or by his cool or lazy love, or by his extinguished, or lost or destroyed love. But do not let it happen that any one among you should be guilty of an unforgivable sin through blasphemy⁶ or obstinacy or despair or impenitence, because even though charity may be

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² I Tessalonians 5.19
³ James 1.22
⁴ I John 4.8
⁵ Psalms 93.10
⁶ Matthew 12.31-32; Acts 7.51
weakened and broken among the branches, there is still hope that what remains in the root, if it be moistened and sprinkled by the rains of heavenly grace, might be able to become green once again and bear the fruits of true compassion and justice, if only the soul will consider its ways, if it will do penance, if it will confess its fault, if it will redeem what it has done by making satisfaction according as it is able. But perhaps you may say: "And who are you, or what is your father's house in Israel to upbraid religious men, especially those who have been placed at the hinge point of the Churches of England? Or what have we done that you consider our charity completely lost?"

I can only reply in my defence what I have said before, that I am the least among the outlawed of Christ, and (I speak from my conscience) one whom the zeal of God's house, to forgive the judgment of error of others, has caused to go into exile as an outlaw, and who (to confess my own weakness) can not bear complacently the scandalous conduct of a brother without a scruple. It is wrong for me, especially after the teaching of the Apostle, to lament my own burning shame in these scandals? Is it wrong to invite those with whom I am ill to hurry to the doctor with me? Certainly every disciple of Christ, even the least, is free to bear witness to the truth under His inspiration; and every one who is of God will hear him not only patiently but willingly. And so bear patiently what I consider your fault and the loss of charity; when it is clear, I beg you, do not try to hide it

7 Aggaeus 1.5, 7
8 II Corinthians, 11.29
under the leaves of foolish words, but rid yourselves of it in deed and in truth.

Nearly six years⁹ have gone by since your father, who is an outcast for the sake of justice, went into exile surrounded by many and great difficulties, burdened with many coexiles of either sex, that is, with the paupers of Christ. I do not think you have forgotten what you sent him—if you did send something—and fellow exiles in all that time. Where, I ask you, has been your charity during this time? Where was your love? Where was your filial affection? For as the Holy Ghost says through His instruction, "the proof of love is in the production of good work,"¹⁰ and the same Author says that love cannot be lazy.¹¹ But you show the strength of your public position, the clever devices of the hangers on, and just fear, lest you lose both your place and your nation;¹² the might of the royal power is very great, and I wish that it were always great on behalf of the Lord, but not so great as to prevent all of your contributions. Truth knows, and perhaps will reveal at least in part some time even before the day of the Lord those who have contributed as often as they were able, and every one who refused. I will say without any hesitancy that Christ will never punish, nor men blame you, if you have withheld for your own needs, not for luxuries, something that might have been given to the poor of Christ who are in exile for the

⁹ Thomas left England in November, 1164.
¹⁰ Greg. Mag. Hom. xxx in Evang. c. i., Migne P.L. 76.1221
¹¹ Ibid. c. ii. 1221.
¹² John 11.48
sake of liberty and justice of the Church; unless, by chance, one were to believe that in the last judgment God will glorify those who are clad in double garments\textsuperscript{13} and who dine sumptuously every day. Satan has set many traps for the avowed love of religious duties and for their performance among our associates, but the faith and watchfulness of some, even though of only a few, will avoid them. I think you would be able to avoid them more easily if occasionally you would make the attempt. I wish it were possible to prove that your sense of religious duty had at least tried to show itself by the testimony of some deed! There only remains that the Apostle of Christ should give you the answer to your fear, for "fear," he tells us, "is not in charity."\textsuperscript{14}

The Jews, as you will recall, killed Christ so as not to lose their place and nation\textsuperscript{15} and by that act they justly lost both place and nation—the very thing they wanted most to avoid. For as often as God is intentionally offended for the sake of some cause, its effect turns out contrary to our wishes. But if they had done the penance that was long hoped for they might have retained the primacy of their place and nation, which, because of their hardness of heart, was given over to the nation which used the graces He acquired.

And so, dearly beloved, since this is still the time for appeasement and merit, hurry to forgiveness through the worthy fruits of penance.\textsuperscript{16} Go

\textsuperscript{13} Luke 16.19
\textsuperscript{14} I John 4.18
\textsuperscript{15} John 11.48
\textsuperscript{16} Luke 3.8
before the presence of the Judge in confession, make up your delay by the completeness of your satisfaction, and raise up again your wavering charity.

If what we hear is true, an easy and glorious opportunity for making satisfaction and redeeming your good name is offered to you, for our Lord the King (as they say), to the harm of the Church, wants his son anointed and consecrated king by the Archbishop of York or some other Bishop. Our Lord Pope forbids this by his repeated commands, and his interdicts are upon the kingdom; if others stop publishing these and come to you, I hope that some among you will be clad in strength from above to publish these interdicts by the authority of God and the Sovereign Pontiff, even making an appeal, if it be required, lest such an evil be directed against the holy Church of Canterbury. This especially so when he in whose care it is, namely the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, is prepared to apply these interdicts. And even if anyone suppresses these prohibitions to the injury of the Church so that they do not reach you, do not hesitate to interpose the prohibition and appeal to stave off the threatening injury and command all the suffragan bishops of your Church to withdraw from this undertaking and under no condition to take part in the injury of their mother.

What can we conclude if you remain silent? Who can be persuaded once

17 Psalms 94.2
18 Roger de Pont l'Eveque, archbishop of York, 1154-1181
19 This letter was sent on February 26, 1170 (cf. Becket Materials 7.217) and was finally presented to Roger of York on the night before the consecration, but he disregarded it and crowned the young king.
20 Luke 24.49
again that your zeal has not died, and that your charity is not burned out? Must we not conclude that there is not one among you who does not consider this transient life more precious than the welfare of the Church and the crown of justice?

Your possessions are not asked for now, but only that you show yourselves to be worshippers of God and children of the Church. By your courage you will make satisfaction for your former offenses, and such a clear display of charity will cover many of the sins that preceded it. God, Who is ever faithful, will be their leader and guardian, and will not permit those men to be tempted beyond their powers, who, under the inspiration of Christ, will take up the armor of zeal, clad in justice for their breastplate, and with certain judgment for their helmet, but will turn those dangers that seem to threaten them into true peace, complete safety and eternal glory.

For our Lord the King, no matter what men may say, remembers that he is the anointed of God, and because of the obligations of his office, the nobility of his family, and the strength of his illustrious soul he will not only not inflict an injury upon those who seek their just rights but will prevent others from harming them, for he knows that "the King's honor loveth judgment."

But I seem to see many among you you desire the crown of this great

21 II Timothy 4.8
22 I Peter 4.8
23 I Corinthians 10.13
24 Cf. Sap. 5.19
25 Psalms 98.4
merit, and each one speaks with the prophet into the ears of the Church:
"Lo, here I am, send me," anxious to seize before all others the title by
which the good name of all will be redeemed and the privilege of the Church
will be perpetuated with firm strength.

Good-bye!

26 Isaias 6.8
LETTER 303/297

JOHN TO ARCHBISHOP THOMAS BECKET

This is the advice of the Lord Bishop of Sens and myself, if nothing better occurs to you, to show that very forceful letter which is in your possession about doing immediately what justice demands to the Archbishop of Rouen and Tours, at least that their guest might hear of it and be frightened. Moreover, he wants their possessions to be returned to the Bishops of Aux and Bordeaux, because it may aid our cause as well as lessen the powers of persecution if it is heard in Gascony that his country is going to be placed under an interdict. No matter what happens in the struggle, we can, in all probability, hope for an easier approach through the Bishop of Bourges. And you will recall what danger and misfortune followed upon the delay

1 SUMMARY: John informs Archbishop Thomas that it is the opinion of Archbishop William of Sens and himself that the papal letters of interdict should be used. As letter 300 relates, an interdict was to be placed on Henry's dominions if he did not come to terms by May 1. Cf. line 108 ff. (p. 61, l. 13 ff.) This letter was probably sent shortly before that in April, 1170.

2 William of Champagne, bishop of Sens, who had gone to the papal court in November, 1169 and returned to Sens in February, 1170.

3 Rotrou de Beaumont, Archbishop of Rouen, 1165-1183

4 Jodoc, Archbishop of Tours, 1157-1174

5 William Dondozile, Bishop of Aux, 1126-1170

6 Bertrand de Montault, Bishop of Bordeaux, 1162-1174

7 Peter de la Chastre, Bishop of Bourges, 1141-1171
in handing over the conditions to the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers, and likewise, the interdictory letter to the Archbishop of York and the bishops across the sea. Nor may you maintain that what befell us was not foretold, but rather that in the way of all omens, prophecies that were not from the Spirit deceived your better judgment. I only hope that the evil effect of this deception is not irreparable, but unless it is heaven-sent, there is no revelation or relief forthcoming; and rightly so, in my opinion, since we had presumed to fathom the hidden thoughts of the human heart, of which God is the sole judge, by the vain imaginings of another's genius. What, I ask you, is more rash or injurious to God, Who defends this privilege of His singular eminence? For the proposition that knowing thyself is the greatest wisdom, even though it originated at the Oracle of Apollo, was so celebrated a sentence among the philosophers that not one of the ancients dared contradict it. Indeed, γνῶθι σεαυτόν, that is, "know thyself," "came down," as they say, "from heaven." And so because human wisdom fails, and even angelic wisdom is not enough, it is the wisdom of God alone that does not guess at the plans and thoughts of men in figments of the imagination, but knows them exactly as they are. Therefore let us renounce all omens in the future, for it was in this way that very great evils swept down upon us. Let Him Who hath made the hearts study them, and let us seek after what belongs to our own house.

8 Archbishop Rotrou of Rouen and Bishop Bernard of Nevers, the papal peace commissioners.
9 Archbishop Roger of York
10 Juvenal 11.27
11 Psalms 32.15
LETTER 304/308

KING HENRY II TO BISHOP BARTHOLOMEW OF EXETER

King Henry of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Angers, to Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter, greetings:

Be informed that I have granted my peace to all who left England because of Archbishop Thomas of Canterbury, and have granted them all their possessions exactly as they were when they left England on his account, and also all the benefices which the same Archbishop afterwards granted them. For this reason see to it that they return safely and receive their possessions properly and peacefully, provided they keep the oath of allegiance which they will make to me.

Witnesses: Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Canterbury
            Richard, Archdeacon of Poitiers
            Richard, Constable of Humaz
            Richard of Lucon
            Reginald of Curtenai, at Cloeo

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SUMMARY: King Henry announces the reconciliation between Henry and Thomas to Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter. This took place at Freteval on July 22, 1170. The letter may be dated shortly after that.
LETTER 305/299

JOHN TO WILLIAM BRITO, THE SUB-PRIOR, ROBERT THE SACRISTAN, AND OTHER OFFICIALS OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

John sends his greetings to his beloved friends and brothers, to William the sub-prior, to Robert the sacristan, and to the others who care for the holy Church of Canterbury, hoping that they will guide themselves wisely in the future:

At last, as is clear from many certain indications, the merciful and compassionate God has heard your prayers and the pleadings of the faithful for his own honor, restoring peace to the Church of England and recalling your father from exile. I only wish that you could hear with your own ears the words of our Lord the King when, in the meetings of kings which was recently convened between the towns of Blois and Amboise, he sent the Lord Archbishop off to receive permission from the French who were holding him to return as quickly as possible to himself, and then to pass over into England. At last, God Willing, according to the agreement he will bid adieu to the

1 SUMMARY: John jubilantly announces the reconciliation which took place between Henry and Thomas at Freteval on July 22, 1170. He informs the monks of Canterbury that Thomas will return on November 1, and he asks them to send money for the journey and give their archbishop a fitting welcome. The letter may be dated shortly after the reconciliation.

2 Between Blois and Amboise, i.e., Freteval

76
people of Sens on the feast of All Saints\textsuperscript{3} to return to his own, as was proposed and agreed upon, and as soon as possible he will honor Canterbury, the city of saints, by his return.

And so, according as you want your record to be one for the honor and welfare of your Church in the future, hurry to meet your father, and if there is any faith, any friendship, any devotion or prudence in you, do not delay in sending to this side of the channel the means by which he might free himself from debt and become eternally indebted to you. Redeem now your delay lest it result in the inevitable danger of the loss of your possessions and good name. I have found in the Historia Novorum\textsuperscript{4} that your earliest predecessors hurried to meet their father Anselm\textsuperscript{5} when he returned from exile; will you be so base as not to contribute anything, or only the very least—as is not like you—to your returning father and brothers? May this never befall Canterbury, the primatial see of England, lest it pass on to future generations so unseemly, so inhuman and unreligious and dissolute an example of our time!

Sorrow and grief will not permit me to write all that the occasion and case demand, for I am moved with pity and fear for you, since from the weakness and obstinacy of some (may God prevent it!) the Church of Christ may receive an everlasting disgrace; but I believe that enough has been said for those who fear God, and to those who are wise and love justice.

\textsuperscript{3} November 1
\textsuperscript{4} Eadmer, Hist. Nov. iii, Migne P.L. 159.464
\textsuperscript{5} St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1093-1109
Let it be enough that I have forewarned my friends thus far. I do not doubt that a reward will be granted to those who love charity, and (as used to be said in an ancient proverb) "an evil will befall"⁶ the deaf.

Goodbye, and remember your friends and ours in your charity.

⁶ Terence, Eunuchus 2.3, 90
LETTER 306/300

JOHN TO ABBOT PETER OF CELLE

I could have been very justly chided for my delay were not necessity its excuse. For I should have sent back a messenger to inform your reverence of the state of your pupils from the very first moment I set foot in England. But as I found a strange and startling state of affairs on disembarking I was unable to give information, confused as I was, by the divergent opinions and words of men. For, three days before I landed, all the possessions of our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and his followers had been seized, his administrators removed from office, and by a public decree affixed to our doors it was forbidden under threat of exile and proscription for anyone of us to be given passage should he choose to leave England. However, those most gracious officers of my Lord King had provided for our welfare with the most prudent care and deadly consideration, so that the Archbishop and his associates would find absolutely nothing on their return from exile, or at best only the barest minimum besides their empty houses, and these destroyed.

1 SUMMARY: John informs the Abbot Peter of Celle of the happenings in England after his return from exile on November 15, and after the Archbishop's return on December 1. The letter was written after Christmas, 1170, a few days before the death of Thomas on December 29, for John mentions that all the revenues had been seized by the young king up until Christmas.

2 November 12
for the most part, as well as demolished granaries and bare threshing floors; and this was to be solace for their long proscription and a reparation for the sacrilege that had been committed.

Although the peace had been settled for us on the feast of Blessed Magdalene, and our most gracious Lord King in a public letter had commanded his son, the new King, to restore all the possessions to the Archbishop and his associates exactly as they were three months before they left England, all the revenues that could be collected by the feast of Our Lord's Nativity were taken away in his name. Civil authorities still retain many possessions and churches in the name of the State that by right and by reason of the covenant agreed upon should have been restored to the Church of Canterbury. Along with the others I have been deprived of one church which used to return my predecessor forty marks every year.

I happened to land three days before the octave of St. Martin, and on the octave day there was to be held a synod at Canterbury in which I was to take the place of the absent Archbishop. And so when, in spite of our hopes and contrary to the good opinion and fair promises of our Lord the King, I found everything in a state of confusion, so much so that all despaired of our peace and the return of the Archbishop, and although I knew that I was practically a prisoner, I made for Canterbury cheerfully and quietly. There I was received by the clergy and the populace with great honor as if I were

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3 The reconciliation took place at Freteval on July 22.
4 December 25
5 November 15
6 November 18
an angel of the Lord, for the faithful were then hoping for better days after my arrival, since they were convinced that the Archbishop would in no wise have sent me ahead if he himself were not to follow after in a short while.

When the synod was over I set out from Canterbury to the new King where I was received civilly enough, although his guardians exhibited some fear, suspecting that peace was not completely settled between us, but rather that the reasons of hatred which had been publicly set aside still remained firmly entrenched; although I was aware of this by many signs, I carried on as though I believed that all was going ahead according to the agreement. From the Court I set off at once for my mother, whom I earnestly ask to be remembered in your prayers and in the prayers of the faithful with whom you live; she was then in the second year of her sorrow and was joyfully awaiting the day of the Lord when she would see me once again. She had received an answer from the Spirit that she would not see death until she had seen my brother and me on our return from exile. 7

In the meantime those former friends of our Lord Archbishop of Canterbury and defenders of the Church's liberty, the Lord Bishop of York, 8 the Bishop of London 9 and their partners, drew up a plan with the "publicans" and sent representatives to our Lord the King urging that the aforementioned Archbishop of Canterbury should not be permitted to return to England until he gave up the office of legate and surrendered to him all the letters he had

7 Luke 2.26
8 Roger de Pont l'Eveque, Archbishop of York, 1154-1181
9 Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London, 1163-1188
acquired from the Apostolic See, and once more promise that he would maintain all the rights of the Kingdom without change. Under the veil of this pledge he would be forced to observe all the customs, for they said that his return would be harmful and disgraceful to our Lord the King unless these conditions were settled beforehand. They also had six persons summoned from every vacant church in which the choice of the people was considered for the election of a pastor, so that all protracted elections might be held outside of the church in some other country or palace that the King chose. If the Archbishop of Canterbury were to disapprove of this plan out of reverence for the canons which his office calls for, he would offend the royal majesty; if he were to agree to it he would be guilty in the eyes of God and would be shown to have failed in maintaining the Church's constitutions.

The frequently mentioned Archbishop of Canterbury had come to Rouen at the command of the King, having been promised that in this way he would be freed from the demands of his creditors and would be sent back to England honorably.

The report disappointed his expectations, for John of Oxford brought him letters from our Lord the King\textsuperscript{10} in which he asked and warned the Archbishop to return without delay to his own Church, and to enjoy the service and society of the aforementioned John in the journey. The Archbishop obeyed, and during the return trip learned from his friends\textsuperscript{11} of the plans his enemies who, having arrived by then at the sea, were awaiting a favorable

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} For this letter cf. \textit{Becket Materis} 7.400
\item \textsuperscript{11} Thomas was warned by William, the Dean of Boulogne, cf. \textit{Becket Materials}, 1.86.
\end{itemize}
wind, while the Archbishop waited in the same way on the opposite shore. When he was informed of their passage and plans, he crushed their efforts in the only way he could, by sending apostolic letters to the Archbishop of York in which he and the Bishop of Dover were suspended from their episcopal office because of the illicit coronation of the new king. The messenger also brought others to the Bishops of London and Salisbury which brought the sentence of anathema upon them once again, and suspended all bishops who had attended the aforesaid coronation.

When this was done a more favorable wind sprang up and carried our Lord Archbishop from Flanders to England in a pleasant crossing. When he arrived at the port which is called Sandwish, he was seized by the followers of the King. They had deployed guards and noisy armed men all along the beach to harm him, as it is believed. These John of Oxford, who was mentioned above, held back and forced to put down their arms, not, as it is thought, out of partiality to our men, but lest their rashness would brand the King and his children with the mark of treachery. Still, they demanded that the foreign subjects who had accompanied the Archbishop take an oath of allegiance to the King and the kingdom. Nor was there any foreign subject with the Archbishop other than Simon the Archdeacon of Sens, and he would readily have been induced to take the oath if the Archbishop had permitted it. Fearful of the precedent, he argued that it was an outrage contrary to all good usage that guests be forced by such an unheard of incivility to take such oaths.

12 Thomas was at Wissant on November 24. On the 30th he sent these letters across the Channel, and they were delivered to the prelates as they were waiting the next day at Dover to cross to the King.
And perhaps the guards would have used force had not the tumult of the mob restrained them, for they feared an attack by the people, who rejoiced in the return of their pastor as if Christ himself had come down from heaven among men.

But when he arrived at Canterbury the next day messengers came to him from the other Archbishop and the suspended bishops appealing to the Apostolic See, although they knew without a doubt that the Supreme Pontiff had taken away all their right to make an appeal. Officials of our Lord the King came from another direction asking in the King's name and demanding by public authority that the Archbishop release the Archbishop of York and the other bishops from the suspensions that had been brought against them, unless he chose to be considered an enemy of the King and the kingdom precisely as if he were one who was trying to wrest the crown from the new King. To this the Archbishop replied that he had no quarrel with the royal dignity, but that he was going to increase the power, wealth and glory of Christ as much as he might, and that this could be done in no way if he did not turn the justice of His Church against the presumptuous bishops. But when they insisted with greater vehemence he added that out of respect for the King, and although it was dangerous for him to do so and he would be going beyond his authority, because an inferior judge cannot remove the sentence of a superior, he was prepared to absolve two bishops after he had received the customary oath of the Church from them that they would obey the commands of our Lord Pope who had issued their sentences. The officials would not permit this to

13 December 2
be done, maintaining that such an oath should not be given by the bishops since it was opposed to the customs of the kingdom. To this he countered that once before they had besought our Lord Pope in every way to release them from the bond of anathema in which they had been bound by the authority of the Church of Canterbury alone, and they could not be absolved until they had taken the oath; if this were required for the dissolution of one archbishop's sentence, which had far less force than an edict of the Supreme Pontiff, it was all the more clear that an apostolic sentence ought not be removed, especially by an inferior judge, without it. The bishops were moved by this and similar statements, and, as has been sated for a certain fact, would have fled to the clemency of the Archbishop had not the often mentioned Bishop of York misguided them, persuading them not to do anything without consulting the King, whom they had as a patron in all their works. When they rushed off indignantly to our Lord the King, our Archbishop began his journey to the new King.¹⁴

But when he had come to London the young King commanded him to go no farther and not to enter his cities or his castles, but to remain with his companions within the limits of his Church; and his friends were commanded not to leave the limits of the kingdom, not to show themselves in public, and to watch out for themselves with the greatest care. When this decree was published the Archbishop and his friends entered Canterbury, and there in great danger we awaited the salvation of God. There was no comfort and safety open to us other than in the prayers of yourselves and the saints; by

¹⁴ The young King Henry was at Winchester.
these alone could we avoid the snares of those who thirst after the blood of the Church, and want us to be completely snatched away from the face of the earth or to perish quickly upon it.

Although the prosecution is very terrible, and very rarely does any one of the wealthy and noble class come to visit the Archbishop, he nonetheless administers justice with pontifical gravity to all those who come to him with absolutely no regard for their persons or offices. My brother, who has not been permitted to visit me as yet, went off to your Bishop of Exeter and remains close by his side in great fear and constant worry.

It would take me a long time, and I am afraid that it might become very tiring, if I were to begin to recount all of our difficulties; but what this letter lacks will be supplied by the one who brings it. And so, if you please, let it be the office of your mercy to ask the holy prior and the friends of Christ at Mont Dieu, and Val S. Pierre, and the Abbots of Ss. Nicase and Crispin, and your other holy friends, to plead in such a way before the Most High for us that we who are endangered by our own merits might be freed by theirs.

But I can hardly recall without groaning and sighs and running tears our beloved brothers and masters who dwell together at St. Remy, remembering that I once lived happily in what was a likeness of paradise while I en-

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15 Richard

16 Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter

17 The priors, Simon of Mont Dieu, Engelbert of Val S. Pierre and the abbots, Guido of St. Nicase and Bernard of St. Crispin.

18 The abbey of St. Remy at Rheims, of which Peter of Celle was the abbot.
joyed their company and experienced a likeness of the charity that I hope for in the eternal life. I beg you to urge them most earnestly to remember their pupils in their prayers. If Christ permits me this favor, I will not delay in informing you through the medium of a hurried letter as soon as God grants us better fortune.

May your sanctity ever remain strong and thrive, and may the good fortune of the whole Church be hastened to all that is good, and please pray for the poor priest of St. Cosmas.
LETTER 307/304

JOHN TO BISHOP JOHN BELMEIS OF POITIERS

Quite unexpectedly, while I was traveling, I learned only recently by the merciful favor of God that the bearer of this letter would soon be traveling to you. Delighted, therefore, with this divinely granted opportunity for writing to a friend, I gratefully seized it, believing that a great comfort was being given me for my long sufferings, since I was able to lament the increase of our difficulties into trustworthy ears.

But where shall I begin? For news begets a helplessness in speech when it is so extensive and abundant and exceed belief but only because evil has increased to such an extent in our times. Shall I deplore our public or domestic troubles? But the world knows the general facts. Our own misery tortures each one of us very bitterly and yet one of the followers of Christ is so inflamed with charity as to undergo the burdens of all and be tortured by the scandalous condition of his neighbors. And because I did not doubt

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1 SUMMARY: John narrates the story of the death of Archbishop Thomas. In manuscript Q the letter is addressed to Bishop John Belmeis of Poitiers, and does not contain the query about what honors were to be accorded to Thomas. The other manuscripts contain this part of the letter and have the address: J.S. cuidam amico suo. The friend was Peter of Celle, who answers this question in his letter 121. Cf Migne ccii. The pertinent part of Peter's letter is appended after this letter. John, however, must have sent copies of this letter to many of his friends, and he has also incorporated it into his life of Thomas Becket. Cf. Becket Materials 2.316-322. The letter was probably written in January 1171, shortly after the death of the archbishop on December 29, 1170.
that you know of the passion of the glorious martyr Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who glorifies not only his own Church but every province of England by his many great miracles, I have decided not to spend too much time upon it, especially since the time for writing is short, and as I believe, the material facts of the story have been known and spread by now throughout almost the whole Latin world by the recounting of so many men. But in such an exhibition of the divine plan I did not believe the fact should be passed over in silence that all men marvel at the glory of God and His martyr, because all the circumstances of the torture of the Archbishop have united in such a way as to glorify forever his fame in suffering, to reveal the shamefulness of his persecutors, and to besmirch their name with everlasting dishonor.

If it please people in one part of the world or another once again to consider and go over the story, the religious Archbishop came here as the Primate of England, the Legate of the Apostolic See, and most incorrupt judge (being one who considers neither persons nor their offices), the defender of the Church's freedom, and, as it were, a tower erected in Jerusalem against the face of Damascus, the hammer of sinners, but at the same time the comforter of the poor and sorrowing. Anyone who wishes may behold the man who came forth from such a background. And if "the cause makes the martyr," as no man who knows what is right will doubt, what is more just or more holy than his cause? Despising the wealth and all the glory of the world, and

2 Deuteronomy 10.17; I Kings 16.7; II Paralipomenon 19.7; Sap. 6.8; Ecclesiasticus 35.15; Romans 2.11; 3.29; Colossians, 3.25; Acts 10.34
3 Augustine Sermo 275, 2, Migne P.L. 38.1254
the affection of his friends and all his relations out of love for Christ, he underwent exile and exposed himself and his associates to dangers and poverty. He fought unto death to defend the law of God and wipe out the abuses of ancient tyrants, nor, after his one fall, could he ever be misled into any obligation towards them by the deceits of those who plotted against him, nor could he be induced to promise them anything of all they had demanded from him. In all of this he provided for the honor of God and for the future safety of the Church's honor. He endured hardships not as if he had only little faith or faith or only an hour, retreating in the moment of temptation, but the endured exile and an unjust proscription into its seventh year, going down the royal path with so much constancy and following in the footsteps of both Christ and apostolic men that his spirit remained unfettered, nor could it be broken by an assault of cruel fortune or softened by its enticements.

But note where he was slain. Certainly in the Church which is the first of the Kingdom and the mother of all others in Christ, before the altar, between his brother priests and the group of religious whom the clamor of armed executioners brought together for the shocking and terrible sight. And so he who had shown himself for a long time to be a living, holy victim, and one pleasing to God, he who had crucified his own flesh with its vices and concupiscence by prayers, vigils, fastings and the constant use of the biting

4 Cf. 195, line 117 and notes
5 Thomas left England in November 1164 and returned in December 1170.
6 Galatians 5.24
hair shirt, he who had accustomed to turn his back (as his holy companion knew) as a little child of Christ to the lashes, he who had ordinarily offered the body and blood of Christ upon the altar, lying prostrate before the altar, he offered his own flowing blood at the hands of sinners. Nor in the immolation of the disciple and servant was there permitted by the ministers of Satan what was granted by those who went before them in the crucifixion of the Master and Lord. For Christ, although He was condemned beforehand by an unjust judge, received some sort of chance to defend Himself, and lest the city be defiled, lest the Sabbath be sinned against, He was led out of the city and crucified beyond its gate by the ministry of Gentiles who had not known God, and by the authority of civil power; they whose laws He had seemed to break accused him, and the disciple who was the son of perdition performed the shameful office of a traitor.

But he was slain not only in the city, but within the Church; not on an ordinary day, but on the day consecrated by the solemnity of Our Lord's birth; and it was fitting by every right that his birthday into God's glory would follow the birthday of the Holy Innocents, for he had lived in innocence and holiness. And, indeed, it is believed that treacherous disciples had attended to, and the princes of the priests had arranged his death, going so far beyond Annas and Caiphas, Pilate and Herod in their malice as to carefully see to it that he was not led to trial, that he was not faced by his accusers, that he did not appear before the face of a judge, that he did not escape sacrilegious hands by the privilege of a holy place or time, or

7 John 17.12
8 December 29
though his dignity or his high office, or by reason of the peace that he been made with the provision of safe conduct—and not by the hands of Gentiles or enemies, but of those who professed the law of God and the faith of his friends.

It has truly come about that under the admirable direction of Almighty God all things have been arranged wisely and usefully, for He who had permitted these so wicked, imprudent and shameful events to take place has not permitted them to be hidden, so that even here, during this temporal life, might be fulfilled what wisdom has said, "There is nothing covered," that is, "that shall not be revealed." For what is popularly said in that well-known statement about Judas, the standard-bearer of all traitors, should by the same right be applied to all his partners, for it is obvious that the same judgment should be made under similar circumstances, so that all Christians might know from faith that the heavens will reveal their sins and the earth will rise up against them. For which of the faithful would dare to doubt that God will either convert or destroy the authors and executors of such a sacrilege?

When that martyr was about to suffer before the altar in the Church, as has been said, before he was attacked, when he heard himself asked for by the soldiers who had come among the crowd of clerics and monks for this purpose

9 Luke 12.2
10 The four knights, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Moreville and Reginald le Breton. They were accompanied by Hugh of Horsea, a degraded clerk. Vespers were being sung in the Cathedral Church. As the knights burst in, three friends of the Archbishop, Robert of Merton, Edward Grim and William Fitz-Stephen were urging the Archbishop up the steps from the transept of the western stairway which leads into the choir.
shouting "Where is the Archbishop?" he came to them from the steps he had almost ascended, saying with a fearless countenance, "Here I am; what do you want?" One of the murderous soldiers answered him in a spirit of rage, "Only that you die, for it is impossible for you to live any longer." The Archbishop replied with no less courage in his speech than in his heart (for, with due respect for all martyrs, I will confidently state as my own opinion that none of them seemed to be more courageous in their suffering than he), "And I am willing to die for my God, and for the defense of the justice and freedom of the Church. But if you week my head, I forbid you on behalf of Almighty God and under threat of anathema to injure any other in any way, whether he be monk or cleric or layman, great or small; but let them be as free from punishment as they were from its cause; for not they, but I am to be held responsible if any of them has taken up the cause of the suffering Church. I willingly embrace death if only the Church will attain peace and freedom by the pouring out of my blood."

Who appears to have a more burning charity than he? For while he was offering himself to his persecutors on behalf of the law of God he was worried only about one thing—that his friends might receive some injury. Do not his words seem to express what Christ said during His passion: "If you seek me, let these others go away"? When he had said this, and saw the murderers with their swords drawn, he bent his head as one does in prayer, and spoke these last words: "I commend myself and the cause of the Church to God and the Blessed Mary and the patron Saints of this Church and to St. Dionysius."

11 John 23.8
Who can recount all that followed without sighs, sobbings and tears? The sense of love will not permit me to recount all the individual acts that those most cruel murderers committed, despising all fear of God and forgetful of all human feelings. For it was not enough for them to desecrate a Church and defile a very holy day with the blood and death of a priest, but, when they had cut off the top of his head, which the anointing of holy chrism had dedicated to God (it is even terrible to speak of this!), they pulled out the brain of the dead man with their murderous swords and ruthlessly sprinkled it across the floor with gore and bones. 12 They were more savage than those who crucified Christ, for when they saw that He had died, the decided his limbs should not be broken as were those of the living. 13

But through all this torture the martyr with an unconquered spirit and wonderful bravery spoke not a word, nor did he cry out or sigh, nor did he defend himself with arm or clothing from his murderers, but he held unmoved his bowed head which he offered to their swords with wonderful courage until it was over, and finally falling to the ground with his body rigid, he moved neither foot nor hand.

But the murderers, no less covetous than cruel, did an injury to the royal power no less than to the Divine Majesty, for they returned to the palace of the Church, and seizing with insatiable greed and daring all the furnitur and all else they could find in the writing desks and chests of the Archbishop, whether they were golden or silver, clothing or many kinds of

12 Hugh of Horsea perpetrated this outrage.

13 John 19.33
ornaments, or books or privileges or any writings, they divided them among themselves as they chose, imitating the deed of those who divided the garments of Christ among themselves, although they went beyond these to a certain extent in their shameful deed. And in order to take away all honor before men from the Archbishop who was now crowned with martyrdom, they sent all the writings that their sacrilegious theft had seized to the King, who was in Normandy.

But it came about that the more human fool-hardiness tried to darken the glory of the very brave athlete, so much the more did God brighten it by the display of virtue and by the clear signs of miracles. When those irreligious men who had hated him with an insatiable hatred saw these, they forbade in the name of the civil power anyone from daring to make known the miracles that were taking place. Still, in vain does anyone want to obscure that God decides to make well-known; for miracles increased all the more according as it seemed to the irreligious that they must be very carefully hidden.

Man sees on the surface, God alone looks into the reins and hearts; for when the body of the blessed martyr was about to be buried and was being clad in pontifical robes as is the custom, it was found to be clothed in hair-cloth filled with lice and worms (of which only a very few of his friends had been aware), and his under-clothing was found to be made of hair cloth right down to the knees, which had been unheard of among the people of nation. But his other clothing was the same as that of other men, in compliance with the proposition of the wise man who said: "Let your external

14 John 19.23
15 Psalms 7.10; Jeremias 17.10; Apocalypse 2.23
appearance be like that of the people, but within let everything be different."16 Who will say what sighs, how many floods of tears he had shed who entered into the society of the Saints in the uncovering of such a hidden spirit of religion?

But the hatred of his persecutors did not stop at all this, for they said that the body of a traitor must not be buried among the holy bishops, but should be cast into the foulest marsh or hung from a cross. And so the holy men who were present, fearing that force might be used against them, buried him in a crypt of the marble sepulchre before the altar of St. John the Baptist and St. Augustine, the apostle of the English, before the followers of Satan who had been summoned to perform this sacrilege arrived. There many great miracles were performed through him to the glory of Almighty God, while the people passed by in throngs to see in others and feel in themselves the power of Him Who is always admirable and glorious in His Saints. For in the place of his suffering, and before the main altar where he had rested through the night awaiting burial, as well as where he was finally buried, paralytics are cured, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, those with fevers are cured, the possessed are freed from the devil, the ailing are cured of various diseases,17 the blasphemers who are possessed by the devil are confuted, and He performs all these and many other miracles which it would take too long to recount—He who alone is blessed above all things in the world, and who chooses those to be the associates of His glory whom, through the truth of faith and zeal of justice.

16 Seneca, Ep. Bk. 1.5, 2
17 Matthew 11.5 and Luke 7.22
through strength of profession and constancy of their unconquered courage, He will make victors over the enemies of truth and faith.

Now under no condition would I dare to write these statements did not an enlightened faith make me absolutely certain of the facts. And so it remains for one of your learning to instruct our humble selves as to whether it would be safe to invoke him as a guardian of salvation among the lists of the martyrs in the solemnities of Masses and in other public prayers without the authority of the Roman Pontiff, or whether we are bound to offer supplicatory prayers for him whom God has glorified by so many signs of miracles, just as we would for any other departed soul. For we fear that such a supplication in prayer might seem to be an injury to the blessed martyr, and would display the likeness of incredulity, and not be a sound devotion after the witnessing of so many signs. The Roman Pontiff would have been consulted about this matter by now except that freedom of traveling is refused to all, so much so that no one is permitted to board a vessel unless he can show a letter from the King beforehand.

In the meantime we have deemed it wiser to stand by the will of God, and we venerate as a martyr in our songs and supplications the one whom God had deigned to honor as a martyr. For in nearly all sections of the world He was both able and wont to glorify whom He willed without waiting for the authority of any man; this cannot be doubtful to a wise man who reads the various parts of Scripture with an intelligent study.
Concerning that question, dear friend, which you asked at the end of the story of Blessed Thomas's passion, I certainly believe that you have found the right answer.

Perhaps you did not doubt that I would agree with your opinion, but would recall that God does not seek the aid or authority of men for what He has determined to do through His own power; for the sake of our own good or humility, He does not despise the services of men, but uses them. Were He able to save a man without any sacrament, that is, without the aid of visible elements and works, would He have provided those opportunities for practicing humility and faith, virtues which are so useful when used by those who are to be saved? Therefore, I definitely maintain that the lamp which is lighted in the hand of God can in no wise be dimmed or put out; nor should we wait the judgment of man when, by the clear light of God, the judgment is obvious.
LETTER 308/307
ARCHBISHOP ROGER OF YORK TO THE CLERGY
AND FAITHFUL OF THE PROVINCE OF YORK

Roger, by the grace of God Archbishop of York and Legate of the Apostolic See, to his venerable brother Hugo, Bishop of Dover by the grace of God, and to his beloved sons Robert the Deacon and William the Chanter, and to the whole Chapter and all the canons of St. Mary of Sudewelle and St. Wilfred of Ripun, and to all the people who dwell within the province of York, health and grace:

You are not unaware of how much I have endured for the dignity of our Church during this period in which so much envy was permitted to be directed

1 SUMMARY: Archbishop Roger of York issues a rescript to the clergy and people of his province notifying them that his sentence of suspension, which he had incurred after the death of Archbishop Thomas, had been lifted. The rest of the letter is occupied by a denunciation of his opponents. It is dated December 13, 1171. On October 23, 1171, Pope Alexander gave authority to the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Amiens to absolve Roger on condition that he take an oath that he had never done anything that encouraged the murder of Thomas, that he was ignorant of the Pope's prohibition of the coronation of the young king Henry, and that at the coronation all things were duly performed. The terms of the absolution are omitted from Roger's letter. Cf. R. L. Poole's article on this letter in his Studies in Chronology and History, p. 288 ff., where he states that the violent denunciation contained in the letter "seems to be an interpolation, an invention composed with the design of showing that the oath taken by the archbishop was, to say the least of it, insincere."
against me that there was scarcely any place left for truth. It is a common practice for sinners, as often as they get the opportunity, to frighten with curses those of whom they are jealous and to pierce the innocent with the poisonous shafts of words. They who sat in judgment upon me with their snares have done this for a long time.

And first they even prepared a hangman's noose for me in which our Lord the Pope entangled me, following their false suggestions rather than the order of justice. And then, lest it might be loosened in any way, adding iniquity to iniquity, they gathered together for this purpose the books of the greatest men with insidious skill, exactly as they had been instructed many years back. Then they bribed a large number of strangers and those who had never seen me before to lessen my reputation in any way they might by lying before the Supreme Pontiff and the Roman Curia about matters of which they had no knowledge.

I was absent, and the few who took my part before the Curia, harassed by such far-fetched lies, were hardly capable of resisting so great a multitude; and especially so since certain individuals, religious only by reason of the habit, seeing that those others were successful in their evil doing, went along with them, and, ignoring the fear of God, together with the prostitutes they had hired with them so that neither sex would fail to take part in my persecution at their hands, they gave testimony to many things in order to destroy the dignity of our Church. Agreeing on one point, all of these decided in their hearts to follow the example of the Giants,²

² The reference is to Homer and Hesiod, a reflection of the might of the Titans and their contest with the gods. Their attack was against heaven.
and undertaking the very force of nature they plastered the wall they had constructed from certain very large stones and lies with their pretended tears, as if these were a certain indissoluble bitumen; with the sighs and groaning feigned for the occasion they filled not only their own homes but also the streets with their wailing both day and night, hoping in this way to be able to shut off the heavens and assign truth to a perpetual prison.

What else? That Pharoah\(^3\) of theirs whose members they are, and he a man of the spiritual order, seemed to go along in such a company with a crown of glory, and I, relegated to the bondage of a twig-basket,\(^4\) looked for aid from men, and there was none; for with the flesh wasted away, my bones had clung to my skin.\(^5\) And so I raised my eyes to heaven and cried out to God in the bitterness of my soul,\(^6\) and through the intercession of your merits and prayers He heard me for His reverence.\(^7\) By the hammer of His natural goodness He smashed the aforesaid wall and reduced it to nothing, and putting the men of Babylon to flight He led truth forth from the enclosure which had held it a prisoner, and washing away the filth of the prison, He commanded it to go out freely into public. As soon as it was restored to freedom it fled quickly to me, and in the presence of the Lord Bishops

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3 Archbishop Thomas. The term is convertible with diabolus. Cf. St. Bernard, Sermo xxxix in Cant. Migne P.L. clxxxiii, 977. This infuriated the Canterbury clerks, and occasioned the bitter abuse of Roger in Letter 311.

4 Opera servilla, or servile works. Cf. Psalms 80.7; St Agustine, Enarr. in Psalms 80 Migne P.L. xxxvii, 1037.

5 Lamentations 4.8

6 Job 10.1

7 Hebrews 5.7
Rotrou of Rouen and the others whom the Bishop of Amiens had delegated in his stead, to whom this investigation had been assigned by the Lord Pope, and before the Bishop of Evreux and many abbots and priors of religious, and it stood at my right side clearer than light. When the aforementioned Archbishop and the religious men who were appointed by the Lord Bishop of Amiens saw its venerable and shining face, they rejoiced with a very great joy; and brooking no delay they absolved me according to the form our Lord the Pope had determined for them from the unjust suspicion under which I was held, while all who were present blessed the Lord Who humbles the proud, Who catcheth the wise in their craftiness, and Who frees those who presume of His mercy and bringeth out them who were bound in strength.

To Him be glory now and through the immortal ages. Amen. God willing, I will come to you soon that my joy might be filled in being with you, whom I long to see more than I can say. May the blessing of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost descend upon you who pray for us.

This is written on the second day after the Sunday on which the Gaudete is sung, the feast day of St. Lucy at Oumal.

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8 Rotrou Archbishop of Rouen, 1165-1183
9 Theobald III, d'Heilly, Bishop of Amiens, 1169-1204
10 Gilles du Perche Bishop of Evreux, 1170-1179
11 Job 5.13
12 Judith 9.17
13 Psalms 67.7
14 John 15.11
15 The opening words of the Introit in the Mass of the third Sunday in Advent
16 December 13
LETTER 309/309

KING HENRY II TO BISHOP BARTHOLOMEW OF EXETER

Henry, King of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Angers, to Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter, greetings:

You may know that I landed in Normandy after a favorable voyage, by the grace of God, and I found all my land on this side of the channel resting in the greatest peace and tranquillity under the guidance of God. Men and faithful friends were filled (as they should have been) with a very great joy at my arrival.

Then I went to the Lord Legates, and although I found them very stiff in the beginning, and, as it seemed, they absolutely could not be appeased,

1 SUMMARY: King Henry announces his arrival in Normandy (fresh from his conquest of Ireland) and informs Bishop Bartholomew that he has agreed to the terms of reconciliation offered by the papal legates. The letter was written some time after June 1, 1172, for the reconciliation took place on May 28, 1172, and Henry remarks that he would have come to England if he had not been hindered by a conference at Caen on the 30th.

2 Henry left Wexford on Easter night (April 16) and arrived in Normandy early in May 1172.

3 The Cardinals Albert (afterwards Pope Gregory VIII) and Theodwin.
nevertheless, contrary to the hope of all, and contrary to the opinion of every one, peace was established and settled between us to the honor of God and the Church and myself and my kingdom, as will be clearer to you from what follows.

These are the terms that I promised to observe in their insistence: namely, that for one year from the approaching feast of Pentecost I shall give such an amount of money, which in the opinion of the Brothers of the Temple, could keep two hundred soldiers for the defence of Jerusalem for one year, and that permission is given to make appeals to our Lord the Pope freely, but in such a way that if I suspect those who are sent, they will swear before they leave the kingdom that they will not seek anything harmful to me or disgraceful to my kingdom on that journey. I shall drop the Constitutions which were set up against the Church in my time, which, as a matter of fact, I consider of very little or no value. If any of the possessions of the Church of Canterbury were taken away, they will be fully restored just as they were one year before the Archbishop left England. And so I will restore my peace to the clerics and laymen of either sex, as well as their possessions which they lost in the downfall of the aforesaid Archbishop. This they enjoined upon me on behalf of our Lord Pope for the remission of all my sins.

I would have come to England as soon as the peace was settled except that the Lord Legates were to hold a meeting at Caen on the Tuesday following the Ascension of the Lord.

But when I do return you are not to delay in hurrying to me at once. Witnesses....

4 June 4, 1172

5 The Constitutions of Clarendon
LETTER 310/306
JOHN TO ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM OF SENS

To his venerable master and dearly beloved friend William, by the grace of God Archbishop of Sens and Legate of the Apostolic See, his friend John sends greetings and his ready and respectful devotion:

Although there is, to a great extent, still considerable trouble in the Church of England, still its sorrow for the most part has turned into joy, and its mourning has been completely transformed happily into a cheerful canticle.

In fact, so many miracles as yet unheard of have occurred repeatedly in memory of the martyr that, if they were heard of from other quarters, they could hardly be attributed to him as miracles. For just as that noble soul strove under every circumstance to excel those who were united with him, so also now (if I might say so with the permission of the other Saints) he surpasses all others of whom I have read or heard in the manifestation of miracles. I can readily believe that this has come about so that our loving

1 SUMMARY: John writes to Archbishop William of Sens about the miracles attributed to Thomas, their value as evidence of the correctness of Alexander's claim to the papacy, and complains about the delay in canonizing Thomas. The letter was written some time in 1172, after the reconciliation of Henry with the Church on May 28, and certainly before the archbishop's canonization in March, 1173.

2 Esther 9.22
Lord might awaken the faith that is not so much asleep as almost extinct in many parts of our country, that He might raise up hope, strengthen charity, and silence the mouths of those sinners who detracted the holy man during his life, and attacked the cause of Christ out of hatred for his person.

For who can still doubt the truth and sincerity of the teaching of Christ, Who rewards with so much happiness the man who was faithful to his words, and known to us? Who, other than one possessed by the devil, can say that that cause is wrong which crowns its champion with so much glory? Many doubt that the side of our Lord the Pope, on which we take our stand, is founded upon justice; but the glorious martyr has cleared it of any charge of schism since, if he were the promoter of a schism, he would certainly not be glorified by so many miracles. For certainly he was a man of too much prudence to be easily led into error in a matter of so great importance for souls.

And so I would be greatly surprised that our Lord the Pope has not commanded him to be included in the list of the Saints were it not that I recall reading in Church History that when Pilate had sent his report to Tiberius Caesar and asked whether Christ, Who had performed so many great deeds, and was being reverenced by very many as a God, ought to be adored as a God, the Senate, called into consultation by the Emperor, answered the He would have been adored as a God except that the people of the provinces had presumed this without the authority of the Senate. And certainly this

answer was given with divine approval in order that the divinity of Christ, whose name was to be preached to the Jews and Gentiles, would not appear to depend upon any earthly power, and then non-believers could say that it was established by being begged for, who, whether they like it or not, are compelled to hear that "the Lord hath reigned, let the people be angry, and let the earth," on which the Church of Christ is founded, "rejoice." And so also, I believe, it came about with divine approval that the glory of this martyr is extolled by neither a decree of the Pope nor by a decree of the Prince, but it grows stronger with Christ as its main author, Whose honor he strove to increase as long as he lived. He always maintained that the honor of Christ would be preserved, and will not Christ reward him in the same way? Heaven forbid that Truth be deceitful in what it promised!

We read in the Acts of the Apostles that certain men who were not as yet baptized received the Holy Ghost without the authority of the Apostles; but did the apostles ever annul this? Assuredly a higher authority is desired to no purpose where God is the author. So if any one wants to stop the glory of so great a martyr, no matter who he may be, let him perform greater or at least equal wonders before we believe him; otherwise we believe that he sins against the Holy Ghost, Whose works he does not fear to derogate.

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4 Psalms 98.1
5 Acts 10.44-48; 11.1-18
LETTER 311/305

THE CANTERBURY CLERKS TO ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM OF SENS

From the clerks of Canterbury who were once so distressed, to the Lord Archbishop of Sens:

With your own eyes, which a perfect generosity that was native as well as raised even higher by heavenly given grace had opened to behold the troubles of the Church of England, you have seen the struggle we endured with the glorious martyr, and in coming to the aid of those poor of Christ you have borne for that Church the burden of the day and the heat, and while it was possible you protected that athlete who was struggling against

1 SUMMARY: John writes to Archbishop William of Sens in the names of the exiles of Canterbury. The letter begins with a lamentation over the murdered Thomas, but soon breaks out into invective and makes a grave charge of immorality against Archbishop Roger of York, P. L. Poole in his Studies in Chronology and History, p. 299, doubts that John wrote this letter, as well as the truth of the charges against Roger, and calls it "part of the furniture of the lowest type of medieval controversy." The letter has been placed some time in 1172, for it refers to a letter in which Roger calls Thomas Pharaoh, cf. letter 308, line 39 (p. 76. 1. 13). But Roger may have written another letter in which he used the same expression. Hence it may be better to place this letter ahead of letter 308 in 1171, before Roger was relieved of the suspension, for this letter indicates that he was still under censure.

2 Matthew 20.12

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his enemies for the law of God as if he were the apple of your eye.\footnote{Deuteronomy 32.10} May God reward your faith and industry by which you have obtained peace for us, and by which you have overlooked nothing of what was taking place, so that our misfortunes cannot be ascribed to you.

For when the greatest and wisest princes gathered together in that illustrious meeting of so many kings\footnote{At Freteval on July 22, 1170} the terms of the peace that were agreed upon certainly seemed good and honorable to all. And so the kingdom rejoiced in the peace that had been reestablished. But the final outcome showed what the representatives of the devil were doing, if they really must be believed to have accomplished their own destruction who committed so great a crime out of contempt for the God Who reserves revenge to Himself. For may it never happen that that terrible Majesty "who taketh away the spirit of princes"\footnote{Psalms 75.13} will grant to another what is His own glory, and will not bring upon them who are known to have committed an unheard of and disgraceful sin, a public rather than a miraculous revenge.

For that holy Archbishop, as has been carefully set down and reported to you in another letter, has, in his glorious martyrdom, left behind the troubles of this world, and has gone to the Lord to sit with the princes\footnote{I Kings 2.8} and judge those who encompassed him and attempted to destroy the heritage of Christ. For while Christ, whether or not His persecutors like it, is God
blessed throughout the ages above all things, the boldness of high authority (over which you have often grieved when you heard of it) is only momentary when a persecutor tries to place his own honor and the abuses of ancient tyrants before the perpetual laws and honor of God.

And lest anyone should dare to object or speak against them, some of us have been seized and locked in prison, others have been outlawed, others condemned to exile, others, whom the divine mercy has better provided for, have been refuge in flight so as not to suffer or behold the misery of their brothers, the trampling under of the Saints, and (what is said with His permission) the ignominy of Christ.

There remain many blasphemers outside of our country who, under a priestly name and honor, attack the priesthood, fawning upon the princes, justifying the cause of the Church's persecutors, rejoicing in the very worst crimes. They have taken their stand with the powers "against the Lord and against his anointed one," whose blood, poured out by them through the ministry of soldiers, cries out from earth to heaven more than the blood of the just Abel, whom his own brother killed.

The leader of these is the Archbishop of York, whom you have seen and heard openly attacking the Archbishop before the Curia; and he who was not worthy so much as to speak his name with the sacrilegious mouth by which he

7 Romans 1.25
8 Psalms 2.2
9 Genesis 4.10
10 Roger de Pont l'Eveque archbishop of York, 1154-1181
brought about the death of the martyr, that man who is clearly full of faults and a liar, even now, as is clear from his letter, calls him who is now renowned for his unheard of miracles a Pharaoh. 11 But we are not moved if that infamous beast does not honor the martyr, for, as his manifest works prove, he does not even fear God. And yet they say that he is preparing to go to the Curia to wipe out the blot of a disgraceful life, as if he were a man who hath done justice and hath not forsaken the judgment of his God. 12 And to be sure that the process of justification may not be impeded, he has brought it about that none of our countrymen is permitted to cross the sea until he has received the permission of our Lord the King; and this cannot be obtained until a pledge is given that nothing will be sought for against the persecutors of the martyr. And so what can those poor men do who long so ardently for the law when they see that justice is suppressed and they are denied passage.

But surely the "word of God is not bound," 13 and you have liberty and freedom of speech before the Roman Church and are well acquainted with the truth. For you knew the martyr during his life, and knew what he stood for, and you knew us who went into exile with him, and you know that Caiphas of our day who, while he appeared to lament its necessity, urged that it was expedient for one to die or be seized lest the whole nation perish. 14 You

11 Cf. letter 308, note on line 39 (p.101, line7).
12 Isaias 58.2
13 II Timothy 2.9
14 John 11.50
were in England with your uncle, the Lord Bishop of Winchester, when that same man who is now Caiphas, then an archdevil, was in the habit of taking great pleasure in the exceptional youthful beauty of a certain Walter (I will not say in a shamefully unnatural relationship), and had the eyes put out of that same uncouth person for boldly crying out at the crimes against nature which he had put up with. Afterwards accusing him of this crime, that same archdevil had him sent to the gibbet, after bribing the judges who sat in judgment upon civil affairs. And thus that man, no less pleasing in appearance than modest, received the affection of his beloved. In this way he rewarded the long displayed submission of his lover: first he committed a disgraceful sin against the unhappy fellow, and then, when that individual regretted consenting to such a foul impurity, he had the unhappy fellow cut up and his eyes plucked out, and finally, because he objected to his distressful situation as much as he was able by his shouting, he had that most unhappy fellow strangled by being hanged from a gibbet.

We are not making up these incidents, but are endeavoring to reawaken them in your memory—as though those things could be forgotten which had been placed in your breast impressed there as it were by an iron claw, as well as by the many great and entirely trustworthy men who have so often recounted them. Up to this day that sad story is repeated time and again to the disgrace of, and very often out of contempt for, the Church. But perhaps

15 Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester 1129-1171
16 Roger had been Archdeacon of Canterbury, 1148-1154
17 The manuscripts all have uestro, but nostro seems to be preferable.
someone might ask how he could have committed so great and public a crime without punishment, especially while Blessed Eugene\textsuperscript{18} was reigning as Supreme Pontiff. And actually, as we believe without any doubt, he would in no way have avoided it except for the exertions of Blessed Thomas who, through the worthy Bishops Hilary of Chichester\textsuperscript{19} and John of Worcester,\textsuperscript{20} caused his atonement to be accepted by Theobald,\textsuperscript{21} Archbishop of Canterbury, now of happy memory. And then, aware that the Roman Church was indignant at this giving of an attonement that was made secretly, inasmuch as it was offered in a chapel of monks and not in a solemn court, he took the advice of his state and set off for Rome to that most famous manipulator, whom you have always hated, Cardinal Gregory of Saint Angel\textsuperscript{22} and by means of a large number of gifts that were scattered around the Curia through him, he succeeded in being able to return to his home justified; it was never known by what divine arrangement he had been saved to commit greater crimes, as is attested by the present day in which the Church is reddened by the blood of an innocent man—a man who saved that detestable person from a just punishment because he worked in the Curia with him, having mercy on him in fraternal charity, and hoping for the fruit of a better life.

\textsuperscript{18} Pope Eugene III (1145-1153)
\textsuperscript{19} Hilary Bishop of Chichester, 1147-1169
\textsuperscript{20} John Pagham Bishop of Worcester, 1151-1161
\textsuperscript{21} Theobald Archdeacon of Canterbury, 1139-1161. By a comparison of dates it is seen that the alleged crime of Roger falls within 1151-1153.
\textsuperscript{22} Gregory, created cardinal-deacon of St. Angelus by Pope Celestine II, before December 30, 1143. See the note on him in R. L. Poole's edition of John of Salisbury's Historia Pontificalis, p. 117. Gregory adhered to the anti-pope Paschal III, and died in 1169.
LETTER 312/322

JOHN TO ABBOT PETER OF CELLE\(^1\)

John sends best wishes for good health and victory in either life to Peter, Abbot of St. Remigius, his only friend:

It is not necessary to give the reasons for my long silence since all communications between nations has been stopped for a long time, and travelers cannot go from one nation to another without the loss of health and danger to their lives. Indeed, those who have been placed under suspicion must be especially careful lest they incur the wrath of the public authority through some questionable incident, for, since everyone is afraid of what he deserves, he can very easily be moved to anger against him whom he has unjustly and brutally injured; for as a certain person says with great beauty and truth:

The story of the past will make one fear what is to come,
Shameful things can happen tomorrow just as yesterday.\(^2\)

And because the Most High, certainly patient, but without doubt a just

\(^1\) SUMMARY: John explains to Peter of Celle that his long silence is due to the dangers and difficulties abroad in the country, and he relates the perils to which the abbot's English estate is exposed. The letter is dated late in 1172 by Robertson, but the latter half of 1173 seems more probable, when Henry's three sons, aided by confederates, were in rebellion against their father.

\(^2\) These are lines 35-6 of the poem "Pergama flere volo," printed as number 152 in Carmina Burana; it is also found in B. Haureau's Les Melanges Poetiques Hildebert de lavardin, pp. 207-8; Speculum vi, p. 121. In Jakob Werner's Lat. Sprichworter und Sinnspruche des M.A.'s there is also the following: De culpa ueteri debent peccata timeri,
Cras possent fieri turpia sicut heri.
Judge, has raised His right hand in recompense and has taken hold on the judgment of His hand, very many fear that the anger of the powers that are clashing against one another will turn into rage; that is why they turn aside from the assault until justice has been turned into judgment and the plan of God is made known by the conversion or sorrow of sinners. In this meantime we wait with silence for the salvation of God, being sure that "the patience of the poor shall not perish forever." Now, indeed, it is most necessary; "now there is need for courage, now there is need for strength" in the Lord; for on all sides we hear of fears and rumors of war, riots are multiplying, and those who should fight against the enemy are taken captive.

And the caldron is heated for the destruction of the people not only by the North Wind, but by the four winds of heaven; for that generation demands not only the blood of the son of Barachias, who recently lost most than that which he spilled between the temple and the altar, but also that of the others who had trial of losses, mockeries and stripes for the same cause, and who have been outlawed, jailed and driven into exile; and from

3 Deuteronomy 32.41
4 Psalms 93.15
5 Lamentations 3.26
6 Psalms 9.19
7 Virgil, Aeneid 6.261
8 Jeremias 1.13
9 A reference to Archbishop Thomas; cf. Matthew 23.35
10 Hebrew 11.36-40
practically the whole Latin world from which they passed over to the Lord, they seek the just revenge for their sufferings for the honor of God and the aid of the Church. And so just men, washing their hands in the blood of sinners, rejoice in these martyrs, for they see that a suitable revenge of justice serves the glory of God.\(^{11}\)

These, to touch upon them but lightly, are some of the things that are taking place among us, where he alone is safe whom anger drives away, or whom the Holy Ghost has made to despise everything in this life; for without there is the sword, within there is fear,\(^ {12}\) and citizen and enemy live underpractically the same dangerous conditions.

Our lot is the same as that of those with whom we live, except that, sailing with great danger between Scylla and Charybdis,\(^ {13}\) the more clearly seen atonement of God affords us a very plentiful consolation above and beyond our merits. For, to recompense better those who are faithful to Himself, He shows us the dangers aimed at us from close at hand, and often drives far off and with greater strength and power those that are crushing down upon us, so that we are obliged to say with all justice: If any man love not our Lord Jesus, blessed above all whether the world likes it or not, let him be anathema.\(^ {14}\)

But those possessions of yours which are in our part of the world are

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11 Psalms 57.11
12 Deuteronomy 32.25
13 Virgil, Aeneid 3.420
14 I Corinthians 16.22
exposed to many dangers. Our prominent men are changed into wolves on all sides, and their shameful gluttony drives them to despise all rights and powers. And unless his sincere and efficient industry had supported the man to whom you entrusted the care of your house, it would now have none or very few inhabitants. I remember having written to you on another occasion of the condition in which he found it, and I do not think you have forgotten. Since I was not personally able to go there I sent a reliable investigator from among my servants, and I rejoiced in the obvious betterment of its condition that he reported to me. For their finances were in such a state at the time that, had the Lord granted us peace, they would have been sufficient for the administration of the house as well as for showing the proper generosity to travelers in a way that would do honor to such a small place. In fact, the brothers living there won the respect not only of the Bishop and his officials but also of their neighbors, and they would have been able to come to the aid of their friends through the grace of God and their own efforts had not the tempest that swept down upon them blocked their attempts. And although their neighbors on all sides, who occupy the defenses, often take much from them by force, nevertheless, in so far as they are able, they are anxious to be faithful to God and their master St. Remigius, and to obey your commands in everything.

Brother Absolom wanted to cross over to you with your revenues, but because of the threatening dangers he returned on the advice of my brother and myself to the house, which, if he had gone away, would have been exposed to disaster. But he entrusted the yearly grant that was agreed upon into the hands of your man Richard, so that you might receive it from him if by any
chance God would grant him a favorable opportunity for making the crossing. And because villany is growing stronger, so much so that it may become necessary for the brothers who are in your house, by reason of their pressing need, to run through the towns after thieves and robbers, so that occasionally none of them might be found at home, it would seem to us to be advisable, if it pleases you and your council, to lessen their tax and send a brother who is upright and prepared for the needs of the monastery to be a comfort to them, and to answer those who come in their absence, and to prove by his presence that the place is consecrated to the Lord under the title of religion.

For if a larger number of religious were to appear there, without a doubt a greater respect for the house would be shown by the citizens, and the wickedness of mischief makers will quiet down more easily.
LETTER 313/320

PRIOR ODO AND THE MONKS OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

TO POPE ALEXANDER III

The sufferings which our Church has endured for a full ten years cannot be unknown to the Apostolic See, for the whole Christian world knows of them. If the reason is sought justice shows itself, the liberty of the Church appears, the reverence for the Apostolic See, whose authority was in the wane in our part of the world, insists it was itself for which the glorious martyr of Christ gave his life, and for which the brothers and friends of

1 SUMMARY: The monks of Canterbury appeal to the Pope against the young king Henry, who has appealed against the election of Prior Richard of Dover to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. At a meeting of the bishops and clergy held in London at the end of April 1173, the following new bishops were elected: Richard of Ilchester, archdeacon of Poitiers, bishop of Winchester; Geoffrey Ridel, archdeacon of Canterbury, bishop of Ely; Robert Foliot, archdeacon of Oxford, bishop of Hereford; Reginald, archdeacon of Salisbury, bishop of Bath; Geoffrey Plantagenet, Henry's natural son, bishop of Lincoln; and John Greenford, dean of Chichester, bishop of Chichester. The Canterbury monks chose their own archbishop, Prior Richard of Dover, at Westminster on June 3. On June 9 the young king announced his appeal against the election of Richard. Cf. Gervase of Canterbury, ed. Stubbs, i.245. Upon receipt of the letter of appeal the bishops held a conference and decided in their turn to appeal to Rome on behalf of the archbishop-elect. This and the four following letters were probably sent soon after that. Richard himself later went to Rome, and was consecrated by Alexander III on April 7, 1174.

2 Archbishop Thomas was canonized on March 12, 1173. The bull "Redollet Anglia" is printed in Becket Materials vii.547.
the Church have been outlawed for a long time and forced to go into exile dressed "as sheep for the slaughter;"\(^3\) "we are made a spectacle to God and to men and to angels,"\(^4\) and the song of the persecuters of Christ all the day long.\(^5\) The blood of martyrs shed among us bears witness to these facts, but especially that which, calling to God from the earth, is held in devotion by the faithful throughout the whole world.

But blessed be God, blessed be your apostolate which has comforted us in our sorrow through the efforts of our Lord Cardinals,\(^6\) with the aid of God's grace, so that after the hardships of such a shipwreck the Church might seem to be coming to the port of freedom that is her due, and be able to immolate in safety to its God the abominations of the Egyptians.\(^7\)

Recently an order was published that elections would be held in the kingdom, and that our Lord King, yielding to their pleas, had ordered pastors who are worthy in the eyes of God to be appointed to the churches. All rejoiced, but we especially for whom the decision had the greatest importance beyond all others. We we met very frequently with the bishops who were summoned from the provinces and the others who had part in the elections, and finally, through God who guided our steps\(^8\) according to His will, all

\(^3\) Psalms 43.22; Romans 8.36

\(^4\) I Corinthians 4.9

\(^5\) Lamentations 3.14

\(^6\) Cardinals Albert and Theodwin, cf. Becket Materials vii.552

\(^7\) Exodus 8.26

\(^8\) Hebrews 12.13
were united with one mind and one soul.\(^9\) Not without divine approval could it have happened that such diverse inclinations could be united so easily in fulfilling the form of the sacred canons. And so, with the hopes and prayers of the people leading the way, with a common desire and unanimous consent we agreed upon a man of whom the Lord seems to have said to us: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;"\(^10\) elect him, for I have elected him the vicar of my martyr--whom he loved in truth while he was suffering for Me, and devoutly cared for, and with whom he faithfully lived in My house from the time he came of age--I command that he be appointed his successor. He is Richard, a monk of our Church since his youth, and raised to all the orders among us, the Prior of the monastery of Dover, outstanding for his good manners and learning, modest in his speech, farseeing in his plans, discreet in what he does, showing in his dress and carriage the true picture of a temperate soul. He fulfills his office of priest very exactly, the zeal of Christ burns in his heart, he generously opens his hand to the needy,\(^11\) practices liberality joyfully, and he takes care of the outside needs in a most praiseworthy way. Is it so surprising, then, that all agreed most willingly upon such a distinguished and great man; a man who should have been placed in office by force if he could not be had in any other way?

And so when his election had been completed freely and according to the

\(^9\) Acts 4.32  
\(^10\) Matthew 3.17  
\(^11\) Proverbs 31.20
law of the sacred canons, the royal approval (as is the custom) was given, and a loud outcry of universal approval followed after the electors, and the whole Church began to resound with the praise of God that is His due. The bishops from the provinces and those who were elected for the other churches accompanied the Archbishop-elect to the metropolitan see, and he was solemnly enthroned according to the rite of the nation and the customs of the ancients. His consecration which was pleasing to God and desired by men, was about to begin when suddenly and without warning a letter was brought bearing the name of the young King. In this letter he declared that he protested against the election which did not have his approval. The letter was shown to be open to suspicion for various reasons and definite indications, and it was the opinion of many that no faith should be placed in it, especially in a matter of such great importance when liberty and the salvation of souls could be endangered, and the affliction of the Church and the irreparable loss of its possessions could be protracted. It would take too long to list the reasons, but at any rate it should have been possible to presume that the King would not want the Church to be held prisoner any longer to his own danger and the temporal advantage of his enemies.

Although that previously mentioned letter did not seem to be of any importance to the wiser men among us, and the authority of the few it was settled that the consecration should be put off out of respect for your name because of the humility and devotion of Archbishop-elect, as well as loyalty, which we recall our fathers and forefathers have always had for the Church of Rome. For we certainly hope that the sad condition of our Church will find all the greater favor in the eyes of your goodness now that you see the
very great respect being shown for you, even at such an irreparable loss to ourselves.

You know, Father, that a cruel and long-lived disaster has oppressed us far beyond the ordinary. You see how sad these times have been, and how dangerous, we fear, are the times that are threatening us. An irreparable destruction is coming (and may God avert it!), we fear the return of the tempest, and our great necessity needs immediate assistance. And so, prostrate at the feet of your goodness, the pastor with the fulness of power who has been provided for us by God, we most earnestly implore you, and with us the whole Church of England implores you, to deign to use, according as it seems most useful to you, the strength of your apostolic authority against those who are trying to perpetuate the destruction of the churches, so that, relying on your apostolic support, and according as God directs you, you may be able to follow in the footsteps of your predecessors.

We implore you, I say, the Church implores you, and the glorious martyrs and confessors who are the patrons of our Church implore you, and together with all of them St. Thomas repeats and multiplies his prayers until your holiness will speak a good word to us, a word of comfort. The Spouse of Christ will weep in soiled garments, and there is no one who will be able to console her until she receives her Archbishop in the fulness of power. Because we are not able to wet your feet with our tears, as we want to, we will

12 The manuscript reading is eructuet. This occurs also in Psalms 44.2 in the Versio Latina Antiqua; see Sabatier ad locum, Bibl. Sacr. Lat. ers. antiqu. II.91. This is noted by C. C. J. Webb in his edition of the Policraticus, vol. ii, 353.
wet our cheeks with them, and there will not be any cessation of them until, under the merciful God, the right hand of your grace wipes them away.
LETTER 314/318

BISHOP BARTHOLOMEW OF EXETER TO POPE ALEXANDER III

To his most excellent lord and beloved father Alexander, by the grace of God supreme pontiff, from Bartholomew, Bishop of Exeter, greetings:

For many reasons the Church of England rejoices in your apostolate beyond the ordinary, and if for no other reason then because you have won its gratitude in a way that surpasses the favor of the others, since you ordered the glorious martyr of Christ to be included among the ranks of the Saints, and also because the hope of your assistance, through the efforts of your legates, has brightened our troubled churches so that they may dare to hope more confidently for complete freedom. Among them our holy mother Church of Canterbury, which is honored by the blood of so many and such great martyrs, and which from the very beginning has always exposed itself to dangers for the sake of justice, for the liberty of the Church and out of faithfulness to the Apostolic See, now at last, with the divine mercy corresponding to

1 SUMMARY: Bishop Bartholomew also appeals to the Pope against the interference of the young king Henry in the election of Prior Richard of Dover to the archbishopric of Canterbury. This and the following three letters were written at the same time as letter 313, in June, 1173.

2 Archbishop Thomas was canonized on March 12, 1173.

3 Cardinals Albert and Theodwin
its just merits, may seem to have come to the end of its shipwreck after its labor, after its losses, after its innumerable disasters, which it would be superfluous to enumerate since the whole Christian world knowns of them. Recently, when those who live in the primatial see, together with the suffragan bishops from the provinces and all who had a right to take part in the election had come together, and with the desire and prayer of the people leading the way, the whole Church freely and according to the laws of the sacred canons elected a man to be its father and pastor with unanimous consent—a man whose life bears witness to his conscience and example, whose learning bears witness to his manner of life, and whose eloquence bears witness to his knowledge, namely, Richard, a monk of the Church of Canterbury, Prior of the monastery of Dover, the care of which he has undertaken in a very praiseworthy way for many years, and who was so faithful to the outlawed athlete of Christ who struggled in want for the liberty of the Church that he is now considered worthy to succeed him.

And so, having sought the approval of the King, the bishops from the provinces came to the metropolitan see according to custom to undertake the function of consecration, as their office as well as necessity required. But under the instigation of the old enemy, as it seemed to many, who was jealous of the profit to souls, an unexpected letter that was written in the name of the young King was delivered to us in which he declared he would appeal to your court against the elections which did not have his approval. Although the letter seemed to be subject to suspicion for various reasons it would take too long to enumerate, and although it was the opinion of many that it ought not be a cause of delay in the consecration that should have taken
place—especially in a time of such great need—nevertheless, the Church decided to refer the matter to your majesty, confidently hoping to find all the more favor before the Apostolic See according as it humbly endeavored to show greater honor and reverence for it, even with so much danger to itself and at a time of such evident necessity.

Therefore, because prolonging the Church's distress is the same as if the perpetual distress of itself and the other Churches were being brought about, prostrate at the feet of your grace we implore you most earnestly to make the Church of England and ourselves rejoice in your heavenly (as we hope) elected pastor, and put in the place of St. Thomas a man whom he found faithful in the time of difficulties.

May the trials of the suffering Church move you, Father, may the prayers of your children move you, and may the reverence of the most glorious martyr, whom we believe is praying that a worthy successor be put in his place over the Church of Canterbury, move you.
LETTER 315/311
JOHN TO POPE ALEXANDER III

The Church of England cries to you from the ends of the earth to lessen the sufferings of that Church in distress which beyond all others of the West has been founded and strengthened in the blood of martyrs, and extended through the sufferings of confessors, and asks you to command its Archbishop-elect, whom it finally obtained through the effective efforts of your legates, to govern it with the fulness of powers after his consecration. The bishops and abbots and clergy and people ask this, and it is not right for my own insignificant request to be missing from among their pleas and voices. And, in fact, my mother herself, the Church of Canterbury, has explained to you very fully the form of the election which was confirmed by the assent and testimony of both bishops and those who were elected to the government of the vacant churches. Such a large number of great men have spoken of the merits of the Archbishop-elect that every adverse suspicion of either the Archbishop-elect or the election should be dispelled. And because the election was canonical and the one elected is worthy of acceptance on every count, we cannot believe that the consecration of such a man should casually be put off for any other reason than that he might be the more gloriously distinguished and have greater influence when he receives the support of your Holiness.

SUMMARY: John writes to the pope on behalf of the archbishop-elect of Canterbury. Cf. summary of letter 313.
I fear to speak at any greater length to your Majesty, especially since my crude style of writing detracts from the excellence of the subject matter, and an inadequate intellect and halting tongue might fail to express properly all the obvious merits of the cause which it has taken up. May the Holy Ghost instruct your Holiness to accomplish the hopes of the faithful in the way that is best for the Church, and to aid your cause even further by your immediate action—which we do not presume to ask.

If my pen has gone beyond the proper limits, most serene Father, let it be attributed to the necessity that knows not how to be restrained within laws, and not to the person, for our trials have been multiplied beyond number. Mary your Holiness always be well and flourish.
LETTER 316/312

JOHN TO ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM OF SENS

To the venerable master and beloved father William, by the grace of God Archbishop of Sens and Legate of the Apostolic See, his John of Salisbury sends greetings and hopes for the continued happy fulfillment of all his desires:

The healthy condition of the body is not maintained unless the members remain joined to the head, and it has justly been shown that every public enemy of the Church is opposed to its advancement. And so, because it is evident that I am a member of the holy Church of Canterbury, although one of little moment, it is necessary for me, in so far as I am able, to add my voice to the prayers of the others, and with all my energy to strive after that towards which the endeavors of the greater members have been directed. And certainly your Holiness has always assisted that same Church in her difficulties: the glorious martyr completed his struggle under the supporting title of your favor, and the clergy was refreshed by the assistance that was so long desired.

For when our Lord the King of England notified the bishops and clergy of the above-mentioned Church through his officials that he had freely granted

1 SUMMARY: John requests Archbishop William of Sens to appeal to the pope on behalf of archbishop-elect Richard of Canterbury, not only because Richard is worthy of the office, but the more so because he (John) has been reported as attempting to impede Richard's consecration through the influence of Archbishop William himself. For the date of the letter cf. summary of letter 313.
them permission at last to elect an archbishop for themselves, through the unanimous desire of those who live in the primatial Church as well as that of the others, they canonically agreed upon a man whose learning, under the guidance of divine grace, will bear witness to his doctrine, whose life will serve as an example, whose excellent manners will win the favor of those who live with him, whose eloquence will profitably spread the word of faith. In fact, we confidently hope that his most holy patron, whom he always loved and respected, will help him in times of need, and will arrange it that he, whom he seems to have elected his successor and called to his labors, will advance to a share in his reward and glory.

He is that worthy man Richard, formerly Prior of the Church of Dover, in whose behalf I kneel at the feet of your Holiness with all the respect of which I am capable, and beg that your Excellency will kindly extend to him the strength of your favor and the help of your advice, and that, with the assistance we desire, you will relieve the labors and difficulties of that Church you have drawn from shipwreck into the harbor of safety. And so, if your esteemed person can accomplish it, may it finally come about that the Archbishop-elect will enjoy the fulness of power after his consecration, so that he may be able to offer the proper service to God and help to the poor.

It is, most blessed and beloved Father, all the more necessary for me to ask this of you since certain individuals, to my great danger, dared to lie about how I must have impeded the consecration before you and through you. But God, and your clear conscience and mine, know that this is altogether untrue.
And so may it please your Holiness, who are aware of my innocence in this matter, to prove its blamelessness out of divine mercy whenever it is most convenient for you, so that God may protect you and yours from all danger.
LETTER 317/321
JOHN TO CARDINAL BOSO

To the venerable lord and most beloved father Boso, by the grace of God cardinal-priest of the Holy Roman Church, his John of Salisbury sends greetings and his respectful and ready devotion:

The friendship which your beloved person has always shown for the men of Canterbury since the days of our Lord Pope Lucius gives me such great confidence in coming before you that I can confidently explain to your Excellency what, I am certain, will best serve your difficulty and your salvation. You will remember more than the others, since you learned the affairs of the Church of Rome better than the others, how the Church of Canterbury has always shown faithfulness and devotion to the apostolic see almost beyond all others in the world. For you recall how Theobald of happy memory, Archbishop of that same Church and your friend and confident, suffered to protect the right of the Church and the constitution of the Apostolic See, and how the Church has always had archbishops who were either martyrs or outstanding confessors.


2 Cf. summary of letter 68.

3 Pope Lucius II, who reigned from March 12, 1144 to November 15, 1145

4 Cf. letters 48 and 69
Therefore, because I am certain that you have the greatest esteem for the cause of the Church, I send you with the greatest affection all the prayers that one may to his father and master, that you will accept the Archbishop-elect with the same charity and protect him with the same care as that with which you used to favor our former archbishops—a man, we hope, who will be a fitting successor to such great predecessors and, God willing, as devoted to you at all times, for he, in so far as he is able, will not be found to be less obedient to you than those who went before him.
LETTER 318/313

JOHN TO CARDINALS ALBERT AND THEODWIN

To the Reverend Lords and beloved Fathers in Christ, Albert and Theodwin, Cardinal-priests of the Church of Rome and Legates of the Apostolic See, from John of Salisbury, a servant of their holinesses, greetings and the service of his ready devotion and reverence:

Under the guidance of divine grace and your cooperation the hope of consolation has beamed upon the Church, and it was finally granted that we could appoint suitable pastors for the vacant sees among us. And so it came about that the Church of Winchester elected as its father and pastor a man whom, as the faithful hope, the Lord had preselected to this office, for he is, for the most part, such a one as Paul ordered to be appointed a bishop. He is Richard, the most devoted son of the Church of Rome, formerly the Archdeacon of Poitiers, whose alms are a comfort to the churches of the saints, whose possessions are the relief of the needy, whose strength is the stronghold of justice and the banishment of injustice. For he is a man who is wise in his

1 SUMMARY: John commends Bishop-elect Richard of Winchester to Cardinals Albert and Theodwin, the papal legates, and asks them to secure his consecration. This letter and the four following letters were written at the earliest in May, 1173, for Richard was elected at the end of April, 1173. Cf. summary of letter 313. Richard was consecrated on October 6, 1174, by Archbishop Richard of Canterbury.

2 I Timothy 3; Titus 1.7

3 Ecclesiasticus 31.11

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plans, discreet in his work, modest in speech, whose industry and affection, I believe, you yourselves might at some time have experienced. For he is believed to have turned towards God with his whole mind in such a way that he despises all his possessions in comparison with the law of the Lord, and is prepared, in time of necessity, to offer himself as a sacrifice to God.

His election was held first in the episcopal see, was solemnly approved afterwards in the meeting of the bishops, and the royal assent confirmed both election and approbation.

And so may it please your Holinesses to complete what you have so laudably begun, and to arrange it in some way, and with all haste, that he might be able to discharge the office of his divine calling after having received the fulness of power. For, God willing, he will be the strongest column in the house of the Lord, and will be able to provide for the needs of his own and of other churches most ably.
LETTER 319/314

JOHN TO CARDINAL HUMBALD, BISHOP OF OSTIA

To the venerable Lord and most beloved Father Humbald, by the grace of God Bishop of Ostia, from John of Salisbury, greetings and the submission of his full devotion:

I would fear to address so great a majesty did not your kindness lift me up, and the memory of that true charity which, almost beyond all other mortals, you had for that most holy confessor, now a glorious martyr, with whom the divine mercy made me a co-exile for the sake of the liberty of the Church, give me courage. Strengthened with this confidence I dare to commend most earnestly to your Holiness a man without doubt worthy of commendation, Richard, Bishop-elect of Winchester, whose possessions are the support of the needy, the comfort of the churches, whose strength is the destruction of injustice and the stronghold of justice. He loved your friend, the glorious martyr of Christ, with such affection that he made himself his servant; he comforts his followers, many of whom flee to him in their needs, and he tries with all his soul to imitate him.

And so, prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, I beg most earnestly in my name and the names of those who were exiled with us, that your grace will further the cause of St. Thomas. For with the greatest devotion he has dedicated all that he possesses, and even himself, to that most glorious martyr whom he has chosen as his patron.

LETTER 320/315

JOHN TO GRATIAN, NOTARY OF THE POPE¹

The truth of Christ, which the world has known to be in you more than in the others who were sent to settle the affair of St. Thomas, gives me the courage to dare to recommend with confidence to your Reverence those who were obviously devoted to the aforesaid martyr. One of these, and one to be included among the very first, is that venerable man Richard, Bishop-elect of Winchester, formerly the Archdeacon of Poitiers, the father of the poor and comforter of them that mourn,² a defender of the liberty of the Church, supporter of justice and enemy of iniquity as far as the circumstances permit, and even more, so that the violence of evil men often flares up against him as he fights, and not without danger, for the Lord. He is a man devoted to the Apostolic See, and one whose friendship is able to serve your honor. And, in fact he is anxious that his dutiful industry might aid you in some way, and he will consider it a great honor if your Reverence should ever desire to commit any task to him.

And so, because he has been properly summoned to the government of the Church and for the comfort of many according to God, kneeling at the feet of

1 SUMMARY: John writes to Gratian, the Pope's notary, on behalf of Bishop-elect Richard of Winchester. Cf. summary of letter 318.
2 Job 29.16, 25
your Reverence I beg with all the earnestness of which I am capable that you will consider his person and his cause very strongly recommended, and so will further his cause according as you know it to be useful to the needs of the Church of England. He has sworn his whole being, as we certainly hope, to be of service to Christ, and is prepared to offer even his own life as a victim for the good of the Church.

Farewell.
LETTER 321/316

BISHOP BARTHOLOMEW OF EXETER TO POPE ALEXANDER III

Just as it has always been the custom of the most Holy Roman Church to expel all unworthy officials from the guidance of churches, so also does it summon suitable individuals to the care of the pastoral office, and extend to them its influence and protection. Surely the Church of Winchester was exposed to many great dangers while it was without a pastor, until, as we hope, a heavenly sent consolation was granted it when a pastor who is acceptable to God was elected, and upon whom, if you please, it is fitting that you bestow the further kindness of your favor. He is your most devoted son Richard, formerly the Archdeacon of Poitiers, whose alms comfort the churches of the saints, whose possessions are the support of the needy, whose strength is the stronghold of justice and the destruction of iniquity. For he is a man who is wise in his planning, discreet in his undertakings, modest in speech, and who follows the norm of moderation in his dress and carriage. He is so completely turned towards the service of God (and we speak our true mind) that he is prepared to expend not only all that he possesses but even life itself for the sake of the law of the Lord.

1 SUMMARY: Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter commends the bishop-elect of Winchester to Pope Alexander. From the wording of the letter it is evident that it was written by John in the name of the bishop. John also undoubtedly wrote Letters 313, 314, 322, 323 and 326. For the date cf. letter 318.
This is our sincere belief, Father, and we are led to believe what we say because of many and certain indications. The whole Church of Winchester freely decided upon him, and after he was canonically elected the royal approval was given him in the presence of ourselves and our brethren. When our Lord Cardinals, your Legates,\(^2\) were informed of this they were greatly pleased, as we learn from their letter. And rightly so, for no other one appeared to be so well equipped to restore the ruins of the aforesaid Church, and to establish as effectively among us the full vigor of the Apostolic See.

And so we beg you, Father, to make haste in furthering his cause so that, after accepting his office, he might be able better and more effectively to settle the troubles of the Church, and to promote what is advantageous to it.

Farewell.

\(^2\) Cardinals Albert and Theodwin
We recommend to you with greater confidence those whom we sincerely love and whom we believe to have a very sincere love for the Church of Rome. One of these, and almost the first among the first, is the father of the poor and comforter of them that mourn, our protector in our trials, our venerable brother Richard, the Bishop-elect of Winchester, whom, as the faithful hope, Christ has elected to the government of His own Church to overcome the enemies who oppose Him, and to set himself up as a wall for the house of Israel, and to destroy the enemies of justice with strength, and to give the just the protection which is their due.

And so, prostrate at the feet of your Majesty, all of us sincerely beg you to advance him with all haste to the task of providing for the needs of his Church, and to make him the comforter of others, and that the support of your favor will come in answer to his prayers, which he will direct to the Lord alone.

Farewell.

1 SUMMARY: The monks of Canterbury also write to the pope on behalf of the bishop-elect of Winchester. Cf. summary of letter 318.

2 Job 29.16, 25

3 Ezechiel 13.5
LETTER 323/317

BISHOP BARTHOLOMEO OF EXETER TO POPE ALEXANDER III

The life of the members is derived from the head, and the health of all the churches flows from the holy Church of Rome after God. Our Lord Cardinals, your legates, having pity on the churches among us that were without pastors, sternly commanded them to put aside every pretext and delay and elect for themselves fathers and pastors who were pleasing to God. And so the Church of Hereford, which had long sorrowed and languished without its own pastor, through a just vote and unanimous consent freely and according to the precepts of the holy canons elected the venerable Robert, Archdeacon of Oxford and a canon of this Church, a man who is outstanding both for his way of life and his learning, born of noble parents, an expert in either law, and one who knew how to rule his own house and take care of the problems of the Church of God, a man who is pleasing and of good reputation before all men. The royal approval was given to his election in the presence of our-

1 SUMMARY: Bishop Bartholomew of Exeter urges the consecration of Robert Foliot, bishop-elect of Hereford. The letter was written at the earliest in May 1173, for Robert was elected at the meeting held in London at the end of April 1173. Cf. summary of letter 313. He was consecrated at Canterbury on October 6, 1174, by Archbishop Richard.

2 The see had been vacant from the death of Robert of Melun on February 2, 1167.
selves and our brothers, and all of us rejoiced and were strengthened by that fact, and gratitude was expressed by all who heard of it.

And so, prostrate at the feet of your Grace, we sincerely beg you to advance him quickly to the task of caring for the needs of his own as well as those of other churches.

Farewell.
If those who give their consent\(^2\) are equally guilty with those who commit the crime, it is evident that they must be likened to liars who withhold their testimony to the truth when they see many threatened with a terrible danger because of the dishonesty of evil-doers. And consequently, I believed it my duty to write to your Holiness of what is known to almost all men in our part of the world about the cause of your son H., Archdeacon of Northampton, against whom those men are setting traps who speak peace with their neighbors in this way in order to plot evils in their hearts.\(^3\) For during the vacancy of the Church of Lincoln,\(^4\) (which, I hope, will receive a suitable pastor through your efforts under the guidance of God,) and with the King's consent, and even at his request, he canonically and solemnly received the archdeaconry of Northampton. But while the deacon was vesting

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1 SUMMARY: John writes to Pope Alexander on behalf of Archdeacon Herbert of Northampton, whose enemies are attempting to deprive him of his archdeaconry. This letter is edited for the first time. It was probably written in June 1175, after the council at Westminster on May 18, 1175. Le Neve's Fasti list Herbert as archdeacon in 1174-1175, ed. Hardy ii.55.

2 Romans 1.32; II Thessalonians 2.12; Gratian, Decr. II 17 qu. 5, c.f, C.I.C. ed. Freidberg, i.816.

3 Psalms 27.3

4 The see became vacant on the death of Robert Chesney, January 26, 1168. Geoffrey Plantagenet, Henry's natural son, was elected to the see at the end of April 1173 at the age of 19, but was never consecrated. He resigned the see on January 6, 1182 and in 1189 became archbishop of York.
him, as is the custom among vacant churches, and the canons offering their congratulations, he became aware that traps were being set for him by those whose driving ambition makes them attempt to break into the sheepfold of Christ in some way other than through the gate; and what they were unable to obtain in this way they were anxious to acquire through secret schemes.

Lest, therefore, through their trickery and deceit they be able to snatch away the blessing God had conferred upon him, he placed himself and all his possessions under the apostolic protection, and appealed to your court against his rivals and detractors, first before the Bishop of Worcester, and then in the solemn meeting before the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

Many great men who justly and deservedly should be heard for their reverence have pleaded for him, and I, although I am but dust and ashes, kneeling before my father, I beg you with all the warmth of which I am capable to hear their voice and mine. The aforesaid Archdeacon, by reason of his good morals and learning, his zeal for the faith and generosity, and the respect he has for the Church of Rome, appears to be worthy not only of that honor but of even greater ones; and you would certainly reduce his rivals to nothing if you but knew them well.

Farewell.

5 Roger Fitz Count, Bishop of Worcester 1164-1179.

6 This is probably the council held at Westminster on May 18, 1175. Cf. Gervase of Canterbury, ed. Stubbs, i.251 ff.
LETTER 325/F
JOHN TO PRIORS ODO AND WILLIAM BRITO AND THE
MONKS OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

To his respected lords and dearest friends in Christ, Odo the Prior and
William the Sub-prior and all the brothers who serve the Lord in the Church
of Canterbury, from John of Salisbury, the least of the priests of Christ,
greetings and the respectfulness of his sincere love:

We cannot remain silent about the glory of God, especially in what per-
tains to the edification of the whole Church, and the consolation of those of
us to whom it was once divinely granted to be among the intimate friends of
St. Thomas. Recently, when the King held a solemn meeting of the French
bishops and noblemen at Bourges, the honorable gentleman Pontius, one time
Abbot of Clairvaux and now Bishop of Clermont, who had returned from England

1 SUMMARY: John relates two miracles of St. Thomas reported at Bourges by
Bishop Pontius of Clermont and by the canons of Saint-Outrille.
This letter occurs in the sixth book of William of Canterbury's
Miracula S. Thomae, cf. Becket Materials i.485. It may be dated
in 1175, some time before Prior Odo's election to the abbacy of
Battle on July 10, (cf. Gervase of Canterbury, ed. Stubbs,
i.256) and after the collection of the first five books of the
Miracles by William of Canterbury, which, according to Walberg,
was accomplished in 1174. Cf. Walberg, Date de la composition
des recueils de Miracula S. Thomae Cantuariensis, Moyen Age,
2e serie, t. xxii (1920), p. 259-274.

2 Pontius, Bishop of Clermont, 1170-1189
a few days before, began to speak in the presence of the King and the Archbishops of Bourges\(^3\) and Sens\(^4\) and the bishops and noblemen of the miracles that the Lord was performing in Arvernia in memory of St. Thomas. And when he was asked whether or not he had witnessed with his own eyes any miracle to which he would dare give testimony in the truth of his rank, he replied:

"There was a noble soldier in our city by the name of John Scotus who had as large an income in the city as the bishop. He was stricken with leprosy in the judgment of the clergy and people, and was segregated from the public according to custom, and even from the noble wife he had married; abandoned by all, he remained by himself for a long time. Finally hearing of the miracles of St. Thomas, he set off for Canterbury, and after a period of six months he was cured by St. Thomas, and returned in good health to his family and possessions, taking up the administration of his affairs with his wife to the delight of his friends. And so we asked him to present himself for the examination of our Lord the King and his assembly to increase the glory of the martyr. But he replied that he would not, because it distressed him to have anyone know that he had been a leper."

When they had heard this story, and while our Lord the King and all the others gave thanks to God, Count Theobald\(^5\) stated that this same John would be made a leper in the future because of his lack of gratitude, for he was ashamed to give honor to God. While all who had heard this wondered and

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\(^3\) Guarin Gerardi Archbishop of Bourges, 1174-1180

\(^4\) William of Champagne archbishop of Sens, 1168-1176

\(^5\) Count Theobald V of Blois
gave thanks, praising the glory of God and speaking over and over again of
the merits of the martyr, dwelling upon his generosity, his kindness and
magnanimity towards men, his faith, his zeal for the law, the constancy of
the trust he had always had in God from the moment of his advancement, the
canons of Saint-Ourtrille of Bourges cried out before the assembly: "God
has also been merciful to us, and Blessed Thomas has rewarded well the kind-
ness we showed him while he remained as a guest among us in the days of his
exile and proscription, while our Lord the Pope stayed in the city." They
urged the chanter to tell the miracle that was well-known among the clergy
and people of Bourges, and which had been performed in favor of Saint-
Ourtrille. Then the chanter began to speak in this way: "There was a young
man in the service of our Church by the name of Butecius, and he still is
in the castle of Saint-Ourtrille. He was stricken with cancer and was on the
brink of death. For the small branches that continually spread out from the
diseased root of his ailment had by that time broken out in many places upon
the neck, shoulders, sides, hands and feet of the poor lad; 'and from the
sole of the foot unto the top of his head there was no soundness in him.'
He employed every possible means for a cure; he kept going to doctors, but
they could do him no good. He traveled around to all the shrines of the
Saints of France, and finally those of Lesser Brittany, in which the power
of curing such a disease was believed to reside, and he returned to his own
without hope. What more could be done? Finally hearing of the miracles of
St. Thomas he set off for Canterbury and had a drop of the sacred liquid

2 Isaias 1.6
poured into his wounds. When this was done such a burning pain seized his whole body, both inside and out, and continued for several days, that he believed he would die almost any hour. When the solemnity of Pentecost was approaching, however, he fell asleep; and received a complete relief in memory of the martyr. For it happened that all pain left him, and his disease was cured and his wounds healed at the same time, with only the scars and a pleasant change of skin left, which remain to this day as a proof of his true deliverance." The chanter narrated these facts according to the testimony of the crowd that surrounded him, and aroused all to praise the mercy of God and the great works of His martyr.

Since all these events were made public by such a solemn recital and an irrefutable testimony, I thought they must be written to your Holiness, so that the glory of God might extend your works, too, and increase the due honor of the martyr. I believe that respect for him consists especially in this, that the cause which he considered more precious than his own life, that is, the integrity of the divine law and the liberty of holy Church, should be continually defended and remain intact. Otherwise it is ridiculous, and even absolutely damnable, to venerate the person of any man, no matter how just he may be, and to oppose the cause of God for which he was justified.

May the Most High preserve your Holiness for a long time. Remember me in your prayers.
LETTER 326/310

BISHOPS BARTHOLOMEW OF EXETER AND ROGER OF EXETER TO

POPE ALEXANDER III

To the most holy lord and beloved father Alexander, by the grace of God Supreme Pontiff, from Bartholomew of Exeter and Roger of Worcester, the delegated Bishops, and C., the delegated Abbot of Faversham, greetings and full obedience with the greatest reverence:

We received the commission of your holiness, and arriving together at the monastery of St. Augustine we looked into the truth of the reports concerning the squandering of the possessions of the Church, the irregularities of the elected Clarembald, the corruption of the order and the loss of its good manner of life, and the other evils which you heard of through the complaint of the convent as taking place because of the neglect or malice of the same elected Abbot. We have striven in every way to restore the monastery to its former state for the glory of God. You also strictly commanded us that if we judged that the state of the Church could not be reformed without the removal of the elected Abbot and certain monks, then, put-

1 SUMMARY: The Bishops of Exeter and Worcester and the Abbot of Faversham, who had been appointed by Alexander III to investigate conditions at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, report their findings to the Pope and strongly recommend the removal of Abbot Clarembald, who had been intruded into the abbacy as a layman by King Henry in 1163. The letter was probably written late in 1175 or early in 1176; Clarembald was deposed by Alexander in a bull dated from Anagni on May 25, 1176, cf Historia Monasterii S. Augustini, ed. Hardwick, pp. 413-415.
ting aside all fear and human respect, we were under no condition to delay in
removing the elected Abbot and the others by your authority, with every ex­
cuse and right of appeal ceasing, and to put in their place men who were up­
right and useful in the eyes of God. In this way your care and ours might
find favor before God and men by reason of the fruit of the monastery that
had been reformed for the better. You directed your commands to that re­
peatedly mentioned elected Prior so that, with every excuse and right of
appeal revoked, he would submit to the judgment of us who had no jurisdiction
over him except by reason of your delegation.

When your letter was presented to him in the presence of the brethern,
he finally ordered a chanter to open and read it. Before it was read
through he said that he and his possessions remained under your protection,
and that those who had decided to use the letter were to appeal to your
court, as we afterwards learned from witnesses who were under a properly
administered oath and by the account of the convent, that is, of fifty-two
monks. Afterwards he returned to the meeting of the brethern and heard your
command read through.

Certainly the rumor among the people corresponded to the reports which
were brought to you, so much so that no person in the province doubted that
the great number of the elected Abbot's excesses (we will not say his crimes,
too) quieted the complaints of the monks. Nearly everybody considered it
strange that you had turned your eyes, which you should keep upon the whole
world, towards the ruin and tears of your house at such a late hour.

And so, when we received your letter, we spared neither our exertions
nor expenses, but making haste to obey you, and putting aside fear as you had
commanded, we came to the monastery from our respective provinces on a suitable day agreed on beforehand. But we learned, as it became evident under the solemn oath of the older and wiser part of the community, that the frequently mentioned elected Abbot in an offense against your commands and to the disaster of the monastery, after making off with ornaments and books and no little money, had chosen flight, intending to go to some power which would be able to oppose God and the apostolic see. So we labored all the harder to get to the truth according as we learned from the statement of very many that before he had undertaken his flight he told several who were listening to him that he had not received his abbacy from the Roman Pontiff, but only the care of a few souls in which he took no interest. Moreover he had no anxiety about his temporal goods, for the Roman Pontiff was unable to take away from him what he possessed from another.

On that account we found their possessions so squandered that we rightly despair of their restoration during the life time of ourselves or our co-evals. It is a pitiful sight for those who view it to see the decay and destruction of the Church, the cloister and workshops exposed to the rains and the winds, and the ruin of the buildings. It is a torture for an upright man to listen to the suffering of the Church's tenants which were brought upon them by the avarice and robbery of that elected Abbot (or better, by that man rejected by God). He disposed illegally of many estates, and, what makes it all the worse, is found to have sold the patrimony of his Patron Christ, in the most shameful dealings, to those who approved of his uncleanness and disgraceful behavior. He took the seal of the Church away from the brethren so he could validate as he chose his unjust sales and rentings. The money of
the monastery, which he gave as security to Jewish and Christian usurers in
the name of the Church, he increased to an amount that was immense and al-
most incapable of being handled. There was a civil war because the monastery
refused its leader the goods that he planned to sell, and, as it is known
among the people, he threw a military seige around the monastery, and tried
to obtain what he wanted by means of starvation. Hospitality, which once
flourished in that house, vanished during his days. The practice of religion
as far as he and his close friends were concerned, ceased altogether. He
turned the cloister into what amounted to a public road for his young friends
and servants, whom he organized in his own way, that is, after the manner of
an army, while those who were more religiously inclined grieved and objected.
He openly accepted money for those who were going to become monks, and,
completely setting aside all your decrees and those of the Fathers, he would
not admit a soul into the monastery until that individual had filled his
hand with filthy lucre. It cannot be denied that he received seventy marks
from one of these, and wasted them so irregularly that it is better not to
mention how right now. What he received from the faithful during his rule
for the building of the Church and the repairing of the buildings came to a
very great sum, but despising the need of the Church he turned all of it to
bad use. The monks complained that the good customs of the house, which were
probably begun and kept up by the fathers, were to a very large extent abol-
ished by him, and there was not a soul who could deny it. The great and
respected convent of monks was greatly diminished.

We fear that we would offend the ears of your Holiness if we told you
of his incontinence, which (as it is commonly said) was known to the pur-
blind and barbers; but no matter how much a shamed sense of decency is opposed to it, we cannot remain silent about those facts which, if they remained untold, would bring ruin to good morals and disgrace upon the Apostolic See, to which that house is said to belong in a special way. Perhaps our lips will be soiled in the recounting of them, for they are concerned with the foulest material, but, God willing, the live coal which the Seraphim will send to us from the altar will purify them especially so since this is not our account but that of the people, which no one can dare deny, unless he does not fear to include a mistaken man and a liar among us.

That elected Abbot (or rather that base stallion) had issue of seed and neighed after women, which the Book of Leviticus condemns, and was so shameless that one would not conceive of his burning lust had he not published it. He defiled mothers and daughters alike, and was not afraid or ashamed to violate the sanctity of marriage. He likened the sin of fornication to a necessity. He was so common that within a few years his offspring had increased beyond the issue of the Patriarchs. Among those who attested to his disgraceful behavior, and there was a very great number of them, one very religious priest, whose sincerity no one could doubt, told us that in one country and its environs he had fathered seventeen illegitimate children. How many he had in other places would take too long to recount, and could not

2 Horace, Sat. 1.7,3
3 Isaias 6.6
4 Ecclesiasticus 33.6
5 Numbers 5.2. The reference to Leviticus is a slip of John's.
be determined by us. Finally, to bring to a close the description of this impurity, God knows, and the Spirit that watches over our soul knows, that we have never heard of so much foulness nor experienced such an offensive odor coming from any man who bore the name and habit of religion. The entire convent opposed him, as did the clergy and populace of the country.

Therefore, because we clearly realized that this condition could not be cleared up without his removal, and we were bound to act according to your command, who had ordered us to remove him with every excuse and right of appeal withdrawn if we found such a state of affairs, relying on the authority of God and yourself, and putting aside fear and favor, we removed him; and we have released the brethren from his obedience, and the laymen from submission to him, decreeing also that the approved rules of his predecessors should again be observed in their entirety, respecting your authority in all matters. And so it will be a worthy work for God and your apostolate to strengthen what has been done, lest that diseased tree which was once pulled up might again fix its roots in your garden, and bring forth poisoned fruits to the shame of the Apostolic See and the disgrace of religion.

But when the sentence was passed all the monks sought pardon and absolution for a certain individual, namely G. Marescalco, and certain others who took part with the servants of the elected Abbot, for they left the monastery with other assassins and poured out the blood of the glorious martyr St. Thomas, and afterwards returned to him; but unwillingly, for they did not dare to resist outwardly their superior, whom they respected as an abbot and feared as a close friend of the King, when he openly gave them orders. And
we, weighing the sorrow of their hearts and the articles of our orders, and yet presuming of your mercy, determined a light penance for them in support of your clemency, and in the meantime we granted them all the absolution that we could, asking you to please write what else should be enjoined upon them.

Surely the need of the Church and the worth of the martyr strongly demand that both the assassins who spilled the precious blood as well as their accomplices and patrons should be very severely punished, so that their penance might frighten others. But your Holiness knows that whoever labors in the work of this reform is considered an enemy of God and a destroyer of the Church in our part of the world.

6 Judith 9.17
LETTER 327/323

KING LOUIS VII TO JOHN OF SALISBURY,

BISHOP-ELECT OF CHARTRES

Louis, by the grace of God King of the French, to his beloved friend Master John of Salisbury, Bishop-elect of Chartres, greetings and sincere love:

We are pleased and gratified both out of consideration for Blessed Thomas the martyr, whose close friendship you justly deserved, as well as out of consideration for your character and learning, that the chapter of Chartres, at the suggestion of the Lord Archbishop of Sens, the Legate of the Apostolic See, or rather, by divine intervention, as we believe, has solemnly and canonically elected you to be its pastor and Lord Bishop by an unanimous vote and consent. We advise your reverence of your election and beg you most earnestly that, in giving your kind consent to your election, you will hasten to acknowledge the very solemn and praiseworthy summons of so great a Church by your presence, so that our wish and that of the Arch-

I SUMMARY: King Louis summons John to accept the bishopric of Chartres, to which he had been elected in July, 1176 at the suggestion of Archbishop William of Sens. This letter arrived with the following letter on July 22, 1176.

2 William of Champagne, brother-in-law of King Louis, had by permission of the Pope continued to hold the bishopric of Chartres after his election to Sens in 1169, and was only now relinquishing it on his translation to Rheims.
bishop of Sens, who labored faithfully and efficiently to attain this end, will be no longer kept in suspense, and that the hope of the Church of Chartres will not be tormented by a longer delay.

Farewell
LETTER 328/324

THE CHAPTER OF CHARTRES TO JOHN OF SALISBURY,
BISHOP-ELECT OF CHARTRES

To their respected Lord and father John, by the grace of God Bishop-elect of Chartres, to take up the duties of his pastoral office to his salvation:

"That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." And so our soul doth magnify the Lord and our spirit hath rejoiced in God, because "flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but our Father Who is in heaven, the Orient on high visiting us," that you have been elected our pastor. Certainly only the Spirit of unity was able to unite such differing votes of men, so many diverse desires of hearts, so

1 SUMMARY: The Chapter of Chartres makes a formal offer of the bishopric to John. According to Gervase of Canterbury (ed. Stubbs, i.259) the letter was presented to John at Canterbury on July 22, 1176. He accepted and crossed the channel to be consecrated at Sens on August 8 by Bishop Maurice Sully of Paris. He held the see until his death on October 25, 1180.

2 John 3.6
3 Luke 1.46
4 Matthew 16.17
5 Luke 1.78
that it is clearly evident that he whom the Spirit revealed was heavenly chosen. We believe that the church of the Blessed Virgin brought a cause of happiness to its heavenly work, conceiving through the Holy Ghost, and has put forth a pastor beloved to God and men.

And so the Church of Chartres demands its beloved for itself by the approving votes of all, and longs for its beloved and its bishop-elect without delay, and wasting away out of love for its spouse, "Let him kiss me," it says, "with the kiss of his mouth."6

The love of Christ spurs him on who is sought for in the embraces of the daughter of the king, and he is pricked by wholesome pangs who is chosen the son-in-law of Christ to propagate the sons of God. He is ashamed to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven alone to whom the glorious pomp of the divine Son is promised, and who is believed to have deserved the golden crown, and may merit a halo by the labors of his glorious office.

Therefore, we send acceptable persons to you from our chapter, namely, the deacon, chanter and chancellor, who will express the mind of all of us to you, and addressing you personally, will inform you that we desire you to come.

6 Canticle of Canticles 1.1
LETTER 329/325

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO PHILIP THE DEAN,
AND THE CHAPTER OF ST. MARTIN, TOURS¹

From John, by the divine mercy, and the merits of St. Thomas the humble minister of the Church of Chartres, to Philip the Dean and the whole Chapter of Blessed Martin, greetings:

I do not believe that all of you are unaware of the controversy that is going on between the men of the borough of St. Martin² and R., our distinguished treasurer, over certain oaths or promises which the aforesaid men had secretly taken among themselves concerning the overthrow of the right of the said Church. Our Lord the Pope has commissioned us to hear it, and, with every right of objection and appeal ceasing, to bring it to its proper conclusion. Therefore, proceeding according to the apostolic command and the advice of religious and prudent men, and having ascertained the truth of the matter through the able testimony of venerable men beyond all suspicion, we have brought a sentence of excommunication through the apostolic authority which we have in this region against the said men both by reason of their apparent obstinacy as well as because of the said plot, the shamefulness of which has been proved by witnesses. We bind individually under

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1 SUMMARY: Bishop John informs the canons of St. Martin (Tours) of the excommunication of certain burghers of Chateauneuf, and orders the publication of the censure. The letter falls within the years 1176 and 1180.

2 The "borough of St. Martin," Chateauneuf (Tours)
the bond of excommunication those who we have heard are leaders of this group; upon all the rest who were accomplices in this plot we pass a general sentence of excommunication, not upon them individually, but upon the whole group. And so we are sending to you in our letter the specific names of those who are individually excommunicated: Reginald Meschin, Peter de Montebruis, Nicholas Engelard, Peter Aubert, Pagen Gastinelli, John Ermerard, Radulf de Fulchis, Radulf Thomas, Gilo Baldwin, Hernaudus Theon, John Theon, Fubert de Fulchis, Papin Roland, Peter Aimeri, Gilo Thomas, Gilo of Sens, Bartholomew de Lochis, Peter de Savoneri, Hardwin Pelliparius, Peter Chivittonus, Reginald Goslan, Juguelmus Cordoanarius, Hameric Epuliard, Sancio Emenard, Geoffrey de Cormeriaco, Bartholomew Fomaudi, Jocelyn Pelliparius, Herbert of Chartres, Bartholomew Attea, Thomas of Amboise.

And so we command you by the Apostolic authority to announce by name as excommunicated those whom we have excommunicated in a special way, and to promulgate the general excommunication we have passed upon the rest who were partners in the said plot as a group, and to have the said excommunicated men, in particular as well as general, frequently and solemnly announced in your Church by the priests at the lesser altars, or to force them to stop attending the divine services.
LETTER 330/B

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO PETER OD CANDE

John, by the divine mercy and the merits of Blessed Thomas the humble minister of the Church of Chartres, to Peter of Cande, greetings:

Every single deed is all the more acceptable to God and beneficial to its donor according as its purpose is better suited and more useful to the receiver. Consequently, looking after your good, we advise and warn you in the Lord not to force the monks of La Fontaine to celebrate Mass in your church of Landes in a way opposed to the rite of the Cistercian Order. Let the divine service which the monks have determined to say in the abbey itself for your welfare and that of your predecessors and successors suffice for your devotion.

Farewell.

1 SUMMARY: Bishop John warns Peter of Cande not to interfere with the divine service of the Cistercian monks of La Fontaine in their church at Landes. The letter falls within the years 1176 and 1180.
LETTER 331/A

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO ARCHBISHOP BARTOLOMÆW OF TOURS

To the venerable Lord and most beloved father Bartholomew,² by the grace of God Archbishop of Tours and Legate of the Apostolic See, from John, by the divine mercy, and the favor of St. Thomas the humble minister of the Church of Chartres, greetings and continual success in his desires:

It is a duty for the rectors of the Church to love religious very sincerely and to assist them out of their own resources, and to keep all harm far from them. And so I very earnestly entreat you out of your compassionate devotion to persuade Peter of Cande that all the richer share of mercy is granted to him for whom it is believed to be the more useful. Therefore advise and warn him in the Lord not to force the monks of La Fontaine to celebrate Mass in the Church of Landes in a way opposed to the rite of the Cistercian Order, since the said monks...in their own abbey for his salvation and that of his predecessors....

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1 SUMMARY: Bishop John requests Archbishop Bartholomæw of Tours to counsel Peter of Conde. Cf letter 330.

2 Bartholomæw de Vendome, Archbishop of Tours, 1174-1206.
LETTER 332/C

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO ARCHBISHOP RICHARD
AND THE MONKS OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY

To his venerable father and Lord Richard, by the grace of God Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England and Legate of the Apostolic See, and to his most beloved brothers and friends in Christ, Prior Harlewin, Archdeacon Herbert, and the Chapter and clergy of Canterbury, from John of Salisbury, formerly the clerk of Blessed Thomas the martyr, by the divine mercy and the merits of Blessed Thomas the martyr the humble administrator of the Church of Chartres, greetings and the affection of sincere love:

Just as many in different parts of the world, under the guidance of the devil and by means of a false explanation, tried to spread a shadow over the excellent works of the most Blessed Thomas while he was fighting for the law

1 SUMMARY: John informs Archbishop Richard and the monks of Canterbury of a miracle of St. Thomas which he had witnessed at Chartres. This letter was edited for the first time by Raymonde Foreville in 1936. See her article in the Revue d'Histoire de l'eglise de France, t. xxii, no 95, pp. 179-185. It is dated some time between the feast of the Ascension, 1177 when Harlewin became prior, and August 6, 1179, when he resigned. Cf. Gervase of Canterbury, ed. Stubbs, i.263, 293.

2 Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1174-1184

3 Cf. above

4 Herbert, Archdeacon of Canterbury, 1174-1180. Cf. Le Neve, Fasti, ed. Hardy, i.38.
of God and the liberty of the Church, so now, when God is showing clearly how
great a man the Archbishop was, they are forced to proclaim his glory even
against their will, and to summon others to the faith in order to give the
thanks to Christ that is His due.

One of these is Peter, the bearer of the present letter, a citizen of
our city and a disciple of the celebrated Count Theobald, who out of want
of consideration and under the impetus of the spirit of error and blasphemy
tried to defame the holy martyr, and was not ashamed to attribute the miracles
he heard of to the imaginations of men. And so one day when he and other
masons who were working in the monastery of Blessed Peter of Chartres stopped
for lunch, they happened to speak about the miracles of Blessed Thomas, and
all the others accepted with reverence and thanks what was being said. But
he, in his careless way, began to laugh and to minimize the miracles, boldly
stating that Blessed Thomas had no power to perform either greater or lesser
works. And taking a morsel of food he said: "Now, if your St. Thomas is
able, let him strangle me or make this food as deadly for me as he can."
The others were terrified, reproving the imprudence of the foolish fellow,
striking their breasts because they had heard so great a blasphemy, and
carefully fortifying themselves with the sign of the cross. A short time
afterwards, leaving them and going to his home, he lost the power of speech
and began to become disordered physically and mentally. Hearing what had
happened, his friends and neighbors hastened to him and tearfully carried
him, insensible and as if he were half-dead, to the Church of the Blessed

5 Count Theobald V of Blois and Chartres, 1152-1191
Virgin, laying him upon the body of Blessed Leobin, who rests in our Church. The story of the miracle spread about, and in a short time was known to the large population of our city. The people came from everyplace to see the wretched fellow whom the right hand of Blessed Thomas had stricken, and filled our very large Church, that is, the Church of Chartres, from three o'clock almost to vespers.

By chance I was away, but I came into the city on the same day. I had hardly entered my home when his mother and friends, prostrate at my feet, told me what had happened, and tearfully begged my help and advice. I went to the Church. The wretched mute was brought to me, striking his breast and raising his eyes and hands to heaven and towards the box in which the undergarment, that is, the chemise the Blessed Virgin was wearing when she gave birth to the Savior, is kept. People were weeping all about me, and those who had come with me along with myself were unable to restrain our tears. Then I ordered the phial in which I had placed the blood of Blessed Thomas, which I had brought to Chartres with me, and the water in which the phial was washed to be brought to me. I prayed a little while before the relics and, when the prayer was finished, offered the phial to the wretched fellow to kiss; at once he cried out in a voice so loud it could be heard by all those who stood around: "St. Thomas, St. Thomas, have mercy on me!" He drank the water in which the phial and knife of the good martyr were washed, and was at once restored to his former health, vowing that he would go to the most blessed martyr to make satisfaction for the blasphemy and to give the proper thanks for his cure.

All of us who were there were stirred to praise God, speaking of the
wonders of the most glorious martyr Thomas, in whom we had seen fulfilled what was said by the prophet: "They shall come to thee who slandered thee, and they shall worship the steps of thy feet." The clergy and people rejoiced, and all sorrow was turned into rejoicing. Weeping changed into happiness, and mourning into singing.

We have written of this to you to take care of His glory Who is wonderful and glorious in the blessed martyr Thomas and in the other saints.

All of you be well before the Lord, and remember us and our Church before God and the glorious martyr, through whom your Church and city is renowned throughout the entire world.

6 Isaias 40.14
LETTER 333/E

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

John, by divine favor and the merits of St. Thomas the martyr the humble minister of the Church of Chartres, to all those into whose hands this letter will come, greetings in the Lord:

You will know that the soldier Gauthier, son of Stephan of Mackweiler, here present, cancels before us the two measures of grain which he used to collect each year from the farm of the Abbot and brethren of St. Peter of Chartres, which is known as Lillebont. For the good of his soul he has kindly and generously granted them this as a gift to be kept forever in the future by the abbot and the brethren, and has completely freed the farm from that payment.

And we, here present as witnesses, G. the deacon of Chartres, R. the Chanter, M. of Chartres, Walter of Possy and R. the Archdeacon of Bloise, have granted this gift to the Abbot.

1 SUMMARY: John announces a gift from the Chevalier Gauthier to the monks of Saint Pere, Chartres. This letter is dated July 10, 1179.

2 Machweiler, Saverne, Alsase.
Therefore, wishing to provide for the peace and quiet of the aforesaid abbot and brothers, so that they may not be able to be annoyed in the future, we have fortified this agreement with the authority of our signature and seal.

Done at Chartres on July 10, in the year of grace 1179.
LETTER 334/327

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

John, by the divine favor and the merits of St. Thomas the martyr the humble minister of the Church of Chartres, to all those in whose hands this letter will come, greetings in the Lord:

You will know that the renowned John of Vendôme was long ago bound by us under a sentence of excommunication, which our Lord the Pope Alexander III also confirmed, because of certain bad practices which, contrary to justice, he resorted to in the villa of Saint-Laumer à Blois, in the town of Vendôme. For he assumed for himself alone the rights of lodging strangers, levying taxes, demanding free labor, ownership of the wild oat crop, and the trial of murder and thievery; being ready to set off for Jerusalem he has perpetually renounced all of these practices before myself and many respectable men of Blois, so that he might deserve to be loosed from the bond of anathema in which he was held.

1 SUMMARY: Bishop John announces the conditions under which Count John of Vendome was released from the censure of excommunication which he had incurred because of his unjust exactions from the inhabitants of Saint-Laumer a Blois. The letter is date in 1180.
He has also decreed and officially witnessed that if any of his heirs or successors should dare to bother or annoy the monks or populace of Saint-Laumer by making the aforesaid demands, that he be forced under ecclesiastical censure to pay sixty silver marks to the said monks.

And lest the quarrel that has been settled in this way might be revived by himself or his heirs, at his request I have confirmed the terms of the peace contained in the present page with my seal.

Done at Bloise, in the year 1180 of the Incarnate Word.
LETTER 335/326

JOHN, BISHOP OF CHARTRES, TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

John, by the divine mercy and the merits of St. Thomas the humble minister of the Church of Chartres, to all those in whose hands this letter will come, greetings in the Lord:

You will know that when we came to the Church of Chartres we bound the nobleman John Count of Vendôme, under sentence of excommunication because of injuries, damages, and extortions which he frequently inflicted upon the Church of the Most Holy Trinity at Vendôme, and kept him under that sentence for more than three years. But in the course of time he approached our respected father Peter, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church under the title of St. Chrysogon, and Legate of the Apostolic See, and having sworn that he would make satisfaction for his injuries and damages to the aforesaid church, while the illustrious King of England was present and interceding for him, he obtained absolution, with the observance of the conditions which he still had to fulfill left to our care. But when the count was summoned he did not fulfill the pledge he had taken, asserting that he had not taken the oath under this form; consequently he incurred again through our decision

1 SUMMARY: Bishop John records his excommunication in 1176 of Count John of Vendôme for his oppression of the abbey of Holy Trinity, Vendôme, and the conditions under which the sentence was relaxed almost four years later. The letter was written in 1180.
the sentence under which he had been held, which our Lord the Pope Alexander III confirmed.

Finally, when the King of England grieved at his remaining so long under the sentence of excommunication, he extended his royal hand, compelling that person, through the performance of what justice demanded, to get himself absolved from the sentence of excommunication under which he was bound.

The Count came to us, penitent as it seemed, and sorrowful, and when he had made sufficient satisfaction for the injuries he was absolved at the request of our Lord King of England and the Abbot and brethern of the above-mentioned Church; he has taken an oath that he will no long molest that Church or its men or its possessions, unless he can prove it to be guilty of some offence.

That it might be known to posterity and provide for the security of the said Church, we have confirmed this promise by the testimony of our signature and seal.

Done publicly in the year of grace 1180.
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