The Testimony of William Thomson, a servant in Throsk, Stirlingshire, who was executed at Edinburgh on July 27, 1681.

Men And Brethren,—I being a prisoner for Christ's sake, and for my adhering to truth, being taken at Alloa, coming out of Fife, from hearing of the Gospel preached by Mr Donald Cargill [at Devon Common on] the last Sabbath of June, this present year; and not knowing when I may be taken and murdered by the stated enemies of our Lord; for they neither walk after the equity of their own law nor God's law; I have, for fear of inconveniences, laid hold of this opportunity, to set down under my hand, or from my mouth, an account of my life and conversation, and my testimony to the truth of Christ, and against all the abominations of the times.

I was before the year 1679 running away, with the rest of this generation, to God-provoking courses, and about that time, when I saw the people of God going to draw together to adventure their lives in the Lord's quarrel, the Lord took a dealing with me at that time, so that I could neither get night's rest, nor day's rest, till I resolved to go with them; and, on the other hand, was afraid lest I should have been the Achan in the Lord's camp; but again, I remembered the Lord's promise, that is held out in the word, 'Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord' (.Mai. iii. 7). Now I do with all my heart bless the Lord, for His wonderful workings with me, since He began with me. I think, when I look on His dealings since that time till now, I must say, that I am a brand plucked out of the fire. Oh ! that my heart and soul could praise Him for all that He hath done for me! And now I am content to die a dyvour [i.e., a debtor] to free grace, and in Christ's debt.

I was charged with being guilty of rebellion against their prince. I answered, I was not so, for I was there a prisoner of Jesus Christ and for His sake, and told them, I adhered to His covenant, and all things in it. I am not convicted from the word of God of any crime as to him whom they call king; who is not my king; nor of anything worthy of death committed against any man, either in thought, word, or deed; so my blood shall cry, with the rest of the innocent blood shed in the land, for vengeance from heaven on the inhabitants of the earth, great or small, who are in the least accessory thereto, ay, and while [i.e., until] they repent.

It is not my doing, but their own, that hath procured it; and God is just to seek after them for the same; neither is it in any man's power to forgive that, as being a breach of God's holy law, without repentance, nor then neither; for the furthest they can come is but to declare unto them from God's word, that this and their other sins shall never be charged upon them, if they have truly received Christ upon His own terms, and walked worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing. But now the thing is clear; the ground whereon they intend to take away my life is, the disowning Charles Stuart for my king, because he will have no homage upon the account of the Covenant from me, or any other; and God only requires the performing of vows, and keeping and fulfilling the Covenants, Ps[s]. I. So in this case, I cannot serve two masters; and I resolve to obey God rather than man.

Now, I here, as a dying man, ready to step into eternity, having health and strength, and being in my right mind, declare:

I adhere to the Protestant religion, as that which is God's true religion, and the Christian religion.

I adhere to the holy rule of the word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, containing the will of God to man, and anent man; and that the Scriptures are a full rule of faith and manners to us.

I adhere to the work of Reformation in Scotland, to the Covenants, National and Solemn League, the Solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties, the Confession of Faith, in regard it agrees with the foresaid writings; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as most seasonable, sound, and according to the Scriptures, and well worth the reading, considering, and practising what is therein held forth.
I adhere to the Rutherglen Testimony; to the paper commonly called Mr Donald Cargill’s covenant, of the date June 1680; I say, I adhere to the original copies of these papers, as they were corrected and revised by the authors.

And, likewise, I adhere to every sound paper, tending to the good of religion, as the Directory for Worship and Catechising; and I adhere unto the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of the Church of Scotland.

I bear my testimony unto all the lawful wrestlings of the people of God for truth, and in the defence and preservation of their civil, natural, and divine rights and privileges, contained and held forth in the foresaid papers, against all encroachers thereupon and betrayers thereof; especially by the sword, as a mean most lawful and commanded of God, to be made use of in that quarrel; which is to be carried to preachings, and other assemblies of the Lord’s people, and so much the more, as the enemy discharges it, as the case now stands.

In the last place, I give my testimony and protestation against all wrongs and injuries done to God and His people throughout the whole world this day; and more particularly against all that hath been done in Scotland since the beginning of the work of Reformation unto this day, in prejudice to God’s glory, His work and people, and especially these crying sins:

1. The corruption of the worship of God, profanation of His holy things, mocking, misbelieving and belying of God, and carrying, as if there were no God; yea, which is worse, saying He approves of all that they do. Oh, this heaven-contemning generation!

2. Against the defrauding, mocking, murdering, and oppressing the people of God, in their bodies, consciences, and estates, and punishing them as evil doers; yea, as the vilest monsters of cruelty; and that only for following their duty, and making them to stink, as it were, above the ground, and making their names to rot by calumnies and reproaches, and doing all they can to drive them to sin; and then blaming them, as the main instruments of all the mischievous villanies and abuses in the land; so that it is come to that with it, ‘The man that departs from iniquity makes himself a prey.’ [Isa. 59.15.] And scarcely can these, who design honestly, get a night’s quarters in any house of the land; so that the people of God are become a scorn to their foes, and a fear to their friends, and especially reproached of those who are their nearest neighbours, as the Psalmist complains.

3. I leave my testimony against all that make peace with the stated enemies of God, these Christ-despisers, these heaven-contemners and none-such fighters against God; whether by bonds, oaths, or promises; they being persons worthy of no credit, nor trust; who will not keep faith, nor trust upon any account, but where it may contribute for fulfilling their lusts, and prosecuting their wicked designs, and hell-hatched enterprises. If they were brought to straits, possibly they might feign themselves; but he is unwise that will give them so much trust as a dog. As Solomon says, ‘When he speaks fair, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart.’ [Prov. 26.25.] which I have a proof of, in my taking by a poor wretch who had sold soul and conscience to the lust and arbitrament of a faithless apostate wretch like himself.

And if ye will not be persuaded to leave off seeking their peace, and covenanting with them by bonds, oaths, and promises, well, see what David, the king of Israel, says, by the Spirit of God, when he is making his testament, 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7: ‘But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire.’ But ye, that are much more seeking peace with enemies than with God; think with yourselves to which of them are ye most beholden, and which of them have done you most good; which of them have most power over you? Which of the two hath the best quarrel by the end? Which of the two is most precious and lovely? And which of the two will be your judge at the last day? Well, if ye have done well in seeking the peace of enemies with the loss of the peace of God; then rejoice ye in them, and with them, and let them do so with you. And if otherwise, the Lord, no doubt, will reward you, as the cause requires, for what ye have done to God’s work, cause, covenant, and people.
4. I leave my testimony against all that contribute of their means for the down-bearing of God’s work and people, and upholding His and their enemies (seeing it is so expressly against the Covenant; and in that case they, being called to suffer, and not to sin, to which practice is annexed a gracious promise, He that loseth life, land, goods, or relations, for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s, shall receive an hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting); and against all that otherwise waste and abuse them to God’s dishonour, but only using this world, as not abusing it; for all within the nation being dedicate and given away by Covenant to God; and this being often renewed, calls all men to be tender of the oath of God, and to see how they administer their stewardship, for to Him they must be accountable. But alas! for that account which many of them have to make!

I leave my testimony against the rendering up the power of the Kirk and State into the hands of malignants. I do really think, they have been all dreaming, or wilfully and wickedly sinning against the light of their own consciences. Well, God hath discovered them since, in an ugly manner; and now they sin more and more. They hold fast deceit; they refuse to let it go, and will not return. It is the old professors and ministers I mean in a special manner; but more particularly the ministers; for, when the time was to speak, they held their peace, and slipped from their Master’s back, without so much as once testifying against the horrid sins then committed, and did never to this day make up the hedge, and build that which they brake down. And, as I am informed, a great part have been dreadful compliers with, and conformers to the sinful courses of this apostatising generation; yea, open persecutors of their more godly and faithful brethren, ministers, and professors; and now they are the greatest opposers of the work, and persecutors of the godly, both underhand and to their face; and, instead of edifying and binding up the weak, strive to break all they can, and especially when they are among the enemy’s hands.

In the last place, I bear my testimony to the cross of Christ, as the only desirable upmaking and rich lot of the people of God this day in Scotland. Oh! it is the portion of poor things, who desire to seek God, and design honesty in the land! I think they want a good bargain of it that want it, and I think they want nothing that have it, and get leave to carry it heartsonely, and His presence under it; I would advise you all to take it on. I dare say this much for your encouragement, that it is easy and sweet. There is no better way to carry the cross right, than to cast all our care upon Christ, and trust Him for all things, and use our single endeavours in the matter, and speak what He bids us, and when He bids us, and obey His voice in all things.

Now, I declare I hate all ungodliness. Now, farewell all things wherein I have been troubled with; a wicked world, and evil heart of misbelief, a subtle, powerful, and malicious devil, and tempted with a company of men who have shaken off the fear of God. Now, welcome Lord Jesus!—into thy hands I commit my spirit.

Sic subscribitur,

William Thomson.'