

## ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

### *The Solemn League and Covenant.*

#### The Preface.

“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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Question 1.—*Is it incumbent upon men of all ranks and stations to engage in public social covenanting, and especially on those who are ministers of the Gospel?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Deut. 29:9-11; 2 Kings 23:1-3; 2 Chron. 34:29-32. Every man is, in charity, bound to be an angel to unmindful Jacob, in point of his vow to God, and monitor his back-sliding brother, Rom. 15:14. But it especially belongs to Gospel ministers, who are God’s watchmen against sin, and his people’s remembrancers unto duty, who are not only by common charity, but also by special office, bound to give warning against approaching evil, contracting guilt, and impending judgments of God, and that as they will acquit themselves from the blood of those immortal souls, who slip into, and perish by their sin, Isa. 62:6 (“make mention of the LORD,” literally, “the LORD’s remembrancers”); Ezek. 3:16-20; 33:7-9.

Question 2.—*Ought the highest end of any covenant to be the glory of God?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 1 Cor. 10:31. It is the great principle of the Christian faith to believers and the chief end of all men to do all that they do to the glory of God. Covenanting is an ordinance of divine worship, which has for its great and leading design, to give homage to God, by an avowal of our complete subjection to, and dependence upon him. Thus Scripture presents covenanting as, not only swearing by the Lord of hosts, but as a swearing to Him, Isa. 45:23-25; 56:6. To the same effect is that described in the New Testament, Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 8:5.

Question 3.—*Ought public social covenants to take in the honor and happiness of the supreme magistrate?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Josh. 1:8, 9. What was written to Joshua is applicable to all who rule. The duties of lawful civil governors and of the people under them owing by these classes respectively to one another ought to be vowed. They are duties to God, Ps. 47:7. They are therefore included in the oath of allegiance which both kings and subjects ought to swear to Him, 2 Kings 11:17. If a civil constitution is according to the word of God, if the rulers who carry its ordinances into effect are men fearing God and hating covetousness (Ex. 18:21; 2 Sam. 23:3), and if they dispense in a righteous manner its just laws, obedience is due by the people, and ought to be vowed to God, 1 Pet. 2:13, 14. That cannot be done completely for the Lord’s sake, which is not vowed to Him, Num. 30:2.

Question 4.—*Ought public social covenants to be concerned with true public liberty, safety and peace, including every one's private condition?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Gal. 6:10. Every one ought to promote the welfare of his neighbor. “Am I my brother's keeper?” is, in every age, the motto only of the murderer. Thus, various duties of the members of civil society are proper matter of solemn covenant engagement.

Question 5.—*Should those engaging in public social covenanting be motivated by a concern for the unity in civil government and religion?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Luke 11:2. The coming of God's kingdom consists in two things: 1.) The subduing of the nations to His Gospel, Ps. 9:17; Rev. 11:15. The kingdoms of this world are established and unified in lawful constitutions when the hand of God is upon them, 1 Kings 2:12; Dan. 4:34-37; and they are dissolved by disregard of the commands of the Lord, 1 Sam. 13:13, 14. 2.) The unity of God's people in His truth, Ps. 133:1; Eph. 4:13. This occurs when all God's people are joined in the same confession and judgment, 1 Cor. 1:10.

Question 6.—*Should those engaging in public social covenanting be motivated by a remembering of the plots of the enemies of God against the true religion, both past and present?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Ps. 50:15. The knowledge of both past designs of the enemies of God and His true religion along with any present conflicts provide suitable motives for engaging in public social covenanting, Judg. 11:12-21, 30-32.

Question 7.—*Should those engaging in public social covenanting be motivated by the lack of prevailing by means of supplications, remonstrances, protestations and sufferings?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Chron. 29:10. When other means fail, it behooves God's people to lay hold upon God Himself and bind themselves to Him by means of covenanting that the church and the nation might prosper, 2 Chron. 15:3-7, 12-15.

Question 8.—*Should those engaging in public social covenanting be motivated by the commendable practice of those reforming fathers gone before and the examples of God's people elsewhere?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Song 1:8. The example of the people of God, while they walk in all his ordinances and commandments blameless, is a warranted motive to duty, 1 Cor. 11:1. Were we doubtful whether or not their observance of covenanting was according to the will of God, we should not be encouraged by it. But when assured of its consistency with the Divine record, we are called to follow it, Heb. 6:11, 12.

Question 9.—*Is it proper that such public social covenants be entered into with hands lifted up to the Most High God, calling upon His Name?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Ezek. 20:5; Heb. 6:13. Thus does the Lord represent Himself as swearing or covenanting with His people. An oath is sworn with the lifting up of the right hand, Dan. 12:7; Rev. 10:5, 6. So, we have this example recorded in the life of Abraham, the father of all the faithful, Gen. 14:22. Also, we see this in the admonition of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 30:8 (“Yield”—literally, *give the hand*—“yourselves unto the Lord”).