

## ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

(The Solemn League and Covenant, Pt. 2.)

“That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person.”—Fourth Term of Communion.

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### The First Article.

“I. That we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of GOD, endeavor, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the Word of GOD, and the example of the best reformed Churches; and shall endeavour to bring the Churches of GOD in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, Directory for Worship and Catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

Question 1.—*Is it a chief article of our faith that we seek to preserve the reformed religion of the Kirk of Scotland?*

Answer.—Yes. 3 John 11. This we should endeavor because: 1.) In doctrine, it is all orthodox, 2 Tim. 3:16. Scripture commands us to study to maintain sound doctrine, Tit. 1:9. There is a faith contrary to sound doctrine which distorts and warps practice, 1 Tim. 1:10. However, there are explicit commands that we hold to true apostolic doctrine lest we bring divisions to the church through corrupt practice, Rom. 16:17. 2.) In worship, it is pure and unmixed, Phil. 3:3. Scripture commands us to worship God in the way He has appointed and none else, Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:23. All worship offered contrary to the Divine command is idolatry, Ex. 30:9; Lev. 10:1. From this, all Christians are commanded to flee, 1 John 5:21. 3.) In discipline and government, against our common enemies, 2 Sam. 23:3; Ps. 110:2; for it is warrantable, and no way tyrannical, *cf.* Lev. 25:46. The government is upon Christ’s shoulders and ought to be fixed by Him alone, Isa. 9:6, 7; Eph. 4:11.

Question 2.—*Ought we to endeavor the reformation of religion in those nations, which are not reformed, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the word of God and the example of the best reformed churches?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 28:19, 20. The Great Commission lays a burden upon the Church to seek to disciple the nations, Acts 9:15. This is the design of the Gospel itself to subdue the world of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, to the obedience of the faith of Christ, Matt. 10:18. For this end, the apostle Paul declared himself committed, even at the expense of his own life, 2 Tim. 4:16, 17. This ought to be effected according to the word of God, Ps. 119:9; which alone can cleanse men from iniquity, Eph. 5:26. It should also be carried out with a reference to the godly examples of those who have already reformed, 1 Cor. 11:1; Song 1:8. Thus, the call to reform is at the same time a call to embrace the faithful doctrine and practice of those who have gone before, Heb. 6:12; 13:7. The apostolic doctrine and practice as found in those who are faithful followers of apostles is considered the normative standard and example for those who would be accounted faithful themselves, Phil. 3:17.

Question 3.—*Ought we to endeavor to bring the churches of God in diverse kingdoms into nearest conjunction and uniformity?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Zech. 14:9. We ought to seek this uniformity in: 1.) Religion, for in the New Testament church, it was prophesied that the Lord would give not only one heart, but one way, Jer. 32:39. This way, and no other, is the way of salvation and only those who have faith in Christ shall go in this way, Isa. 35:8. 2.) Profession of faith, for we are exhorted to walk by the same rule, so far as we have attained, to study uniformity, not diversity in things that are agreed upon to be good and right, Phil. 3:16. There are only two paths of profession, one drawing nigh to God and the other departing into unbelief, Heb. 10:38, 39. 3.) Form of church government, for the apostle enjoins such in various matters of church policy, 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:17, 19. It is the purpose of church government, in its higher courts, to establish forms and usages as well as providing authoritative interpretations against rising errors or heresies, Acts 15:28-31; 16:4, 5. 4.) Directory for worship, for the apostle clearly intimates and commends such an uniformity, 1 Cor. 14:27, 33, 40. The worship of God ought to be undertaken in an orderly manner, *cf.* 1 Cor. 11:34; and this order is noted as a matter of cause for apostolic joy, an expression of approbation, and, therefore, a note of its desirability in all churches, Col. 2:5. 5.) Catechising, for we are exhorted all to speak the same thing, 1 Cor. 1:10; and that ought to be sound doctrinally, Tit. 2:1. Thus, it is a commanded duty that teachers in the church engage in catechizing in order that those taught might be better enabled to give an answer for the hope within, Gal. 6:6.

Question 4.—*What is the end of seeking the aforesaid conjunction and uniformity?*

*Answer.*—The end of seeking after such a conjunction and uniformity is twofold: 1.) That we and our posterity may live in faith and love as brethren, Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1. The apostles enjoin holding fast the form of sound words in faith and love, 2 Tim. 1:13; and all that we might live together in love as brethren, 1 Pet. 3:8. This is simply the just application of the Divine law, Ex. 12:49. 2.) That the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us, Zech. 2:10, 11. The profession of the truth being one because there is only one truth, 2 Cor. 13:8; therefore, it must be uniform amongst the Gentiles as well as the Jews, Ezek. 37:27.

Question 5.—*Is it proper to undertake covenanting, not only for ourselves, but for our children?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Deut. 5:2, 3. Scripture affords many examples of this principle being taken for granted, *e.g.*, Gen. 17:7; Acts 2:38, 39. The relations of the domestic circle are of Divine appointment, Ps. 68:6; 107:41. The Lord is not only the God of each individual, but of families, Jer. 31:1. In fact, the wrath of God is threatened against all families that do not call upon His Name, that is, which do not vow to Him, Jer. 10:25. It was by families that Israel, in the land of Moab, did take hold of the covenant and present themselves before Him, Deut. 29:18. This entails a careful instruction in these covenants, and to cause the children to make conscience thereof, Deut. 6:6, 7. For without such diligent instruction of our children, and good examples given by us to them, God may justly plague us, and let them forget and fall from this covenant, and the judgments of God will fall on the posterity, as on Israel, for King Saul's breaking of the oath to the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. 21:1.