

LETTER

Major-General Sir William Waller (c. 1598–1668), Parliamentary Commander in the West
to General Sir Ralph Hopton (1598–1652), Royalist Commander in the West

Bath, 16 June 1643

The experience I have had of your worth and the happiness I have enjoyed in your friendship are wounding considerations when I look upon the present distance between us. Certainly my affections to you are so unchangeable, that hostility itself cannot violate my friendship to your person; but I must be true to the cause wherein I serve. The old limitation, *usque ad aras*,¹ holds still; and where my conscience is interested, all other obligations are swallowed up.

I should most gladly wait on you, according to your desire, but that I look on you, engaged as you are in that party beyond a possibility of retreat and, consequently, incapable of being wrought upon by any persuasions; and I know the conference would never be so close between us but that it would take fire, and receive a construction to my dishonour.

That great God, Who is the searcher of my heart, knows with what reluctance I go upon this service, and with what a perfect hatred I look upon a war without an enemy. But I look upon it as *opus Domini*,² and that is enough to silence all passion in me. The God of Peace in His good time send us peace! And in the meantime fit us to receive it.

We are both on the stage, and we must act the parts that are assigned us in this tragedy. Let us do it in a way of honour, and without personal animosities. But, whatever be the issue, I shall not willingly relinquish the dear title of your affectionate friend and faithful servant.

R. Polwhele, ed. *Traditions and Recollections: Domestic, Clerical, and Literary* (London: John Nichols, 1826), I:15–16.

¹ *usque ad aras* — to the altar of sacrifice; to the last degree

² *opus Domini* — work of the LORD