

The Joint Testimony of William Gogar, Christopher Miller, and Robert Sangster, who lived in the Shire of Stirling, and suffered at the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, March 11th, 1681. Directed to the Shire of Stirling.

“The Lord, in His holy providence, having singled us out of that shire to seal His controverted truths with our blood, we could not but leave a line behind us (we being Stirlingshire men), to let you know wherefore we are come here this day, to this place of execution; that it is for adhering to that which ministers and professors are disowning. And the Lord seeing it fit to honour us beyond others, now in this day of defection and back drawing from the truth, we tell you that it is truth we are to suffer for. Although ye condemn us in it, and say that we have a hand in our own death, yet we durst not, for our souls, do otherwise, or else we would have been sure of the broad curse of God on us and our lives both. You may think that it is a novelty of our own head, that we are brought hither for; but if any of you had that love to the Lord that you seemed to have once-a-day, you would count it your duty, as well as ours, to contend for the sweet truths of God, when you see Him so wronged, and His rights so usurped and taken from Him; who was both sweet and kind to poor things at hill-sides, and especially among you of that shire.

Oh sirs! you may take shame to you, for all that you have done against the honour of God; that have seen His goings so stately among the meetings of His people; that will not contend for lovely Christ. Oh! do ye not think that a sad day will come on you for joining with God’s enemies, who have broken Covenant with Him, and shed the blood of the saints, and trampled on the honour of God? And ye will not fear to join with them for all the blood they have shed; you will still go on with them; and, though you profess that you have love to the Son of God, and that your zeal for the Lord God of Hosts is not abated, yet you will go on with them, and bond and comply in paying of cess and militia money, to maintain a party against God and His work, which once in a day you were forward to maintain, and would have ventured your life in the maintaining of it against all the Lord’s enemies. You may justly take shame to yourselves, for your preferring the things of time to the sweet cross of lovely Christ. Oh sirs! what think ye will your doom be, that have done so much against the honour of a holy God? Indeed you may look out for wrath, and that of the saddest sort.

Now, as dying men, we tell you that there are sad days abiding you, for what you have done to the honour and glory of God, if ye get not speedy repentance. Therefore, as you would answer in the great day, make conscience of what ye do. Remember that you will count and reckon for all that you have done, and will be reckoned as guilty of the blood of the saints—as the worst enemies amongst them all. Therefore, as dying men, we charge you take with [i.e., acknowledge] guilt, or else it will be worse for you.

Oh sirs! fear the Lord’s wrath, and fall to and moum for what you have done. Oh! cry mightily for repentance, or else you will get Judas’s reward; for you are the persons that have betrayed the Son of God, and expelled Him out of your coasts. You were thinking that He was like to prove a costly Christ, and therefore you of that shire would give consent to banish Him away from among you. You would not hear tell of a field preaching for fear of hazard!

Oh sirs! take it to consideration, and lay to heart what a hand you have in banishing Christ and the Gospel out of Scotland; and we are sure, it was not your parts to have done so. No, no! it was not your part to have given lovely Christ such an affront; the sweet days that you have had long since, might have made you give Royal Jesus better quarters, though you should go to the gibbet for it, and lose your gear. For, your doing as you have done, is a denying of Him before me

Take it as ye will, we must tell you, as in the sight of the living God, before whom we are now to appear, and get our sentence for all that we have done, you are the only shire that has denied lovely Christ quarters; for He sent an offer to you to the Torwood, and ye would not hear it. Well, it is likely there are many of you that will never get another; there are some of you that would not go to hear, but forbade others to go, and thought it was duty not to go; and some of you

were at that preaching, and made a bad use of it. Oh remember, sirs! you have rejected Christ. We tell you it as dying men, you will count for it ere it be long; for our Lord did not send the Gospel to the Torwood for naught, but it will accomplish that for which it was sent.

Oh sirs! be afraid and tremble, for judgment is at the door; and indeed your sentence will be sore to bide [i.e., endure]—it will be more tolerable for open enemies in the day of judgment, than for you. We are afraid when we think what judgments will be on you shortly; for, considering what pains have been taken on you of that shire, and how tender the Lord has been of you, in training you up for suffering; and has given you trials, and you have endured them; and He has taken them off again, and given you sorer trials, and He has delivered you out of these; it had been better for you that you had been at that preaching, though you should have gotten the gallows the very next day, than to have done what ye did; and that you will find ere it be long.

Oh! what of His kindness have you met with at such places! You dare not say, that He has been a barren wilderness or a land of drought to you. Testify against Him, if He was not kind to you; so long as ye abode by Him, He abode by you; and He was tender of you, so long as ye kept faithful to Him; but after ye turned into the enemies' camp, then He turned to be your enemy, and fought against you; and in all that you do, God will be seen to be against you. You may thrive in the world, but it will be a dear thriving to you; you will get the wrath of God with it. But ye have done with thriving in the worship of God; indeed, there are many of you that hold your life no more of God. Remember, we tell you of it, who are within a few hours to eternity.

Now, it is like, you will not notice what the like of us say, but will allege that we are dying as fools, and have no Presbyterian principles, but notions; but we say the contrary. We say, we are not fools as to that, however the world may think and look on us as such. We say, we have Presbyterian principles, and are Presbyterians in our judgments, and will make it appear, that we die as Christians, and as those that own the truths of God, and are standing to what ministers once taught us; although this day they are turned to the contrary, and condemning us, and saying, that we have nothing but notions of our own heads, that make us do such things. But they will not find it so in the Day of Accounts.

1. You may say, that it is not a Presbyterian principle to cast off magistrates.

We grant with you; but where are the magistrates? Indeed, they were once placed such; but they cast out themselves, when they brake the Covenant, and set up a cursed Supremacy, insulting over the Lord's inheritance; and when they have done that, we think they are no more to be owned as magistrates by Presbyterians; but to be cast oft, and witnessed against; and when it comes to that part of the play, do ye not think, that it was our part to contend for truth?

Oh sirs! do ye not believe Jesus Christ to be the eternal Son of God, and that all things were made for Him, and by Him, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers? What is not His; and that by free gift and donation — by an eternal decree—intimated to us in the second Psalm, where, in more particular manner, He is declared to be King in Zion, and all the heathen promised to the enlargement of His kingdom? Oh sirs! do ye not believe, that Scotland became His, with its own consent, as the product of that decree, and the fruit of His intercession and purchase; and that He allows no authority to be owned, and submitted unto in Scotland, but only in so far as they keep the line of subordination to the Son of God? Or do you believe, that Scotland should have no other magistrates but such as should be of God's choosing, men of truth, able men, fearing God, hating covetousness; and that the land was bound by Covenant to have such, under the pains contained in the law, and danger both of soul and body, in the day of the Lord's fearful appearance to judgment? We believe many a man's wit in that day shall be counted foolishness.

Then, if this be a ground, we are sure ye must say, that day that Charles Stuart was crowned, perjury became national; only professors as to this point were free. Do ye think we would, without perjury and treachery to God, own Charles Stuart's authority any longer, when he held not his authority of God? But it being manifest, that in Middleton's

Parliament [held at Edinburgh, January 1661, in the Acts asserting the king's majesty to be supreme in all causes, civil or ecclesiastical, and denying the obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant.] he disclaimed that title to authority, we think we were bound to witness our loyalty to Another, and that we were freely absolved from obedience and fidelity to him then, and could not own his authority without gross perjury; he declaring, 'he would have no homage upon the account of the Covenant.' Would ye not count him a distracted man that would cleave to him on that account, whether he would or not? Yea, and whoever do it, we know they will find themselves fools. Do you believe, that in the day that Covenant was taken, any within the nation was not bound to perform and prosecute it, and that God will [not] punish the destroyers of that Covenant? Do ye think that Act explanatory of the Supremacy is not a plain renunciation of the word of God, the law of nature, the Covenant, and human society, and setting up devilism and confusion, without a full, free, and direct public testimony to the contrary? We are sure, that every public breach of Covenant requires public repentance. We think there can none be absolved without this; for in express terms our Lord says, 'Whosoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven.' Now, there should not only be a testimony given, but a walking according to it afterwards.

Oh sirs! would you have none to witness against the abominations of this day? Indeed you are all mistaken, for our Lord will not want witnesses to witness for Him, however few and feckless [i.e., feeble] they be; yet He will make the things that are not confound the things that are. Oh sirs! think you it not a sin, to join with them who have rejected the living God, and will not have Him to reign over them? Do ye not think it duty to protest against them, that are trampling our Lord's glory under foot? Oh sirs! do ye not think yourselves guilty of breach of Covenant, that have connived at these men, that have their hands reeking in the blood of the saints, when you are strengthening their hands in the doing of it? We think you guiltier nor [i.e., than] these wretches; because you join with them in sin, whereas you should have protested against them in the committing of such acts. We wot [i.e., know] well, if ye read the Bible, ye will count yourselves as guilty as they are, and the guiltiest of the two; for it was your part to have contended for the truth, and stood in defence thereof, unto the losing of lives and liberties, and all that you had. The Lord has cast them off, and yet you will do what in you lies to hold them up, who shed the blood of those who were once in a day your dear brethren!

It may be, you will say, that Samuel knew that Saul was rejected of God, and yet he did not cast him off. We answer, he did what lay in his power to get him cast off; for he went and anointed David in his stead, and durst not do it publicly, but secretly, for fear of Saul; neither did Samuel converse much with Saul after that.

Next, you say, That David's heart smote him, for taking and cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, and said, that he would not stir [i.e., hurt] the Lord's anointed. Now, we say, he had two reasons, which we have not. First, he had that reason, that he was the Lord's anointed. Secondly, it was his own particular quarrel; because he was to reign in his stead. So we say, that Charles Stuart is not the Lord's anointed, neither is it our particular quarrel, but in defence of the Gospel, and in so far as he is an enemy to God and the way of salvation; which is sufficient ground to cast any person out of the Church, and witness against him, in the defence of the Gospel, unto the losing of life and liberty, and all other things.

And, believe us as ye will, we do not think them Christians, that will not contend for lovely Christ and His sweet truths, in witnessing against this bloody excommunicate traitor, and not owning them as rulers; seeing they have disowned the just and holy One, and are trampling on His sweet truths, and would never have them to rise again, but would have the stone sealed, that there might be no more mention made of the honour of God.

And you have a deep hand in this, because ye are not faithful and free in witnessing for His despised glory. And if ye will not do it, delivery to the Church shall come from another airt [i.e., quarter], and you shall all be destroyed; for He will be up again in spite of all your hearts; and He will make your fears and theirs both come on you, for He will make inquisition for all His truths; and when He comes indeed, we would not abide the reproof that you, the professors of

Stirlingshire, will get. for all the gold in Europe. There will be no excuse heard then; your wife and children, or lands, will be no excuse; for He hath told us in express terms, that whosoever will not forsake all, and follow Him, cannot be His disciple. Wife and children, houses and lands, must all go for Him. And you must take up His cross daily, and wander through at His back; it may be, hard bestead, with a borrowed bed, and a borrowed fireside, and live upon providence. We wot [i.e., know] well, there are some of you that can say, to your sweet experience, that you never lived better than on God's providence; although now you have rejected and betaken yourselves to the world. Have you done so? Well, you may be doing; but ere long you will rue it. Remember we told you it, when we were going into eternity, that you would meet with much woe and sorrow, for what you have done against the honour of God, if you repent not.

2. You say, It is not a Presbyterian principle to own that party that is jeoparding their lives for the honour of God, and witnessing for His despised truths, that this day is so abused, and nicknamed by you and others.

But we say, It is; and maintain it to be a Presbyterian principle, to own that despised party; for they are the party that are only designing the glory and honour of God, and have no other view before them but His sweet truths, which are dear to them; and they will quit with life and liberty, before they quit with an hoof of truth, which has been made out by their valiant sufferings. Oh! but truth has been sweet and dear to them! They have not counted their lives dear unto them, on the account of it. They have cheerfully gone to the scaffold for truth, and have been honourably carried through, and the Lord's presence seen in their through-bearing; as we hope, shall be made out on us, ere it be long. Also, they study to spend their time and strength for God. When all other means have failed them, they study to keep up that mean of reading, singing, and praying, as the Lord will assist and help them: although the Indulged and their comforts have a great envy at them, and do what they can to get them off the earth. For they are the main actors in taking of that poor party. And all is, because their practices condemn theirs; although they take the Scripture for their rule, and study to walk so as they may get God's approbation in the day of accompts [i.e., accounts].

3. You say, It is not a Presbyterian principle to own these papers, that our worthies have set out, or the work that they have done, which many of them have sealed with their blood.

But we say that it is a Presbyterian principle; because all that they did was agreeable to the Word of God, and our Covenants. For, consider these papers when you please, you will find them consonant to the Scriptures, and just and lawful for Presbyterians to own. And, say the contrary who will, we do not think them Presbyterians, nor yet Covenanters, that will not own them; for there is nothing in them, but what we will with all our hearts seal with our blood as Presbyterians, and as having these principles.

4. You say, It is not a Presbyterian principle, to confess all these things.

But we say it is a Presbyterian principle to confess and avouch Him and His truths, before this adulterous generation. Now, when the quarrel is thus stated, we should not put them to prove what is truth. Stephen made a free confession of his faith, and so have all our worthies. And now, seeing we own these things, and they being the controverted truths of the day, and the Lord calling us to own and maintain them, we never thought it our part to smother and hide them, but with courage to avouch them, to the losing of our lives in the quarrel; we seeing our dearest Lord's truths so trampled on, and a pack of you that seemed to be fair before the wind for owning of truth, and witnessing for Him, never so much as putting to your hand to help, but turning your back on truth and the way of God. Indeed, we fear, that ye shall never be honoured to witness for God any more. It is like you care not for that honour. But we tell you that you will rue it, when you will not get it mended. And remember, we tell you here, as dying witnesses for truth, you will meet with as sad a judgment as ever a shire met with, if you repent not; your judgment will be unparalleled for your denying Him before men.

We are come here this day to witness freely and faithfully against you and all others, for their complying with the

enemies against the work of God. And we say, as in the sight of a living God, you will count for it ere it be long. Oh! but we think it a sweet thing to be honoured this day to contend for truth, and to be overcomers by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony. Indeed, we are called to it, to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. And we think, if we had not been free and faithful before these bloody wretches, we would have held our life no more of God, if we did not speak for His truths before them, when He bade us speak; for He sought a proof of our love to Him, and His nick-named, despised way, and to poor Zion, whom no man is seeking after.

And think you that we durst hold our tongue and not speak when He bade us? Indeed, our life was not dear to us when His truth came in question. We might have gone away with our life, and the broad curse of God upon it to go with us; if we had denied Him at this time, we would have held our lives no more of Him, of whom we held it all our clays; and now we might cheerfully lay it down at His command and bidding; for this we knew, that devils or men could not stir a hair of our head, without our Lord's determination, and therefore we are the less afraid of what they could do.

And now, as dying men, we charge you not to speak of that poor party, that this day is so reproached and spoken against by a party of them that are called ministers and professors. Oh! take shame to you altogether; and as you will be answerable in the day of accounts, we tell you not to have a wrong thought of them, for all the reproaches that can be said against them; for they are a godly people, and have much of His mind.

And if you go on with enemies and others that have turned their backs on the way of God, go your ways; but it were better that a millstone were hanged about your neck, and ye cast into the midst of the sea, than that ye should speak at such a rate as ye do; for let you and others reproach as ye will, they design nothing but the honour of God, and have the Scripture to be their rule, and walk as becomes the Gospel; and they study a holy carriage.

Although there be many among them that have an unsuitable carriage, by reason of whom the way of God is evil spoken of; yet the way of God is not an hair the worse to be liked. It may be there is a Judas among the twelve; and what of that? We say the rest are not to be cast at [i.e., objected to] for all that, seeing they keep the truth. We know there are many of you who say that we do not keep by the Scriptures. But we declare the contrary, for with all our heart we set to our seal and testimony to the holy Scriptures, which have been sweet to us; and our testimony to the National and Solemn League and Covenant, and to the Confession of Faith, as agreeable to the word of God; and to the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, and to all that our worthies have done in the defence of the Gospel. We join our hearty testimony to all their appearances in the fields, both first and last.

And we protest against all the actings of the enemies against the Lord's people in all their proceedings, both first and last, and everything that they have done against our worthies, when they were in defence of the Gospel; and we abhor and testify against Popery, Prelacy, Quakerism, Erastianism, Indulgency, and all the connivers with them, be who they will; and against Jesuitish principles, which you say we hold, which sect we most basely abhor, and give our testimony against all such erroneous sects and principles. We give our testimony against all you that say we have such principles, and that we have got new principles and new light. But we do say the contrary; and declare that we do hold by these principles which ministers did teach both you and us to stand to in the defence of, until we had lost our lives and all in that quarrel.

Now, you that say such things of us, we exhort you to repent, or else you will meet with a sore day of wrath; for it is not a light thing to speak of sufferers, as you do. Therefore, we obtest you in the bowels of Jesus Christ, to be sober in your speeches against that party, and make a right choice, and fairly side yourselves, and come out from among the tents of the wicked, and be separated from among them, and join yourselves to the poor suffering remnant, and be not at ease now in the day of Zion's trouble. Do not think that you will enjoy your ceiled houses, and your warm firesides, in such a day as this. If you be single for God, He will have you out from all these things, and denied to them all; for woe to him

that is at ease when Zion is in trouble, and is not concerned in all the afflictions of Joseph! You must either now get a wakening, or else you will get a wakening when the wrath of an angry God comes on the land for sin.

Indeed, sirs, we think that religion has not cost you much heart work. We think you have not been at much pains in seeking of God, for as fair a show as ye seem to have. Indeed, when the Gospel was in its purity, and many seeking to preachings, the Lord seemed to be kind to you, and you seemed to have much love to Him and His despised way, and you seemed as if you would have ventured your life in the defence of the Gospel. But when we would have looked through you at preachings, and going to them, and in coming from them, it would have made some of us a sore heart to see your unconcernedness and unsuitable carriage, even among you that seemed to be the heads of them. And when we would have been in some of your companies, either coming or going, your talk did aye [i.e., always] smell of the world, and so is come of it. Oh! repent and come out from among your lusts and idols that you are so wedded to, and take hold of a Mediator and seek the Lord with all your heart.

Oh! you town of Stirling and the shire, repent; for sentence is passed against you for what you have done, although it be not put in execution yet. But it will be put in execution ere long, if you repent not, though the Lord is seeing it fit to take us away from the evils which are coming on this land, for breach of Covenant and a slighted Gospel. We tell you, it may be you will find it when we are gone; it is better to endure all the torments that devils and men can inflict on you here, than to endure one drop of the wrath of an angry God, that will be poured out without mixture on all ranks that have not the work of the day upon their spirits, be who they will, ministers or professors, indulged or not indulged; for, if they be not taken up and concerned with the case of the Church of God this day, as it is stated, He will come and reckon with them all, and count them all turners aside, and will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity, when peace shall be on Israel. Therefore, we would desire you to have a care, and look well about you what you are doing, and beware of speaking against that party.

There are some of you that say, they are of bloody principles. You should beware of speaking these things, for the contrary is known that they are not murderers, nor have any such intentions, as some of yourselves know, although you be speaking the contrary; for you never heard of their killing any, except it was in the defence of the Gospel, and their own defence.

Likewise you say that we are cursers and criers for vengeance on the land. Now we must not stay to argue this out, we being this day to lay down our lives; but we think any that has tender love to the Son of God, and His cause, cannot but be grieved to see ministers and professors so avowedly betray the truth that is sweet and dear to us; yea, dearer than our lives. And, when we think on what you have done to the sweet truths of God, we cannot but pray against your courses. As for anything ye can do to us, we heartily forgive you. But the wrongs you have done to a holy God, we cannot get them borne, for they are weighty to us. If it were our enemies, we would bear with it; but when it comes from the like of you, we cannot get it borne.

Truly, sirs, we think ye will embrace Popery ere it be long. Your entertaining of that excommunicate Duke of York, a professed Papist, says that you would do more yet. There was not one of you all in town or shire that moved your tongue against him; but, as if you had all been professed Papists, you let him come in among you, and kindly entertained him. We leave our testimony against your so doing. [In the preceding month, James, Duke of York, had visited Linlithgow and Stirling.]

But we break off, having no more time; and request you to take these things to your consideration, and lay sin to heart, and mourn bitterly before the Lord for what you have done. We here obtest you to come off these ways of yours, and make conscience of duty, as in the sight of a holy God, before whom ye must shortly appear. Slight not time, for it is precious. Wrath is at the door. Oh! make haste, and lay these things to heart, and study to have a more tender respect

to the honour of God. We desire to leave it on you now, when we are going into eternity, that you would mind your engagements and vows to God. And so we bid you farewell, and bid you mind the poor groaning Kirk that we are to leave behind us, which was dear to us.

Now we bid farewell to poor desolate Zion, and pray the Lord may mind her case. Farewell all things in time, and welcome Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Subscribed at the Iron House, a little before we went out to the scaffold, March 11, 1681.

William Gouger. Christopher Miller. Robert Sangster.