
Calvin, Close Communion and the Coming Reformation

**(A Book Review of *Alexander and Rufus;
or a Series of Dialogues on Church
Communion, in Two Parts. Part 1:
Vindication of Scriptural Church
Communion in Opposition to
Latitudinarian Schemes. Part 2: Defence of
the Communion Maintained in the
Secession Church* by John Anderson
[1862])**

Written by Reg Barrow, Copyright 1996

**"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences
contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).**

John Calvin listed the doctrine of the sacraments as the third most important

element, in cataloguing his four major areas of concern, regarding Christianity and the ecclesiastical Reformation of his day, writing,

If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity: this is, a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and, secondly, of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name Christians, our profession is empty and vain. After these come the sacraments and the government of the church... (*The Necessity of Reforming the Church* [Presbyterian Heritage Publications, 1544, reprinted 1995], p. 15).

Second Reformation thought on church communion is clearly echoed in the words of the Reformed Presbytery, in 1876, when they declared,

In this age of boasted charity, but really 'detestable neutrality and indifferency,' it is an irksome and painful task, but a duty, thus to bear testimony against churches, in which are to be found, no doubt, many precious sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. But personal piety never was, nor possibly can be, the condition of fellowship in the visible church. To think so, and say so, is one of the most popular delusions of the present day. It puts the supposed pious man, speaking his experience, in the place of God, speaking his sovereign will in the Bible. This is the height of impiety. (*Act, Declaration, and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation*, p. 175).

These testimonies remain true today (and maybe even more so), as the **close communion doctrine of the Reformation** continues to be much misunderstood and even more maligned. The false ecumenists (and **theological egalitarians and pluralists**) of our day continue to batter away at this foundation of the Reformation doctrine of the church -- while even many of those that profess to be the heirs of the Reformation are found to be ignorant regarding this point. Any doctrine of communion which does not take into account the biblical command to "be of one mind" (cf. Rom. 15:6, 2 Cor. 13:11, Phil. 1:27, Phil. 2:2, 1 Pet. 3:8) at a corporate, visible level is skewed from the beginning. In short, **latitudinarian schemes of open communion** (which only include the so-called "essentials" of the faith) are schismatic (i.e. if we do not confuse "schism" with "separation").

As Dodson notes, in his *Open Letter to an RPCNA Elder*, one should not

confuse 'schism' with 'separation.' They are not the same thing. John Brown, of Haddington, states, **'that schism in scripture, chiefly, if not solely, represents alienation of affection, and disagreement among those who continue the same joint attendance on the ordinances of the gospel,'** 1 Cor. 12:25; 1:10. Augustine said, 'It is not a different faith makes schismatics, but a broken society of communion.' In no place, in the Bible, does the word 'schism' appear to signify 'visible separation.'
Error in doctrine, corruption in worship and tyranny in discipline, render separation unavoidable, to escape the sin of schism. Your conception of what constitutes 'schism' is that of Rome. If 'schism' is 'separation;' and 'There is no precedent for schism [re: separation] in the Bible;' then, on what basis did Protestants leave Rome? Every Reformer owned that Rome is, in some sense, a Church of Christ. After all, that man of sin is seated in the 'temple of God,' as they taught (emphases added).

Schismatic schemes promoting open communion (of which **paedocommunion** is presently at the head), attempt to **"dumb down"** (to a greater or lesser degree) the requirements for partaking at the Lord's table. Loose and latitudinarian schemes of communion lead to churches that stand for little -- or nothing -- over time; while a Scripturally regulated close communion tends to the exact opposite end. Anderson makes this very point in his preface to this book, **"corruption is the native consequence of latitudinarian schemes, (while) scriptural order in sacramental communion tends to make the visible church a heaven on earth to the faithful, terrible as an army with banners to her enemies, and to her King and Head for a name, for a praise and for glory."**

If you love the purity and peace of Christ's church and agree with the words of **John Calvin**, when he wrote, **"We are only contending about the true and lawful constitution of the church, required in the communion not only of the sacraments (which are the signs of profession) but also especially of doctrine"** (*Institutes*, 4.2.12), then you will find a meaty meal in *Alexander and Rufus* -- for the author not only deals with the larger questions related to church communion, but also weaves into the fabric of this book many specific threads relating to practical applications and doctrinal controversies. Moreover, notwithstanding a couple of peculiar doctrinal foibles originating from the Seceder camp, in opposition to the Covenanters (especially regarding civil government and some points of the law), a plethora of subjects relative to the Reformed view of communion, church union, testimony-bearing, etc., are all

dealt with here -- and these points are given the kind of attention (along with Scriptural and historical accuracy) that will be greatly appreciated among those familiar with the precise views of the "old dissenters" of Scottish origin.

Additionally, Anderson is not shy about proclaiming the fact that **Scripture teaches that anti-Calvinists (i.e. Romanists, Pelagians, Arminians, Amyraldians, etc.), anti-paedobaptists, anti-regulativists, and a host of others that deny the apostolic faith (at points related to the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the church), should be barred from the table of the Lord** (arguing *a fortiori* from Math. 5:23-24); but, he is also careful to distinguish between the Popish and Prelatical views of excommunication (which equate excommunication with a sentence to hell) and the Calvinistic view which recognizes that those who are among the elect can at times come under the sentence of excommunication. For example, Greg Price has noted (in a forthcoming book on the visible church and separation) that "Calvin distinguishes between anathema and excommunication. The former sentences one to hell, the latter puts one outside the fellowship of the church" (cf. Calvin's *Institutes* 4.12.10). Samuel Rutherford makes the same distinction in his *Survey of the Survey of that Summe of Church Discipline* (1658) commenting on 1 Cor. 16:22 and 1 Cor. 5, as does James Fraser of Brae, on page 210, in *The Lawfulness and Duty or Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches* (1744).

It is also not without significance that Anderson's contendings can be seen to be nothing more than classic second Reformation teaching regarding fencing the Lord's table. **Samuel Rutherford** comments,

Because the Churches take not care, that Ministers be savoury and gracious; from Steermen all Apostasie and rottenness begin. O if the Lord would arise and purge his House in Scotland! As for Church-members, they ought to be holy; and though all baptized be *actu primo* members, yet such as remain habitually ignorant after admonition, are to be cast out, and though they be not cast out certainly, as paralytick or rottened members cannot discharge the functions of life: So those that are scandalous, ignorant, malignant, unsound in faith, lose their rights of Suffrages in election of Officers, and are to be debarred from the Seals. Nor can we defend our sinful practise in this: it were our wisdom to repent of our taking in the Malignant party, who shed the blood of the people of God, and obstructed the work of God, into places of Trust in the Church State, and the Army, contrary to our Covenants, they continuing still Enemies (*Survey of the Survey*, p. 373).

This is confirmed throughout *The Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, From the Year 1638 to the Year 1649 Inclusive*. **Here is a partial list of offences recorded in *The Acts* for which people were disciplined:** innovations in worship; neglecting daily family worship; Sabbath breaking; covenant refusing, covenant breaking and speaking against the national covenants; Arminianism; celebrating man-ordained holydays (e.g. Christmass); familiar fellowship with those excommunicated; promoting, countenancing, hearing or accepting false church government and unlawful ministers (whether Popish, Episcopal or sectarian [Independent]); slander; contumacy, etc.

Furthermore, recognizing Calvin's (biblical) distinctions concerning the visible church (distinguishing between the **visible church** as to **essence** and the visible church as to **constitution**, cf. Calvin's *Institutes* 4.2.12), Anderson writes:

The catholic church comprehends all that profess the true religion. There is a lawful and necessary division of it into sections in respect of local situation. **But when a number of people, bearing the Christian name, combine together as a distinct society, for the purpose of maintaining and propagating doctrines and practices, which, instead of belonging to the true religion, are contrary to it; they ought not, considered as such a combination, to be called a lawful section of the catholic church (i.e. constitutionally, according to their public character and profession--RB). It is not denied, that they belong to the catholic church** (in as far as they, as individuals, profess the truth--RB); but it is denied, that there ought to be any such section or division in it. **Thus, there ought to be no section of the catholic church, having for the peculiar end of its distinct subsistence, the support of episcopal hierarchy, unknown in the Scripture, of the propagation of antipaedobaptism, or of anti-scriptural doctrine, in opposition to that of God's election, redemption, effectual calling and the conservation of his people, as delivered in the scripture; or for the support of ways and means of divine worship not found in Scripture. If the catholic visible church were brought to a suitable discharge of her duty, she would abolish all such sections.** But no society ought to be called such an unlawful section, while it can be shown that it subsists as a separate society for no other end, than for the maintaining of something in the doctrine, worship or government of the church which belongs to the Christian religion as delivered in the word of God, or for exhibiting a testimony against prevailing errors and corruptions which the scripture requires the catholic church to condemn. Such a profession of any party of Christians is no sectarian profession; and a union with

them is not a sectarian, but properly a Christian union; and, being cordial and sincere, is a union in Christ; and communion upon the ground of this union is truly Christian communion. **On the other hand, however much of our holy religion any body of Christians hold in common with others, and however many of them we may charitably judge to be saints, yet while their distinguishing profession is contrary to the word of God, communion with them, as a body so distinguished, is sectarian communion; as it implies a union with them in that which ought to be rejected by the whole catholic church** (pp. 10-11, emphases added).

Commenting on "Alexander's" **latitudinarian contention that Calvin would have tolerated Arminians and idolaters at the Lord's table** (which together comprise the two main areas of Calvin's concern for ecclesiastical Reformation, as cited at the head of this review), "Rufus" replies,

Considering that the Arminian scheme includes some of the most pernicious errors of Popery, how reproachful it is to the memory of Calvin, to call such a base proposal, his plan revived and prosecuted? Did Mr. Calvin ever speak of independent churches in the one church of Christ? Or of promoting union, by holding sacramental communion with the professed teachers of false doctrine, as every Arminian teacher is, or with the professed defenders of superstition in the worship of God? By no means (*Alexander and Rufus*, p. 159).

Furthermore, it is a well documented fact that **the Genevan Presbytery of Calvin's day, in 1536, sought to excommunicate anyone who would not swear an oath to uphold the Reformed doctrine as it was set forth in their *Confession of Faith***. T.H.L. Parker writes,

Since the evangelical faith had only recently been preached in the city, and there were still many Romanists, **the ministers also urged excommunication on the grounds of failure to confess the faith**. The Confession of faith, which all the citizens and inhabitants of Geneva... must promise to keep and to hold had been presented to the Council on 10 November 1536. Let the members of the Council be the first to subscribe and then the citizens, 'in order to recognize those in harmony with the Gospel and those loving rather to be of the kingdom of the pope than of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.' **Those who would not subscribe were to be excommunicated** (*John Calvin: A Biography*, p. 63,

emphases added).

Moreover, those who would not submit to "Calvin's" close communion were not only proceeded against with **negative ecclesiastical sanctions**, but they came under **negative civil sanctions also**.

Mike Wagner, in *Up From Reconstructionism*, states,

John Calvin, during the First Reformation, showed that he supported the concept of Covenanted Reformation by requiring all the residents of Geneva to take an oath in support of the Reformation. The 'Register of the Council of 24' of Geneva notes as follows: 12 November 1537. It was reported that yesterday the people who had not yet made their oath to the reformation were asked to do so, street by street; whilst many came, many others did not do so. No one came from the German quarter. **It was decided that they should be commanded to leave the city if they did not wish to swear to the reformation** (Scribner, Bob and Pamela Johnston. 1993. *The Reformation in Germany and Switzerland*, Cambridge University Press, p. 138, emphases added).

Now, it should be obvious to those who know the commandments of God that **an honest man cannot swear an oath to uphold a confession that he does not believe. To do so, even if the man disagrees with only one point of the confession, is to violate both the third and ninth commandments** -- and to play the Jesuit (see the *Westminster Larger Catechism* on the duties required and the sins forbidden concerning the third and ninth commandments; these can be found as questions and answers 112, 113, 144, and 145). Such false swearing is also, by definition, perjury (I wonder how many perjured officers reside in Presbyterian and Reformed churches today?). To encourage others to so swear is subornation to perjury. These are all serious sins in themselves and all worthy of excommunication and civil penalties -- as the Genevan Reformers rightly taught and practiced.

In *Alexander and Rufus* **close communion is also shown (as above) to be God's ordained method of promoting truth, unity and Reformation**; not destroying it, as the ignorant and scandalous claim,

The term sectarian, the favorite watch-word of this author, tends to divert the attention from the matter in dispute. The question is, whether a church's refusing to have sacramental communion with such as openly

avow their opposition to one or more articles of her scriptural profession has such effects as are now mentioned? Does this refusal break up the unity of the church at large? By no means. **The truths of God's word constitute the bond of unity in the catholic church; so far as they are publicly professed and preserved in the doctrine, worship, and government of the several particular churches. Hence it is evident, that what breaks up the peace of the catholic church, is not the faithfulness of particular churches in refusing, but their laxness in granting sacramental communion to the avowed opposers of undoubted truths of God's word, as exhibited in the public profession of any of the churches, every instance of this laxness tending to weaken the bond of their union.** Does refusing sacramental communion with the avowed opposers of the truths of God, publicly professed by a particular church, chill the warmth of love to the catholic church? surely no: for it is manifestly the interest of the catholic church that every particular church should hold these truths in her public profession, and **not tolerate opposition to them in her communion. Hence it must give sincere pleasure to a lover of the catholic church to see a particular church uniformly faithful in refusing church communion to open opposers of any one of the truths of God contained in her public profession...** Does the faithfulness of a particular church, in refusing to have sacramental communion with the open opposers of any article of her scriptural profession, hinder her from using any means appointed in the word of God for promoting his spiritual kingdom? This is so far from being the case, that this refusal is supposed and implied in the use of several proper means for that end; such as, a church's contending for the whole truth exhibited in her public profession; **the judicial assertion of the truths of God's word, and the judicial condemnation of the contrary errors; committing the word to faithful men, who will teach others the whole truth and nothing but the truth, according to the public profession or testimony of the church, in due subordination to the holy scriptures; recognising the solemn engagements, which the church has come under to preserve whatever measure of reformation has been attained. These means, which are certainly appointed in the word of God, cannot be sincerely used by any particular church, unless she be careful, that such as are avowed and obstinate opposers of any article of her scriptural profession, may not be received into, or continued in her communion.** Whilst these means, of our Lord's appointment, are willfully neglected, we have little ground to expect the Divine blessing on such other means as men may pretend, to use for the advancement of

his spiritual kingdom (pp. 92-93, emphases added).

To see how closely this mirrors Calvin's teaching, see pages 126 to 135 in *The Necessity of Reforming the Church* (Presbyterian Heritage Publications' edition).

Anderson also does an excellent job concerning: Calvin's plan for promoting a union among the churches (p. 151ff.); the place of confessions and confessional subscription (pp. 85, 179); covenanting (pp. 358-384); separation (pp. 92, 132); worship (pp. 10-13, 87, 107, 142, 155, 161-164, 456ff., etc.); the marks of the church (p. 132ff.); uniformity (pp. 7, 103, 168, 205); the Westminster Assembly (p. 169ff); the Dutch views (p. 158f.); distinctions between essentials and non-essentials (p. 168); the so-called "glorious revolution" of 1688 (p. 263); the French Reformed churches (p. 156); the covenanted Reformation (p. 253); discipline (p. 103); attainments (pp. 11, 93, 137, 162ff., 206, etc.); the government of the church (p. 123); the so-called "Apostle's creed" (pp. 100-104); the Belgic Confession (pp. 135-138); councils in the ancient church (p. 104); the Donatists (p. 112); the forsaking of sin, false doctrine, and false teachers (pp. 92, 132); occasional hearing (p. 83); Owen against open communion (p. 207); sectarianism (p. 92); and much, much more.

On the topic of church and sacramental communion you are unlikely to find many other books with as much solid information. Recommended for advanced study. Indexed, 518 pages.

***Rufus and Alexander* is a "rare bound photocopy" and sells for \$99.95-80%=\$19.99 (Canadian funds) or as a Hardcover photocopy for \$39.00 (Canadian funds)**

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government, terms of communion, creeds, confessions, covenants, etc., exposed (in modern Presbyterian and Reformed churches) and corrected in accordance with Scripture and the best teachers and preachers of the (first and second) Protestant Reformations. This is chapter four from the book *The Covenanted Reformation Defended: "Misrepresentation #4: The Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton (PRCE) is guilty of imposing the traditions of men upon the conscience by requiring terms of communion that are unscriptural."* Free etext:
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GEORGE, R.J.

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MCKNIGHT, W.J.

Concerning Close Communion

An strong little book that should be considered by all those seeking the purity and peace of the church. Holds to the strict old covenanted Presbyterian position. Justifies the maintaining of the separate existence of a denomination that will faithfully testify against sin, and the excluding from the Lord's table those that do not so testify. Gives numerous examples of backsliding in regard to specific truths of Scripture. Proclaims that "the Word of God teaches unequivocally that the Commandments are equally binding." This includes the first commandment as it relates to Christ's Kingship over the nations (and dissent from immoral civil governments which will not recognize and obey Christ as King and law giver); and the second commandment concerning purity of worship (as against "all devising, counselling, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God Himself," such as the use of songs other than the Psalms and the Popish use of musical instruments in public worship). Maintains that violation of these commandments are grounds for barring a person from the Lord's table. Shows how close communion is nothing more than the old Presbyterian view, in keeping with the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and John Calvin when he stated "We are only contending about the true and lawful constitution of the church, required in the communion not only of the sacraments (which are the signs of profession) but also especially of doctrine" (John Calvin, *Institutes* 2.12). Also includes an excellent discussion of essentials and non-essentials, as they relate to the Lord's supper and salvation. The best short book on the Lord's supper that we have seen. Written by an RPCNA minister in large easy-to-read type.

REFORMED PRESBYTERY

An Explanation and Defence of the Terms of Communion, Adopted by the Community of Dissenters, etc.

Defends the inescapable necessity of creeds and confessions, while promoting a fully creedal church membership. Shows how the law of God obliges all Christians "to think the same things, and to speak the same things; holding fast the form of sound words, and keeping the ordinances as they have been delivered to us" (Col. 3:13). After laying

some basic groundwork, this book proceeds to defend the six points of the "Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion Agreed Upon by the Reformed Presbytery." These six points are the most conservative and comprehensive short statements of consistent Presbyterianism you will likely ever see. Besides the obvious acknowledgement of the alone infallible Scriptures, the Westminster Standards, and the divine right of Presbyterianism, these points also maintain the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, the Renovation of these covenants at Auchenshugh in 1712, and the Judicial Act, Declaration and Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery. In short, this book sets forth adherence to the whole of the covenanted reformation, in both church and state, as it has been attained by our covenanting forefathers.

MCKNIGHT, W.J.

Covenanting, Communion and Confessions: With a Short Summary of the Westminster Confession of Faith

Deals with the terms of communion as they relate to the Reformation Creeds and the Westminster Confession. Defends creedalism and the historic progress evident in the faithful creeds. Touches on covenanting. Contains a useful summary of every chapter of the WCF. In classic Reformed Presbyterian style, the author notes the testimony of the martyrs in leaving "a noble example for us and our posterity to follow, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils, which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either church or state."

ANONYMOUS

A Modest Apology for the Conduct of Seceders, in Refusing to Join in Christian Communion with Sectarians, Latitudinarians, etc. Who Have Departed From the Purity of Reformation Once Attained to in these Kingdoms

An exceedingly rare work published in 1773. Sets forth a strong case for separation from all bodies that are backslidden from the work of covenanted reformation, as it was attained during the days of the Westminster Assembly, and as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and its related documents (regarding the government, worship, doctrine and discipline of Christ's church). Denounces the "detestable indifference or neutrality" of not maintaining covenant obligations, which bind all

reformers, "to endeavour the extirpation of all superstition, heresy, schism, and whatsoever should be found contrary to sound doctrine." Also proves that there is no liberty or love that is contrary to God's Word. Maintains Christian charity throughout by distinguishing between loving the persons in error, and taking part with, or encouraging them in their sinful confederacies or actions. A great work on the subjects of purity, faithfulness and separation. It is in keeping with the sentiments expressed in the Reformed Presbytery's Act, Declaration and Testimony which states: "The first cry against the presbytery and its members was 'schism, schismatics.' This charge was promptly and publicly met and refuted, by showing from the Scriptures, that schism 'is in the body,' 1 Cor. 12:26; and from the approved writings of our covenanting fathers, that 'sometimes to avoid schism, we must separate.' Our worthy ancestors knew better than to adopt the vocabulary of papal Rome. Besides, 'the majority making defection are the real separatists.'" (Samuel Rutherford).

CLARKSON, ANDREW

Plain Reasons for Presbyterians Dissenting from the Revolution Church of Scotland. Also, Their Principles Concerning Civil Government, and the Difference Betwixt the Reformation and Revolution Principles (1731)

An exceedingly rare and important book now back in print after 265 years! The *Contending Witness* magazine (May, 1841) described *Plain Reasons* "**as the single best volume penned defending the principles of the second Reformation.**" It sets forth "**the grounds why Presbyterian Dissenters refused to hold communion with the revolution church and state,**" (Reformed Presbytery, *Act Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation*, p. 154n). The biblical principles contained in this book still apply today and thus *Plain Reasons* remains one of the best books explaining why (and when) an individual (church or citizen) should separate himself (or itself) from those (in church or state) who do not hold fast to all the attainments of our **covenanted Reformation forefathers**. In this regard the session of the Puritan Reformed Church of Edmonton calls this the one book that best explains why faithful Covenanted Presbyterians must, for conscience sake, remain ecclesiastically separate from all Presbyterian denominations that have backslidden from second Reformation attainments. (This being the classic corporate Calvinistic application of such commands as "Nevertheless, whereto we have already **attained**, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" [Phil. 3:16, emphasis added]. It is also the acknowledgement that the Lord has clearly stated in his Word that he "requireth that which is past" [Eccl. 3:15]).

Furthermore, the session of the PRC of Edmonton has noted that this book "clearly spells out the reasons why to unite with the Revolution Church (1689) or any of its descendants (The Free Church of Scotland, The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and American Presbyterian Churches) is to undermine and subvert the work of the Second Reformation. The argumentation is cogent (with an abundant supply of documentation). The reading can be divided up into 5-10 pages at a time. Reasons 8 and 9 (pp. 77-91) which speak to the issue of the covenants are very helpful, as is Reason 14 (pp. 138-140) which covers the matter of terms of communion. We might also highlight Clarkson's treatment of ecclesiastical dissent (pp. 172-221 wherein he discusses schism) and political dissent (pp. 221-280). **This is the best apologetic we have read defending the necessity of Presbyterians to faithfully maintain the attainments of the Second Reformation**" (emphasis added). Moreover, Clarkson's section on schism, separation and the nature of the visible church (constitutionally considered) contains over 10 pages of notes and quotes taken from numerous Reformers including: Beza, Rutherford, Gillespie, Dickson, Durham, M'Ward (Rutherford's disciple), Marshall, Watson, Cotton, Owen, Burroughs, Fraser, and Case -- demonstrating that his ideas regarding dissent from corrupt and backsliding civil or ecclesiastical governments are not new, but merely classic Reformation doctrine. The book also answers a multitude of pertinent and realistic objections in sections conveniently located directly after each reason for dissent.

Moreover, the days of the revolution settlement were a time of civil and ecclesiastical confusion not unlike our own day -- the beast (civil and ecclesiastical) was attempting to devour the "woman in the wilderness" by a cunning mixture of half-truths that were designed to beguile an exhausted and persecution-weary remnant. The **consequences** of the actions taken in these days, by both church and state "officials," **have been amplified by time** and apply directly to our contemporary civil and ecclesiastical situation ("That which hath been is now" [Eccl. 3:15]).

The Reformed Presbytery's *Act, Declaration and Testimony* (p. 47) further explains the original historical context -- so germane to the thesis of this book -- regarding those deceptively trying days which followed the "killing times" and final martyrs' death of that period of persecution (being the death of the covenanted Presbyterian minister James Renwick, who sealed his testimony with his blood February 17, 1688).

Of the so-called "glorious revolution of 1688" and the overthrow of the Royalist tyranny the Reformed Presbytery's measured and discerning comments read, "for in a few months, God in his righteous judgement and adorable providence, overturned that (Royalist--RB) throne of iniquity on which they (the persecuting popish, prelatical, Erastian, antichristian [civil and ecclesiastical] "authorities" which were then wondering after the beast--RB) depended, and expelled that inhuman, cruel monster

(the duke of York--RB), from his tyrannical and usurped power, upon the Prince of Orange's (William of Orange--RB) coming over into England, in the beginning of November that same year (1688--RB). But although the Lord at this juncture, and by this means, rescued and delivered our natural and civil rights and privileges in a national way, from under the oppression and bondage of anti-christian tyranny, arbitrary and absolute power; yet the revolution, at this time, brought no real deliverance to the church of God; but Christ's rights (by these [rights--RB] are not meant the rights of Christ personal. It is not in the power of mortals, or any creature, to acquire and secure these to him; but the rights of Christ mystical, that is, of the church, or of his truth, true worship, and religion, and professors of it as such.), formerly acquired for him by his faithful servants, lay still buried under the rubbish of that anti-christian building of prelacy, erected on the ruins of his work in this land; and the spiritual liberties and privileges of his house remained, and do still remain under the bondage of Erastianism, supremacy, toleration, etc. For it is well known, that although this man (William of Orange--RB), Jehu-like, 'destroyed Baal out of Israel, yet he departed not from the sins of Jereboam, wherewith he made Israel to sin.'"

As a second witness to the testimony also given throughout Clarkson's *Plain Reasons* see pages 55 and following in the *Act, Declaration and Testimony* for more on "the grounds of the presbytery's testimony against the constitutions, both civil and ecclesiastical, at the late revolution, anno 1689; as also against the gross Erastianism and tyranny that has attended the administration both of church and state, since that memorable period; with various instances thereof, etc."

Since these momentous days Antichrist and his minions have sought to bury the covenanted Reformation and its attainments (upholding Christ's Kingship over both church and state) under the rubbish of democratic, humanistic, atheistic, tolerationism and a "detestable neutrality" in the cause of God and truth -- the same "detestable neutrality" so strongly inveighed against in the Solemn league and Covenant.

Commenting on this defection from within professing Christendom, Clarkson writes, "It is also evident from this, **that Schism from our covenanted Church consists in this**, to wit, When the Members of the Church make Defection to the contrary part, that is in plain Terms, when they associate or incorporate with, assist and defend the Parties against whom the Covenant (Solemn League and Covenant--RB) was made and sworn, viz. Papists, Prelatist and their Underlings, Hereticks, &c. the common Enemies of Reformation; and fall from the Duties of Preserving and propagating the Reformation of the three Kingdoms; and refuse to join with, assist and defend those, who adhere to the Covenants, in the necessary Work of Renewing them, for Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Superstition, Heresy, Error and Profaneness, and whatsoever is contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness; and for re-establishing, preserving, and propagating the covenanted Reformation, once

happily established in these Lands, and sworn unto by our Covenants. Furthermore, Schism from our covenanted Church consists in this, viz, When Members, Ministers or others, give themselves to a detestable Indifferency and Neutrality, in the Cause of God, namely, in the preserving and propagating the covenanted Reformation of these three Kingdoms; that is to say, When Men are like so many Gallio's in the Cause of God, preferring worldly Ease, Honour and Wealth, their own Interest to the Interest of Christ, become easy, whether the covenanted Reformation in these Lands sink or swim; and, from a cowardly Disposition in some, and a malignant, perfidious Temper in others, coalesce and accord in apostatizing from the Articles of Covenant foresaid, the Cause of God, and its honest- hearted Friends; and frightened from both, as if they thought it both Sin and Shame to have it said, that they carried any warm Side to either the one or the other. I say, All Members of this National Church, who, on Account of any Combination, Persuasion, or Terror and Fear of worldly Loss, of Sufferings of whatsoever Kind, are guilty in any of these two Cases, are also guilty of making SCHISM from the covenanted Church, as is clearly manifest by the 6th Article of our Solemn Covenant" (pp. 182-184, , emphasis added).

Commenting on the common charge of schism leveled against those who would maintain the attainments of the covenanted Reformation, Clarkson writes: "Now, upon the whole of this Objection, as 'tis plain, Presbyterian Dissenters are not Schismatics, nor deserve to be so called; so 'tis a most groundless and shameless Reflection, to call them Separatists, tho' 'tis the ordinary Name of Epithet given them, especially in Print; yet to me, and I judge to many others, it is a Wonder with what Audacity, Men of Sobriety and Conscience should have the confidence to speak at such a Rate, unless they intend, in a desperate Humour, to render their Authority every where, amongst all sober persons, contemptible: For, if two Persons, walking upon a high Path-Road, on the Brink of a Puddle, the one of them by a Blast of Wind tumbling headlong into the Gulf; when weltering amidst the Glare and miery Clay, cries up to his Neighbor upon the Brink, Sir, unless you tumble over after me, I will look upon you as a Separatist: Which of the two are to be judged most insnared into the Course of Separation, whether the Person keeping the High-way, or the poor Man wallowing in the polluted Mire, Crying upon his Neighbour to unite with him in that his miserable Estate? *Est solatium miseris habere socios doloris*, ('Tis Comfort to Persons in Misery to have Companions.) **Have not this present Church thrown themselves over into the Ditch of Pollution, in complying with these dreadful Apostates of this and the former times?** And, shall these be judged Separatists, who dare not, who cannot, and may not in Conscience follow their Example? Can such as join with, and strengthen them, be able to purge themselves from the Guilt and Judgements, which accompany this shameful Defection? For an Union here (so much cried up) without Debate, is the Brotherhood of Simeon and Levi: It is an Union in the Course of Sin and Wrath, and not in Truth and Duty" (pp. 206-207, emphasis added).

For more of this strong tonic get the whole book -- **it is one of the strongest and clearest calls that we have ever seen for the church to repent of its covenant-breaking and backsliding and return to its first love at the corporate level (covenantal and constitutional).**

The only drawback that needs to be noted, regarding Clarkson's *Plain Reasons*, is that a few of the pages (the book being as rare as it is) in the only copy that we have been able to obtain for use as a master, are a little hard to read. Even so, most of the book is easily legible and contains the highest quality of Reformation thought regarding the subjects of which it deals. **It is undoubtedly a major Reformation classic and should be studied by all those who are serious about seeing the destruction of the present tyranny (which is expressed in the modern civil and ecclesiastical Babylon erected by those that oppose the covenanted Reformation and the implementation of the Crown rights of King Jesus over the whole Earth!).**

Cassettes below are for sale at:

<http://www.swrb.com/music/cassets.htm>

PRICE, GREG

The Apostolic/Reformation Way to Worldwide (Biblical) Church Unity (7

cassette sermons, 1998)

Click here: All Greg Price's sermons are free in MP3 (and some video) format.

Seven astounding sermons on God's biblically ordained method to fulfill His command for unity (and the great commission) in the visible church:

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2. *What is Close Communion?* (2 cassettes)
3. *What is Occasion Hearing* (or Occasional Communion)? (3 cassettes)

These truths which have been prominent from Old Testament times to the days of the Apostles -- and in all great subsequent Reformations and true revivals (especially during the second Reformation) -- are clearly, simply and Scripturally presented. These forgotten or ignored doctrines are once again coming to public notice in the preaching of Greg Price (and the publishing of classic Covenanter literature), as well as in the contemporary call for a third Reformation in which the nations of the earth will once again enter into (or renew) covenant with Christ.

As Price points out from Scripture, these truths will also be well known in the days of millennial glory to come. "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one (visibly--RB)" (Zech. 14:9). **These sermons give us a foretaste of the blessings that God will pour out upon His church when she runs "the way of thy commandments" (Ps. 119:32) and when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9)!**

All these seven sermons are also free in MP3 audio on the web, beginning with the first tape in each set (which are linked to subsequent sermons in the series), at:

What Are Terms of Communion? (1/2)

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sermonid=780119920>

What is Close Communion? (1/2)

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sermonid=42101152912>

What is Occasion Hearing (or Occasional Communion)? (1/3)

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sermonid=6201223051>

Terms of Communion (19 cassettes by Greg Price)

[Click here for free MP3s for this complete series of 19 lectures.](#)

This set explains the six "Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion in the Reformed Presbyterian Church" (i.e. the historic Covenanters). *These terms represent a high water mark concerning covenanted Reformation attainments thus far in history.* They are thoroughly Scriptural (as this set proves) and should be adopted by all Churches as the minimum standard by which people are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The "rare bound photocopy" *An Explanation and Defense of the Terms of Communion...* (\$C3.98 cerlox; \$C15.00 hardcover) by the Reformed Presbytery also covers much the same ground, adding some arguments not found in this tape set, but generally containing less detail. McKnight's "rare bound photocopy" *Concerning Close Communion* (\$C3.99 cerlox; \$C15.00 hardcover) is also very helpful in regard to the general subject of the Scriptural propriety of a **close communion and explicit, open, honest, and biblical terms for fencing the table of the Lord.** Separate sections of this cassette series can be purchased individually as outlined below.

Terms of Communion: The Word of God (2 cassettes) or FREE MP3s ([click here](#))
Explains and defends the first term of communion, which is "An acknowledgement of the Old and

New Testament to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith and practice." Covers the attributes of Scripture, including the necessity, inspiration, authority, sufficiency, perspicuity, perpetuity, etc. of the Word of God. Also deals with principles of interpretation (hermeneutics) and how we know that God's Word is His Word, and thus can be trusted as the absolute, inerrant, infallible and inspired truth. Touches on higher criticism and the debate over bible version, upholding the Textus Receptus (i.e. the ecclesiastical or received text) and the King James Version. A fine defense of Sola Scriptura which also touches on how "extra-biblical" terms of communion are not only required by Scripture itself, but are an inescapable necessity. Price is careful to point out the difference between the primary, infallible standard of Scripture and those uninspired subordinate standards, which nevertheless bind the conscience whenever they say the same thing as Scripture. A great introduction to God's Word that comes with our highest recommendation. "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name" (Ps. 138:2).

Terms of Communion: The Westminster Standards (5 cassettes) or FREE MP3s (click)

Explains and defends the second term of communion, which is "That the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon the Scriptures." Price not only explains why we need creeds and confession (answering the question: Isn't the Scripture sufficient?), but he shows how **everyone has a creed** and how such statements of faith are actually inescapable -- for as soon as one says what he believes the Bible means, he has (by definition) put forth his creed ("credo" in Latin means "to believe"). There is no neutrality! He also gives a summary of the Westminster standards and the history of this august assembly, demonstrating why these standards are agreeable to the word of God. After showing how faithful creeds and confessions (i.e. human testimony) have brought untold blessings to the church he gives a history of the Westminster Assembly (setting the context for the study of the Standards themselves). The doctrines contained in the confessional standards are then summarized. Price also exposes and rebukes much false teaching and false practice (contrary to the standards) using the specific names associated with each heresy refuted. The following doctrines are covered: sola Scripture (refuting popery, neo-orthodoxy, liberalism and the charismatics), the doctrine of God (refuting Unitarianism, Oneness theology [Modalism, Sabellianism], and tritheism), God's decrees and predestination (refuting Arminianism, fatalism [Islam]), creation (refuting Evolutionism, Pantheism and New Age and Eastern mysticism), the covenant of works, Providence (against "luck" and "accidents"), the fall of man (refuting Arminianism and Pelagianism), the covenant of grace (refuting dispensationalism), Christ our mediator (refuting Arianism [JW's], Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism [which led to the transubstantiation and consubstantiation heresies], the free offer of the gospel, effectual calling (contra Arminianism), justification by faith alone through Christ alone (contra Rome and the Arminians), sanctification and good works (condemning antinomianism and legalism), assurance of faith, perseverance of the saints, the law of God, Christian liberty (against pretended liberty of conscience and the imposition of legalistic standards outside of the law of God), worship (against the anti-regulatists and promoters of will-worship), the regulative principle (condemning Arminianism in worship), the Sabbath (taking the high Scottish view), lawful oaths and vows (condemning covenant breaking [churches and nations included], perjury, etc.), the civil magistrate (against pluralism, false toleration, Erastianism, and for biblical establishments), marriage, the church (contra popery, prelacy and independency [all of which are forms of sectarianism]), and the resurrection and general judgement.

Terms of Communion: Presbyterian Worship and Government (2 cassettes) or FREE MP3s

Explains and defends the third term of communion, which is "That Presbyterian Church Government

and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable; and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained, is exhibited in the Form of Government and Directory for Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation." "To many readers, the subject of church government will not seem terribly exciting. Judging from the lack of contemporary literature on the topic, one might conclude that church polity is not very important. Yet, if the truth were known, many of the practical problems facing the church are the result of an abandonment of scriptural church polity. The church is not a mere social club. The church is the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13), subject to his rule. In the Bible, the Lord has established an ecclesiastical government by which his people are to be ruled. Just as Christ has instituted civil government to ensure civil order, so he has established ecclesiastical government to preserve order in the church (1 Cor. 14:33). A man is not free to dispense with the church's government anymore than he is at liberty to disregard the (lawful--RB) civil authorities. We do not contend that the divine order for church government extends to every detail. Obviously, the Lord did not mandate how many times the elders of the church must meet each month; nor did he prescribe any particular attire for them to wear while performing their official duties. Such incidentals are adapted to the needs and exigencies of the time and place; according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed. Nevertheless, the scriptures do provide an overall plan of government which the church must follow if she is to remain faithful to her Lord. Therefore, it is important to examine biblical principles of church polity," writes Kevin Reed in his *Biblical Church Government*. Much the same could be said regarding worship. These tapes are an excellent introductory explanation of the fundamentals of Divine Right Presbyterian church government and Divine Right Presbyterian worship. They are jam-packed with Scripture, history and sound reasoning and should be very helpful to all those seeking the Lord's will concerning these two important subjects. Price distinguishes between the elements and circumstances of worship (contra John Frame's heretical innovations, wherein he rejects these distinctions), while the vital issues of unity and uniformity, separation from false worship and false man-made church governments are not forgotten. All this is set in the context of faithfully approaching the Lord's table. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you" (1 Cor. 11:2).

Terms of Communion: Covenants and Covenanting (7 cassettes) or FREE MP3s (click)

Explains and defends the fourth term of communion, which is "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; and in consistency with this, that the Renovation of these Covenants at Auchensaugh, Scotland, 1712 was agreeable to the word of God." Includes the studies offered separately on the National Covenant (2 tapes), the Solemn League and Covenant (1 tape), the Auchensaugh Renovation (2 tapes), as well as two introductory lectures (only available in this set) on the biblical principles related to the ordinance of covenanting, the descending obligation of lawful covenants, objections against covenanting, etc. A thoroughly amazing set of tapes -- among our best!

Terms of Communion: The Martyrs and Historic Testimony (2 cassettes) or FREE MP3s

Explains and defends the fifth term of communion, which is "An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against Paganism, Popery, Prelacy, Malignancy and Sectarianism; immoral civil governments; Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them; and of the Judicial Testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761 (i.e. *The Act, Declaration and Testimony for the Whole of Our Covenanted Reformation--RB*) with supplements from the Reformed Presbyterian Church; as containing a noble example to be followed, in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the

constitutions of either churches or states." Price demonstrates how and why uninspired historical testimony must be a term of communion. A number of the same arguments apply to this question (of fencing the Lord's table based on uninspired historical testimony), as apply to fencing the table based on biblically accurate creeds and confessions -- so those that understand biblical creedalism (and close communion) should have no problem with this aspect of Reformation thought. Reformation views are also differentiated from Romish views of history, church authority, etc., as they come to bear on this point. At one of the most interesting points of this study, Price also proves how one cannot even keep the inspired commandments of God without the use of uninspired history (using the fifth and ninth commandments as examples). History is here set on its biblical foundations. Testimony is also well dealt with. Testimony is defined as "That record which a witness gives (in a court) in defense of the truth and in opposition to error." Faithful biblical testimony is shown, by various examples from inspired and uninspired history, to bring the fury of the enemy. This is where the Reformation theological rubber meets the road of experimental Christianity and disinterested self-sacrifice (often resulting in suffering and persecution as the antichristian beast [ecclesiastical and civil] is stirred from his slumber by the barbs of faithful Christian witnesses as they testify to the truth and against "all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states" -- thus the long list of Christian martyrs throughout history).

Terms of Communion: The Practice of Truth (forthcoming, 1 cassette) or FREE MP3s (click)
Explains and defends the sixth term of communion, which is "Practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior by walking in all His commandments and ordinances blamelessly."

BARROW, GREG

and LARRY BIRGER

***Reformation Principles Re-Exhibited:
An Historical Witness and Brotherly
Entreaty.***

***Summary and Analysis of Changes within Terms of Communion
of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and America
from 1761 to the Present, and a Particular Analysis and***

Testimony Against the Present Day RPCNA. (August 5, 2002)

In a day of spiritual confusion and complacency, what could be more welcome than a clarion call to godly faithfulness and a clear testimony for the truth?

Among the Reformed Presbyterian community, the appearance of this new book by Elder Greg Barrow and Dr. Larry Birger, Jr. should be like a magnificent flare lighting up a pitch-black night sky. The terrain that is revealed by the light might not be pretty, but the soldiers of God's Army can easily identify enemy positions and avoid them. Some may actually discover that they are surrounded by deserters and need to get back to the position marked out by the Lord.

One can tell much about a church from its terms of communion, and Barrow and Birger are able to trace the progressive defection of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) by analysing the changes in that denomination's terms of communion. Terms of communion are the formal basis for admitting people to the Lord's Table. The RPCNA began as a Covenanter church, but later turned away from the Covenants (National and Solemn League) and defected from the Covenanter testimony. **This is demonstrated in the evolution of its terms of communion, from clear, faithful terms, to loose and general ones.**

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland (RPCS), like the RPCNA, defected from faithful terms of communion. It did this largely to make communicant membership easier for new members. "Rather than patiently teaching the people, and bringing them up to 'own' and 'acknowledge' the testimony of the past contendings of faithful witnesses (as Scripture commands), they opted to 'dumb down' their constitutional standards which were originally designed to protect the unwitting, ignorant, and the scandalous from partaking of the Lord's Supper. In so doing they declined from a more pointed testimony unto one which is more evasive, loose and general" (p. 15). **This is a significant issue raised by Barrow and Birger: over time, doctrinal standards and terms of communion should become clearer and more precise. If the reverse is happening, that is undeniable evidence that a church is backsliding and progressively abandoning the Biblical attainments of previous generations.**

The defection of these churches has included a growing doctrinal latitudinarianism. This leads to an important question: "**How can a group of people who obviously incorporate, inculcate, and tolerate serious differences amongst themselves regarding the doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, come to the Lord's Table professing themselves to be in agreement, and of one mind, before our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without overtly and highhandedly violating the precepts of the ninth commandment?**" (p. 28).

Barrow and Birger conclude that the "RPCNA must be accounted guilty of extreme spiritual adultery, and must be testified against" (p. 49).

This is an important document for those who would avoid the doctrinal declension of our day.

49 pages.

This book is also available on all the *Reformation Bookshelf CDs (in the "Free Books" file)* at: <http://www.swrb.com/Puritan/reformation-bookshelf-CDs.htm>

Free in html, PDF and zip formats, at: <http://www.ecn.ab.ca/prce/books/index.html>

Or directly at:

<http://www.ecn.ab.ca/prce/books/rpcna/rpcna.htm> (html)

<http://www.ecn.ab.ca/prce/books/rpcna/rpcna.pdf> (pdf)

FRASER, JAMES (of Brea)

The Lawfulness and Duty of Separation from Corrupt Ministers and Churches Explained and Vindicated (1744)

This is one of the most comprehensive treatises dealing with lawfulness and duty separation. It does not shy away from the hard biblical questions, but rather meets them head on. Fraser covers all the major biblical reasons for separation, both in general and in particular. Some of these Scriptural reasons for separation include (examples in brackets are selected to fit our contemporary situation in accord with the general headings found in the book -- though a number of these specific errors are also dealt with in the book itself): 1.) Heresy, or error in doctrine (e.g. Arminianism, Pelagianism, Romanism, the denial of the regulative principle of worship, antinomianism, legalism, etc.); 2.) Idolatry in **public worship** (e.g. singing hymns of human composition, paedocommunion and open communion, the use of musical instruments, woman speaking or preaching, anti-paedobaptism, Charismatic [or anabaptistic] folly and excesses, malignancy [anti-covenanting], etc.); 3.) Tyranny in government (e.g. Popery, Prelacy, Independency, etc.); 4.) Sinful terms of communion (e.g. any terms which deny or ignore the attainments of the covenanted Reformation or in any way contravene Scripture); 5.) Tolerationism (e.g. refusing to discipline the scandalous, open communion and countenancing false ministers or false governments or false doctrine, etc.) . Many other areas are also dealt with, not the least of which include a strong testimony against the Prelatical Priest George Whitefield (who, as the preface notes, is "a person leavened with gross errors, enthusiastic delusions, etc."). In the publisher's original reasons for publication we read, "In this book the case and nature of schism and separation is cleared, and the true scriptural terms of church-communion, and grounds of separation from corrupt churches and ministers, carrying on backsliding courses from the covenanted Reformation-principles..., are clearly handled, and the same proven to be just and warrantable grounds of separation, and many useful cases of conscience concerning separation; and what are just and warrantable grounds of separation and what are not, are solidly, learnedly, and accurately discussed and resolved, and the case of separation clearly stated, handled and determined; and separation from corrupt ministers and churches is fully vindicated; and the true Scripture marks of time-servers and hirelings, who should be separated from, are given from the Word of God." Calvin, Knox, Rutherford, Gillespie, Durham, Owen (who repented of his Independency and embraced Presbyterianism just before he died) and a host of other notable Reformers are cited throughout. Occasion hearing and occasion

communion are also exposed and rebuked from Scripture. Appended to the book is "The Reasons agreed upon by the Reformers of the Church of Scotland, For which the Book of Common Prayer, urged upon Scotland, Anno 1637 was refused. As also the Reasons agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, for laying aside the English Book of Common Prayer. Together with Mr George Graham's Renunciation and Abjuration of Episcopacy." This is an almost flawless photocopy of this **exceedingly rare and valuable book** (which was obtained at great expense from the Bodleian Library [Oxford University] in England). It is one of the major Reformed classics concerning the topics that it deals with and answers many common questions which Christians raise today regarding church affiliation. It is also a much needed landmark of Reformation testimony against the white devils of Independency and sectarianism and the black devils of Popery and Prelacy -- which can be seen to be covering the land once again -- contrary to the teaching of the Word of God and the attainments fought (and died) for during the second Reformation. 239 pages.

AUTHOR: CUNNINGHAM, JOHN

TITLE: *The Ordinance of Covenanting* (1843)

This book is considered by many as the classic work on covenanting. "The theology of Covenanting is here unfolded with a richness of scriptural research and a maturity of intellectual strength which would have made the grey eye of Peden glisten with delight. The treatise is a valuable addition to that solid theological literature of which the Reformed Presbyterian Church has produced repeated and enduring specimens, and stamps Mr. Cunningham as a distinguished disciple of the thoughtful and scriptural school of Mason and the Symingtons" (*Presby Rev.*, (1844) as cited in *The Treasury of the Scottish Covenant* by Johnston). The author himself notes that "Prayer and the offering of praise are universally admitted to be duties of religion. The Scriptures announce a place among these for the exercise of solemn Covenanting... What the word of God unfolds concerning it, is addressed to the most resolute consideration of all, and is capable of engaging the most extensive and prolonged investigation. And yet, though none have found this subject, like all God's judgements, else than a great deep, still in meditating upon it, the ignorant have been brought to true knowledge, and the wise have increased in wisdom. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant' (Ps. 25:14)... Mutual federal engagements, concerning things religious and civil, whether entered into merely by simple promise, or confirmed by the solemn oath, have been made from the highest antiquity to the present. The hostility to some such engagements, and also the proud disregard for their obligation, which have been evinced by some in all ages, demand a most careful examination into

their nature and design... Furnished with the key of Scripture, approaching the subject, we are enabled to open the mysteries in which ignorance and prejudice had shut it up; and equipped with the armour of light shooting forth its heavenly radiance, in safety to ourselves we assail the darkness thrown around it, and behold the instant flight of the spirits of error which that darkness contains. Standing alone in beauteous attractions descended from heaven upon it, this service beckons us to approach it, and engages to connect extensive good with a proper attention to its claims. The observance, under various phases, is described in Scripture as an undisputed and indisputable reality." In this book Cunningham exhaustively covers the subject of covenanting in over 400 pages. He deals with the manner, duty and nature of covenanting (including personal and social covenanting), the obligation covenanting confers, how covenanting is provided for in the everlasting covenant, how it is adapted to the moral constitution of man and how it is according to the purposes of God. Numerous Divine examples are cited from Scripture and covenanting is shown to be one of the great privileges of the Christian life. An interesting chapter covers "Covenanting Enforced By the Grant of Covenant Signs and Seals;" which touches on circumcision, baptism, the Sabbath, the Priesthood, the new heart and the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, this book demonstrates how God's approbation rested upon Covenanters in former ages, how covenanting is predicted in prophecy, how it is recommended by the practice of the New Testament Church and at what seasons it is appropriate. The appendices touch on the relationship of covenanting to immoral and unscriptural civil governments, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the British constitution and the apostasy of the Revolution settlement. Additionally, Cunningham acknowledges that the true church is "bound by the obligations of the Church of God in past times" and is still obligated to **pay what it has vowed to the Lord** in those magnificent attainments of the second Reformation (the epitome of these attainments being embodied in the Solemn League and Covenant and the Westminster Standards). If you are interested in the ordinance of covenanting this is the most extensive treatment you will find in one book. It is a gold mine of Scriptural references and should be read at least once by everyone who calls upon the name of Christ.

ROBERTS, WILLIAM L.

The Reformed Presbyterian Catechism (1853)

A manual of instruction, drawing from such notable authors as William Symington and J.R. Willson, presenting "arguments and facts confirming and illustrating the

'Distinctive Principles'" of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Chapters deal with: "Christ's Mediatorial Dominion in general;" Christ's exclusive Headship over the Church;" "The Supreme and Ultimate Authority of the Word of God in the Church;" Civil Government, the Moral Ordinance of God;" Christ's Headship over the Nations;" "The Subjection of the Nations to God and to Christ;" The Word, or Revealed Will of God, the Supreme Law in the State;" "The Duty of Nations, in their National Capacity, to acknowledge and support the True Religion:" "The Spiritual Independence of the Church of Christ:" "The Right and Duty of Dissent from an immoral Constitution of Civil Government;" "The Duty of Covenanting, and the Permanent Obligations of Religious Covenants;" "The Application of these Principles to the Governments, where Reformed Presbyterians reside, in the form of a Practical Testimony;" and finally "Application of the Testimony to the British Empire." A most important book, as we approach (possibly) the end of the great apostasy and will be in need of preparing for the dawning of the glorious millennial blessings to come; the days prophesied in which the church "shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings" (Isa. 60:16).

SCOTT, DAVID

Distinctive Principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (1841)

This book is not designed to discuss "the (many-RB) doctrines which the Reformed Presbyterian church holds in common with others," but is written to set forth RP distinctives. It tackles its subject from three major heads: "Social Covenanting;" "The Dominion of Christ;" and "The Universal Application of Scripture (civil as well as religious)." It shows that while these doctrines "are held by many, as abstract doctrines of divine truth, they are not embodied in the testimony of any other Christian denomination: nor made necessary to ministerial or Christian fellowship. Although other individuals may hold these doctrine, it is a 'distinctive' feature of the RPC to embody them in her testimony; and to make them terms of communion." It also explains how these are the same distinctives that were maintained "at the era of the reformation, (when) the covenanted church of Scotland bore a distinguished testimony for all the offices of Christ, as prophet, priest and king: and for the pure doctrines, worship, discipline, and government of the house of God." The author states that "the great object aimed at is to help forward the glorious triumph of the Messiah, so beautifully described in the 72nd Psalm. When 'all Kings shall fall down before him; and all nations shall serve him.'"

The book, *The Canterbury Tales: An Extended Review and Commentary Based upon the Geneva Papers*, can be purchased from Still Waters Revival Books at the address listed above. This book deals with aberrant modern religious views concerning worship.

An electronic version is also available FREE of charge on our web page at: [*The Canterbury Tales: An Extended Review and Commentary Based upon the Geneva Papers*](#)

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