

## Letters of John Philpot, Archdeacon of Winchester

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*A Letter of John Philpot, to the Christian Congregation,  
exhorting them to refrain from the idolatrous Service of the Papists,  
and to serve God according to his Word.*

“It is a lamentable thing to behold at this present time in England, the faithless departing both of men and women from the true knowledge and use of Christ’s sincere religion, which they have been so plentifully taught and know, their own consciences bearing witness to the truth of this. If that earth is cursed by God, which often receiving moisture and pleasant dews from heaven, does not bring forth fruit accordingly, how much more grievous a judgment will such persons receive, who having received from the Father of Heaven the perfect knowledge of his word by the ministry of it, do not display God’s worship according to the same word? If the Lord will require, in the day of judgment, a godly usury of all manner of talents which he lends to men and women, how much more will He require the same from his pure religion revealed to us (which of all other talents, is the greatest and most pertains to our exercise in this life), if we hide it in a napkin, and do not proclaim it to the usury of God’s glory, and the edifying of his church by true confession? God has kindled the bright light of his gospel, which in times past was suppressed, and hidden under the vile ashes of man’s traditions, and has caused the brightness of it to shine in our hearts, to the end that the same might shine before men, to the honor of His name.

“It is not only given us to believe, but also to confess and declare what we believe in our outward conduct. For as St. Paul says (Rom 10.10), ‘With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.’ It is all one before God, not to believe at all, and not to display the lively works of our belief. For Christ says, ‘Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruits.’ So that the person who knows his master’s will, and does not do it, will be beaten with many stripes. And not all those who say, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of God, but whoever that does the will of the Father. And Christ says, ‘Whoever therefore is ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man will also be ashamed of him, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’” After we have built ourselves into the true church of God, it has pleased him, by giving us into the hands of the wicked synagogues, to prove our building, and to have it known to the world as well as to ourselves, that we have been wise builders in the true church of God, building upon the rock, and not on the sand. And therefore, now the tempest is risen, and the storms mightily blow against us, so that we might notwithstanding stand upright, and be firm in the Lord, to his honor and glory, and to our eternal felicity. No new thing has happened to us, for the church of God has continually been exercised with such tempests and dangerous weather. Now once again, as the prophet Haggai tells us, ‘The Lord shakes the earth, so that those might abide forever, who are not overcome.’

“Therefore, my dearly beloved, be stable and immovable in the word of God, and in the faithful observation of it, and let no man deceive you with vain words, saying that you may keep your faith to yourselves, and dissemble with antichrist, and live at rest and

quietness in the world, as most men do, yielding to necessity. This is the wisdom of the flesh. But the wisdom of the flesh is death and enmity to God, as our Savior, for example, declared to St. Peter who exhorted Christ not to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, and there be slain; but counselled him to look better to himself.

“Likewise, the world would not have us forsake it, nor to associate ourselves with the true church, which is the body of Christ, of which we are lively members, and to use the sacraments according to God’s word with the danger of our lives. But we must learn to answer the world as Christ answered Peter, and say, ‘Get behind me, Satan, for you do not savor the things that are of God.’

‘Shall I not drink of the cup which the Father gives me?’ For it is better to be afflicted and to be slain in the church of God, than to be counted the son of the king, in the synagogue of false religion. Death for righteousness is not to be abhorred, but rather to be desired, which assuredly brings with it the crown of everlasting glory. These bloody executioners do not persecute Christ’s martyrs, but crown them with everlasting felicity. We were born into this world to be witnesses to the truth, both the learned and unlearned.

“Now since the time has come that we must show our faith, and declare whether we will be God’s servants in righteousness and holiness, as we have been taught, and are bound to follow, or else with hypocrisy to serve unrighteousness. Let us take good heed that we are found faithful in the Lord’s covenant, and true members of his church into which we are engrafted through knowledge; and from which if we fall by transgression with the common sort of people, it will more straitly be required of us than many yet make account of. We cannot serve two masters; we may not halt on both sides, and think to please God; we must be fervent in God’s cause, or else He will cast us out from him. For by the first commandment we are commanded to love God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength; but they are manifest transgressors of this commandment, who with their heart, mind, or bodily power, have communion with a strange religion, contrary to the word of God, in the papistical synagogue, which calls itself the church, and is not. Those who do so, greatly offend God now, just as the Israelites did in times past by forsaking Jerusalem, the true church of God, and by going to Bethel to serve God in a congregation of their own setting up, following their own imaginations and traditions. For doing this, God utterly destroyed all Israel, as almost all the prophets testify. This happened to them for our example, that we might beware of having any fellowship with any like congregation, to our destruction.

“God has one catholic church dispersed throughout the world; and therefore we are taught in our Creed to believe one catholic church, and to have communion with it. This catholic church is grounded upon the foundation of the prophets, and of the apostles, and upon no other, as St. Paul witnesses to the Ephesians. Therefore, wherever we perceive any people worshipping God truly according to his word, we may be certain the church of Christ is there, to which we ought to associate ourselves, and desire with the prophet David, to praise God in the midst of his church. But if we behold through the iniquity of the time, segregations are made with counterfeit religion, otherwise than the word of God teaches, then if we are required to be companions of it, we ought to say again with David, ‘I have hated the congregations of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked.’

“In the book of Revelation the church of Ephesus is highly commended, because she tested those who said they were apostles, and were not in deed; and therefore it would not abide their company. Further, God commanded his people by the mouth of his prophet Amos, that they should not seek Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, where idolatry was used. Also we must consider that our bodies are the temple of God, and whoever (as St. Paul teaches) profanes the temple of God, the Lord will destroy him. May we then take the temple of Christ, and make it the member of a harlot? All strange religion and idolatry is counted as whoredom by the prophets, and is more detestable in the sight of God than any other sin.

“Therefore the princes of the earth, in the Revelation of St. John, are said to go a whoring, when they are in love with false religion, and follow it. How then by any means may a Christian man think it tolerable to be present at the popish private mass (which is the very profanation of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ) and at other idolatrous worshippings and rites which are not according to the word of God, but rather to the derogation of it, in setting man’s traditions above God’s precepts, since God by his word judges all strange religion which is not according to his institution, as whoredom and adultery?

“Some foolishly think that the presence of the body is not material, so long as the heart does not consent to their wicked doings. But such persons little consider what St. Paul said to the Corinthians, commanding them to glorify God in body as well as in soul.

“Moreover, we can do no greater injury to the true church of Christ, than to seem to have forsaken her, and disallow her, by clinging to her adversary. By this it appears to others who are weak, that we allow the same. And so, contrary to the word, we give great offense to the church of God, and outwardly slander the truth of Christ, as much as men may do so. But woe to him by whom any such offense comes. It would be better for him to have a millstone tied about his neck, and to be cast into the bottom of the sea! Such are traitors to the truth, like Judas, who with a kiss betrayed Christ. Our God is a jealous God, and cannot be content that we should be of any other church than that unspotted church of which He is the only head, and in which he has planted us by baptism. This jealousy which God has towards us, will cry for vengeance in the day of vengeance, against all those who now have such large consciences as to do that which is contrary to God’s glory, and the sincerity of his word, unless they repent in time, and cling inseparably to the gospel of Christ, however much at this present time both men and women otherwise flatter themselves in their own corrupt judgment. God wills us to judge uprightly, and to allow and follow that which is holy and acceptable in his sight, and to abstain from all manner of evil. And therefore Christ commands us in the gospel to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

“St. Paul to the Hebrews says, ‘If any man draws back, my soul will have no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back unto perdition; but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.’ St. John in the Revelation tells us plainly that none of those who are written in the book of life will receive the mark of the beast (which is of the papistical synagogue), either on their foreheads, or on their hands — that is, obviously or obediently.

“St. Paul, in writing to the Philippians, affirms that we may not have any fellowship with the works of darkness, but in the midst of this wicked and froward generation we ought

to shine like lights, upholding the word of truth. <sup>Phi 2.15</sup> Furthermore, he says that we should not touch any unclean thing, which signifies that our outward conversation should be pure and undefiled, as well as the inward, so that with a clean spirit and purified body we might serve God in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life.

“Finally, in the 18th chapter of Revelation, God plainly commands us to depart from the Babylonian synagogue, and not be partakers of her trespass. St. Paul to the Thessalonians exhorts us, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; to withdraw ourselves from every brother who walks disorderly, and not according to the institution which he has received from him.

“Therefore, ponder these Scriptures well, good brethren and sisters, which are written for your instruction and reformation, of which not one jot is written in vain. These are utterly against all counterfeit illusion to be used by us with the papists in their fantastical religion, and be adversaries to all those who have such light consciences in so doing. And if they do not agree with this adversary (I mean with the word of God) which is contrary to their attempts, He will (as signified in the gospel) deliver them to the judge, who is Christ; and the judge will deliver them to the executioner — that is, to the devil — and the devil will commit them to the horrible prison of hellfire (which is the portion of all hypocrites), where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth, world without end. Yet many will say for their vain excuse, that God is merciful, and his mercy is over all. But the Scripture teaches us that cursed is he who sins upon the hope of forgiveness. It is true that the mercy of God is above all his works, and yet it is only upon those who fear him. For it is written in the Psalms, ‘The mercy of God is to those who fear him, and on those who put their trust in him.

“There we may learn that only those who serve him put their trust in God; and to fear God is to turn from evil, and do what is good. So that those who look to be partakers in God’s mercy, may not abide in what is known to be manifest evil, and detestable in the sight of God.

“Another sort of persons make them a cloak for their sins, under the pretense of obedience to the magistrates, whom we ought to obey even if they are wicked. But such persons must learn from Christ to give to Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and to God that which is due to God; and with St. Peter, to obey the higher powers in the Lord, even if they are evil, *if* they command nothing contrary to God’s word. Otherwise we should not obey their commandments, even if we should suffer death for it. We have the apostles for our example, who answered the magistrates as we ought to do in this case, not obeying their wicked precepts, saying, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than to God, you judge.’

“Also, Daniel chose to be cast into the den of lions to be devoured, rather than obey the king’s wicked commandments. If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch. There is no excuse for the transgression of God’s word, whether a man does it voluntarily or at commandment, even if there is great damnation to those by whom the offense comes. There are some others, who, for an extreme refuge in their evil doings, run to God’s predestination and election, saying that if I am elected by God to salvation, then I will be saved whatever I do. But such persons are great tempters of God, and abominable blasphemers of God’s holy election. And they cast themselves down from the pinnacle of the temple in presumption, so that God may preserve them by his angels through

predestination. Such truly may reckon themselves to be none of God's elect children, who will do evil so that good may come of it. Their damnation is just, as St. Paul says. God's predestination and election should be considered with a simple eye, to make us more warily walk in good and godly conversation according to God's word, and not set ourselves up, and charge it upon God, to do wickedly as we will. For the elect children of God must walk in righteousness and holiness, once they are called to the true knowledge of the truth. For St. Paul says to the Ephesians (Eph 1.4), 'Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.'

"Therefore, St. Peter exhorts us through good works to make our calling and election sure to ourselves, which we do not know except by the good working of God's Spirit in us, according to the rule of the gospel. And whoever does not conform himself to that rule in godly conversation, may justly tremble, and doubt that he is one of the elect children of God, but of the viperous generation, and a child of darkness. For the children of light walk in the works of light and not of darkness; though they may fall, they do not lie still.

"Let all vain excuses be set apart, and while you have light, as Christ commands, believe the light and abide in it, lest eternal darkness overtake you unawares. The light has come into the world, but, alas! men love darkness more than light. God give us his pure eye-salve to heal our blindness in this behalf. O that men and women would be healed, and not seek to be willfully blinded! The Lord open their eyes, that they may see how dangerous a thing it is to decline from the knowledge of truth, contrary to their conscience.

"But what did I say *conscience*? Many affirm that their conscience will bear them well enough to do all that they do, and to go to the idolatrous church to service; their conscience must be very large to satisfy man more than God. And even if their conscience can bear them to do so, I am sure that a good conscience will not permit them to do so. This cannot be good, unless it is directed according to the knowledge of God's word. And therefore, in Latin this feeling mind is called *conscientia*, which by interpretation, agrees with *knowledge*.

"And therefore, if our conscience is led by herself, and not according to true knowledge, we are not to be so excused, as St. Paul bears witness saying, 'Although my conscience does not accuse me, yet I am not justified in this.' He joins a good conscience with these three sisters: charity, a pure heart, and unfeigned faith. Charity keeps God's commandments; a pure heart loves and fears God above all; and unfeigned faith is never ashamed of the profession of the gospel, whatever damage may be suffered in body thereby. The Lord, who has revealed his holy will to us by his word, grant us never to be ashamed of it, and give us grace earnestly to so cling to his holy word and the true church, that for no manner of worldly respect will we become partakers of the works of hypocrisy which God abhors — so that we may be found faithful in the Lord's testament to the end, both in heart, word, and deed, to the glory of God and our everlasting salvation. Amen.

"JOHN PHILPOT, prisoner in the King's Bench  
for the testimony of the truth. A.D 1555."

*A Letter to John Careless, <sup>1</sup> profitable to be read by all  
those who mourn in Repentance for their Sins.*

“The God of all comfort, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, send to you, my dear brother Careless, the inward consolation of his Holy Spirit, in all the malicious assaults and troublous temptations of our common adversary the devil. Amen.

“That God gives you so contrite a heart for your sins I cannot but rejoice to behold the lively mark of the children of God, whose property is to think more lowly and vilely of themselves than of any other, and oftentimes to set their sins before them, so that they might be more stirred to produce the fruits of repentance, and learn to mourn in this world, so that in another they might be glad and rejoice. Such a broken heart is a pleasant sacrifice to God. O, that I had the like contrite heart! God soften my stony heart, which does not lament my former detestable iniquities in such a way. Praised be God that he has given you this sorrowful heart in respect to righteousness, and I pray to be a partaker of these godly sorrows for sin, which are the testimony of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Did the sword of sorrow not pierce the heart of the elect and blessed mother of our Lord? Did Peter not weep bitterly for his sins, who was so beloved by Christ? Did not Mary Magdalene wash the feet of our Savior with her tears, and received with it the remission of her sevenfold sins?

“Be of good comfort, therefore, my own dear heart, in this your sorrow, for it is the earnest of eternal consolation. In your sorrow be joyful, for the Spirit of God is with you: ‘Blessed are those (says Christ) who mourn, for they shall be comforted.’ Those who went forth and wept, says the prophet, shall come again having their hearts full of gladness.’ And although a sorrowful heart, in consideration of our sins, is an acceptable sacrifice before God, by which we are stirred up to more thankfulness to God, knowing that much is forgiven us so that we might love all the more, yet the man of God must keep a measure in this, lest he be swallowed up by excessive sorrow. St. Paul would not have the Thessalonians be sorry like other men who have no hope, Such a sorrow is not commendable, but works damnation, and is far from the children of God, who are continually sorrowful in God when they look upon their own unworthiness, with hope of forgiveness. For to this end, God by his Spirit sets the sins of his elect still before them, so that where they perceive sin to abound, they might be assured that grace will much more abound, and bring them down to hell so that he might lift them up with greater joy to heaven. Therefore, my own comfort in Christ, as long as you are not altogether void of hope, do not be dismayed through your pensive heart for your sins, however huge they have been, for God is able to forgive more than you are able to sin. Yes, and he will forgive the one who, with hope, is sorry for his sins.

“But know, brother, that as often as we go about by the help of God’s Spirit, to do what is good, Satan lies hard in wait to turn the good to evil. And he goes about to mire the godly sorrow of a pure penitent heart, with the detestable weed of desperation. You are not ignorant of his malicious subtlety, and how he continually assaults that good which the grace of God plants. I see the battle between you and him; but the victory is yours, yes, and that is daily. For you have laid hold of the anchor of salvation, which is hope in Christ, and which will not permit you to be made ashamed.

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<sup>1</sup> John Careless will later be martyred himself.

“Do not be discontented that you have this conflict. Rather, be glad that God has given it to you to test your faith, and so that daily you might appear worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you strive. God beholds your striving faith against Satan, and He is pleased with your mighty resistance. The spirit, which is in you is mightier than all the adversary’s power. Tempt you he may, and lie wait at your heels to give you a fall unawares. But he shall not overcome. Indeed, he cannot, for you are sealed up already with a lively faith to be the child of God forever. And those whom God has once sealed for his own, he never utterly forsakes. The just falls seven times, but he rises again. It is man’s frailty to fall, but it is the property of the devil’s child to lie still.

“This strife against sin is a sufficient testimony that you are the child of God. For if you were not, you would feel no such malice as he now troubles you with. When this strong Goliath has the hold, all things are in peace which he possesses. And because he does *not* have you, he will not allow you to be unassaulted. But stand fast, and hold out the buckler of faith, and strike him on the head with the sword of God’s promises, so that he may receive a deadly wound and never be able to stand against you any more. St. James tells you that the devil is but a coward, saying, ‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.’ It is the will of God that he should tempt you this long, and not go away as yet, or else he would have been done with you long before this. He already knows that he will receive a defeat at your hands and increase the crown of your glory; for he who overcomes will be crowned. Therefore glory in your temptations since they will turn to your felicity. Do not be afraid of your continual assaults which are occasions for your daily victory. The word of God abides forever. In whatever hour a sinner repents of his sins, they are forgiven. Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?’ Do you not perceive the manifest tokens of your election? First, your calling to the gospel, and after your calling, the manifest gifts of the Spirit of God were given to you above many others of your condition, along with godliness which believes and yields to the authority of the Scriptures, and is zealous for them. Seeing that you are God’s own child, who can hurt you? Do not be cast down for these temptations, nor make your sincere friends more sorrowful for you than need requires.

“Since God has willed you, at your baptism in Christ, to be “careless,” why do you make yourself careful? Cast all your care upon him! Set the Lord before your eyes always, for He is on your right hand, so that you should not be moved. Behold the goodness of God towards *me*! I am careless, being fast closed in a pair of stocks which pinch me for their very straitness. And would you be careful? I would not have that unseemly addition to your name. Be as your name pretends, for doubtless you have no other cause but to be so. Pray, I beseech you, that I may still be as careless in my careful estate, as you have reason to be careless in your easier condition. Be thankful and put away all care, and then I will be joyful in my strait present care. Commend me to all our brethren, and desire them to pray for me, that I may overcome my temptations. For the devil rages against me. I am put in the stocks in a place alone, because I would not answer to such articles as they charged me with — in a corner, at the bishop’s appointment, because I did not come to mass when the bishop sent for me. I would lie all the days of my life in the stocks, by God’s grace, rather than consent to this wicked generation. Praise God, and be joyful, that it has pleased Him to make us worthy to suffer somewhat for his name’s sake. The devil must rage for ten days.

“Commend me to Master F\_\_\_\_, and thank him for his law books. But neither law nor equity will take any place among these blood-thirsty men! I would, for your sake, that this unjust dealing were noted to the parliament house, if it might avail. God shorten these evil days. I have answered the bishop very plain already. And I said to him, that if he will call me in open judgment, I will answer him as plainly as he will require. Otherwise I have refused, because I fear they will condemn me in hugger-mugger.<sup>2</sup> The peace of God be with you, my dear brother. I can write no more for lack of light. What I have written I cannot read myself, and God knows it is written with pain. I pray God that you may pick out some understanding of my mind towards you.

“Written in a coal-house of darkness, out of a pair of  
painful stocks, by your own in Christ.

“JOHN PHILPOT.”

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<sup>2</sup> *Hugger-mugger*: in utter disorder and chaos; marked by hidden aims or methods.



*A Letter of John Philpot to certain Godly Brethren.*

“The grace of God the Father, and the peace of our Savior Jesus Christ, his eternal Son, and the consolation of the Holy Spirit, our comforter, strengthen your hearts, and comfort your minds, that you may rejoice, and live in the truth of Christ’s gospel to the end, Amen.

“I much rejoice, dearly beloved in the Lord, to hear of your constant faith in the word of God, which you have so purely received. Do not, with the worldlings, decline from the purity of it, even if you suffer grief and trouble by it, for which I praise God most heartily. The Lord of all strength, who has begun this good work in you, make it perfect to the end, as I have no doubt He will, for the faithful zeal you have toward his truth and his afflicted church. Therefore, that you may better stand and bear the brunt of many temptations which you are all likely to be assaulted with in these wicked and stormy days, I thought it good, as it is the duty of one Christian man to exhort another in the time of trouble, to put you in remembrance of this, and to desire you, with the wise man, to prepare yourselves for temptations. And beware that you, who yet stand by the goodness of God, may not fall from your lively knowledge and hope. It is an easy thing to begin to do well. But to continue in well-doing is the peculiar property of the children of God, and those who assuredly will be saved. For so says our Savior in his gospel, blessed are those who persevere to the end.

“Therefore, do not let this certainty of your salvation, which is continuance in the sincerity of faith, slide from you. Esteem it more than all the riches and pleasures of this world; for it is the most acceptable treasure of eternal life. This is that precious stone for which the wise merchant in the gospel sells all he has, and buys it. God, in the third chapter of Revelation, signifies to the church, that there will come a time of temptation upon the whole world, to test the dwellers on the earth. From the danger of this temptation, all those will be delivered who observe His word. That word there is called the word of *patience*, to give us to understand that we must be ready to suffer all kinds of injuries and slanders for the profession of it.

“Therefore God commands us there to hold it fast, so that no man might deprive us of our crown of glory. And St. Peter tells us, ‘In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations (trials), so that the testing of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tested with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.’ St. Paul to the Hebrews shows us that Christ our Savior was made perfect in his humanity by afflictions, so that being called to perfection in Him, we might more willingly sustain the troubles of the world, by which God gives all those who are exercised in it for his sake, his holiness.

“And in the twelfth chapter of the said epistle it is written, ‘And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to children, ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives,’ etc. In the gospel of St. John, Christ cautions his disciples to look for afflictions, saying, ‘In the world you will have tribulation, but in me you will have peace.’ And therefore, in the midst of their trouble, in the 21st of St. Luke, he tells them to look up, and to lift up their heads, for their redemption drew near. And in the 22nd he says to all those who are afflicted for him,

‘You are the ones who have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed to me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’

“Oh how glorious are the crosses of Christ, which bring the bearers of them to so blessed an end! Will we not be glad to be partakers of such shame as may bring us to so high a dignity? God open our eyes to see all things as they are, and to judge uprightly. Then doubtless we would think with Moses, that it is better to be afflicted with the people of God, than to be counted the king of Egypt’s son. Then we would joyfully say with David, in all our adversities and troubles, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn your statutes.’ Therefore St. Paul would not glory in any other thing of the world, but in the cross of Christ, and in his infirmities. We have the commandment of Christ to daily take up his cross and follow him. We have the godly examples of all his apostles and holy martyrs, who with great joy and exultation have suffered the loss of all lands, goods, and life, for the hope of a better reward which is laid up for all those in heaven, who unfeignedly cling to the gospel and are never ashamed of it.

“Great is the felicity of the world to the outward man, and very pleasant are its transitory delights. But the reward of the righteous, according to the word of God, incomparably excels them all, insomuch that St. Paul, in writing to the Romans, plainly affirms that all the tribulations of this world cannot deserve that glory which will be shown to us.

“Let us therefore, good brethren and sisters, be merry and glad in these troublesome days, which are sent by God to declare our faith, and to bring us to the end and fruition of that which we hope for. If we would enter into the Lord’s sanctuary, and behold what is prepared for us, we could not but desire the Lord to hasten the day of our death, in which we might set forth by true confession, His glory. Neither should we be afraid to meet our adversaries, who so earnestly seek our spoil and death, but do as Christ did when Judas and that wicked company came to apprehend him, saying, ‘I am the one whom you seek.’ It is commanded us in the gospel, not to fear those who kill the body, but to fear God, who can cast both body and soul into hell-fire. We are bound to observe this commandment as much as any other which God has given us. The Lord increase our faith, that we fear God more than man. The Lord give us such love towards him and his truth, that we may be content to forsake all and follow him. Now it will appear what we love best; for we will adhere to what we love. There is none worthy to be counted a Christian unless he can find it in his heart, for Christ’s sake, if the confession of His truth requires it, to renounce all that he has and follow Him. And in so doing he gains a hundredfold more in this life (as our Savior said to Peter), and in the life hereafter, eternal life.

“Behold, I pray you, what he loses, who in this life receives a hundred for one, with assurance of eternal life. O, happy exchange! Perhaps your outward man will say, if I were sure of this great recompence here, I could be glad to forsake all. But where is this hundredfold to be found in this life? Yes, truly; for instead of the worldly riches which you forsake, which are but temporal, you have found the everlasting riches of heaven — which are glory, honor, and praise, both before God, angels, and men — and for an earthly habitation, you have an eternal mansion with Christ in heaven. For even now you are of the city and household of the saints with God, as it is said in the 4th chapter to the Philippians. For worldly peace, which can last but a while, you possess the peace

of God, which surpasses all understanding. And for the loss of a few friends, you are made a fellow of the innumerable company of heaven, and a perpetual friend of all those who have died in the Lord, from the beginning of the world. Is this not more than a hundredfold? Is the peace of God which we have in this world through faithful imitation of Christ (which the world cannot take from us), not ten thousandfold more than those things which are most highly esteemed in the world, without the peace of God? All the peace of the world is no peace, but a mere anguish and a gnawing fury of hell, as God has recently set an example before our eyes, to teach us how horrible an evil it is to forsake the peace of Christ's truth, which breeds a worm in the conscience that shall never rest.

"O, that we would weigh this with impartial balances! Then we would not be dismayed at this troublous time; neither would we sorrow in a worldly manner, for the loss which we are now likely to sustain, as the weak faithless persons do, who love their goods more than God, and the things visible above those which are invisible. But rather, we would heartily rejoice and be thankful that it pleased God to call us to be soldiers in his cause against the works of hypocrisy, and to make us like our Savior Christ in suffering. By this we may assure ourselves of his eternal glory. For blessed are those, says Christ, who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. And as St. Paul witnesses to Timothy, 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he will also deny us.'

"O, that we would enter into the veil of God's promises! Then, as St. Paul says to the Philippians, we would reject all, and count all things but dross, so that we may gain Christ. God, who is the enlightener of all darkness, and remover of all blindness, anoint our eyes with the true eye-salve, that we might behold His glory, and our eternal felicity, which is hidden with Christ, and prepared for us who abide in his testament. For blessed is that servant whom, as Christ said, the master finds faithful when he comes. Let us therefore watch and pray for one another, that we not yield in any point of our religion to the antichristian synagogue, and that we not be overthrown by these temptations. Stand, therefore, and do not be cowards in the cause of your salvation. For his spirit that is in us, is stronger than he which is in the world, who now rages against us. Let us not put the Spirit of God away from us, by whose might we will overcome our enemies. And then death will be as great a gain to us as it was to the blessed apostle St. Paul. Why, then, do you mourn? Why do you weep? Why are you so careful, as though God has forsaken you? He is never more present with us, than when we are in trouble, if we do not forsake Him. We are in his hands, and nobody can do us any injury or wrong without his good will and pleasure. He has commanded his angels to keep us, so that we will not stumble at a stone, without his divine providence. The devil cannot hurt any of us, and much less any of his ministers, without the good will of our eternal Father.

"Therefore let us be of good comfort, and continually give thanks to God for our estate, whatever it may be. For if we murmur against it, we murmur against God, who sends it. If we do so, we but kick against the goads, and provoke more and more the wrath of God against us — which by patient suffering, would otherwise be sooner turned to our favor, through faithful prayer.

"I beseech you with St. Paul, to give your bodies as pure and holy sacrifices to God. He has given us bodies to bestow to his glory, and not according to our own desires. If for many years God has allowed us to use our bodies, which are his temples, according to

the lust of the flesh, in vain delights that are not according to his glory, then is it not our duty in the latter end of our life, to more willingly yield our bodies to God's glory, with all that we have, in demonstration of true repentance of what we have evilly spent before?

"Cannot the example of the blessed man Job, when sorely afflicted, cause us to say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord? Even as it has pleased the Lord, so it has come to pass. If we cast our whole care likewise upon God, he will turn our misery into felicity, as well as he did for Job.

"God tempts us now as he did our father Abraham, commanding him to slay his son Isaac in sacrifice to Him. This name *Isaac*, by interpretation, signifies mirth and joy. Abraham, by his obedience, preserved Isaac unto long life, and offered in his stead a ram that was tied by the horns in the brambles. Likewise we are all commanded to sacrifice to God our Isaac, which is our joy and consolation. If we are ready to do this, as Abraham was, our joy will not perish, but live, and be increased, even though our ram is sacrificed for our Isaac. This signifies that the pride and desires of our flesh entangled through sin, with the cares of this stinging world, must be mortified for the preservation and perfect augmentation of our mirth and joy, which is sealed up for us in Christ.

"And to withstand these present temptations with which we are now encumbered, can you have a better remedy than to set before your eyes how our Savior Christ overcame them in the desert, and to follow his example? — that if the devil himself, or anyone else by him desires you to make stones out of bread, that is, to take such a worldly wise way that you may have your fair houses, lands, and goods to live on still, then you must say, 'Man does not live only by bread, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

"Again, if the devil counsels you to cast yourselves down to the earth, so as to revoke your sincere belief and godly conduct, and to be conformable to the learned men of the world, pretending that God will be well enough content with it, then you must answer that it is written, 'A man shall not tempt the Lord his God.'

"Further, if the devil offers you large promises of honor, dignity, and possessions, so that you will worship idols in his synagogue, you must say, 'Get away from here, Satan; for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'

"Finally, if your mother, brother, sister, wife, child, kinsman, or friend, seek to have you do otherwise than the word of God has taught you, you must say with Christ, 'They are your mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, children, kinsmen, who do the will of God the Father.' To which will, the Lord for his mercy conform us all unfeignedly to the end. Amen.

"Your loving and faithful brother in Christ,  
in captivity, JOHN PHILPOT, A.D. 1555."