

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 20 June 1581 from Thomas, 2nd Lord Wentworth, to Lord Burghley regarding the proposed marriage between Oxford's sister-in-law, Elizabeth Cecil (1564-1583), and William Wentworth (1555/6-1582), the eldest son and heir of Thomas Wentworth (1525-1584), 2nd Lord Wentworth, and his second wife, Anne or Agnes (d.1574), the daughter of Henry Wentworth (d. circa 1545) of Mountnessing, Essex, and Agnes Hammond. The marriage of William Wentworth and Elizabeth Cecil took place on 26 February 1582 (see CP 140/13). However William Wentworth died later that year, on 7 November 1582, and Elizabeth Cecil survived him for only a few months, dying in April 1583.

My very good Lord, by your last letter I understand your Lordship's mind what and how you mean to give with your daughter. And whereas by your former I was drawn on to yield to more than was either my ease or ability, now your Lordship stayeth in giving that which, when I had made my last offer, I thought your Lordship would never have stuck at and my need and necessity (as before I made your Lordship privy by Mr Bacon) doth require, and that not to my benefit only, but also to the good of my son, for otherways those burthens will lie on his shoulders which by this means he shall be discharged of, neither do I know how any way else how to discharge them but by his marriage. And therefore I pray your Lordship to pardon me although I set down to your Lordship what I think in truth, that it is as good reason for me to call back one £100 by year which shall be your daughter's jointure after my son's death, if he chance to die within the year after their marriage, as for your Lordship to stay £1000 if God should call your daughter. Further I am to assure my whole living to my son upon this match, and so do debar myself to relieve myself with mine own, whatsoever occasion shall hereafter befall me, the which if it shall please your Lordship to consider, together with the good portion I am content to allow to the young parties presently out of my small living, I hope your Lordship shall think me rather liberal than strait-laced in this matter, and I may truly affirm unto your Lordship that few matches that I know of should have brought me to do thus except this with your Lordship. But seeing it hath pleased God to move my son's mind to make choice where I hope he shall find a virtuous wife and many good examples of wisdom and piety to imitate, I do willingly strain myself above my ability to further the same, praying your Lordship not so much to weigh what shall be received or given as what is meet for me to require in respect of my own estate, which if it were such as it hath been or as I am sure your Lordship doth wish it, then should your Lordship readily find that I would say with Solomon, *pars bona mulier bona* [=a good wife is a good portion], and so the conditions fit to be considered on in this case would soon be agreed on, for that it should not be the portion that should part the match. Howbeit if your Lordship would be eased of some part of this sum, if it may please your Lordship to do it of the £500 I am willing to allow the young parties, I shall be content therewith, but for the £2000, it doth so much import me to have it as I hope your Lordship will be content to agree thereto. If it please your Lordship to do me that honour as to take my house in your way to Theobalds, I shall think myself most beholding to your Lordship. And thus

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with my humble commendations, I commit your Lordship to God's good keeping. Mile End, the 20 of June 1581.

Your good Lordship's always to command,

Thomas Wentworth

Endorsed: (1) To the right honourable and my very good Lord, the Lord Treasurer of England; (2) (in Lord Burghley's hand) 20 Iunij 1581, Lord Wentworth