Name_____

Sir Thomas More

Sir Thomas More lived during a time of political change in England. The king had declared himself head of the Church of England, and More refused to acknowledge this transfer of power within the church. Instead, he stood up for his beliefs.

Prior to the King's declaration, Thomas More served as counselor, secretary, and confidant for Henry VIII. He practiced law but was also a scholar and a journalist. More had a good education and studied spiritual texts while preparing for his law career. Finally, he felt he must make a choice between a life of civil service and the monastic life. He moved to a monastery outside of London in 1503 and participated in the community as much as his legal career would allow. After a time, he once again felt the calling to civil service. More wanted to serve his country, so he left the monastery to enter Parliament just one year later. Eventually, he was elected as speaker of the House of Commons. During the course of his career, he published novels as well as papers defending the Catholic church and lashing out against Martin Luther and the protestant revolution.

After the king disclosed his plans to divorce Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn, More resigned from the House of Commons. He cited ill health as his reason, but most likely his decision came as much from his disapproval of the king's actions as anything else. More subsequently did not attend the coronation of the new queen, and the king did not view this favorably. The king's ire was further raised when More refused to swear to the Oath of Supremacy, which effectively declared King Henry as the head of the Church of England. He was found guilty of treason, sent to the tower, and beheaded a year later.

More's final words were, "The king's good servant, but God's first."

Text Questions

1. What words could be used in the first paragraph in place of the phrase "stood up for his beliefs"?
   a. defended his persuasion
   b. defended his doubt
   c. defended his convictions
   d. defended his guilty sentence
2. Which title would be a good alternative for this text?
   a. "The King's Good Servant"
   b. "A Monastic Life"
   c. "A Man of Principle"
   d. "Servant to All"
3. What is the significance of More's choices?
   a. He considered others less important than himself.
   b. He made decisions based on what other people wanted him to do.
   c. He thought only of what would serve his best interests.
   d. He tried to stand up for what he thought was right.
4. Which of the following does <u>not</u> describe a way in which Thomas More served Henry VIII?
   a. He was secretary to the king.
   b. He refused to support the king's declarations.
   c. He was an adviser to the king.
   d. He was the king's confidant.
5. What significance do More's last words hold for people today?

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