

# JOHN GUTHRIE.

## S E R M O N.

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*" Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head."—Ezek. xvii. 19.*

I CONCEIVE, in the verse that I have read, there is more solid truth delivered by the Spirit of God, which cannot lie, than I am able to declare, when I have fallen to the explication and enlargement of it. Yet the very first words in the 11th and 12th verses speak as much to the truth contained in the rest of this sermon of Ezekiel, as that it is not laid before the people, neither left unto them, in any confused way which is not plain, but the prophet gets a commission to show them plainly what the mind of the Lord was to them. This will more clearly appear if you take notice of the former part of the chapter, wherein these things are delivered plainly to the people by a similitude, the prophet having showed to his hearers the same things that he comes to speak plainly of himself, "What needs so plain preaching and application? Will not any man, that hears the words, take them up without any application?" You find the Lord, in His commission to Ezekiel, after He points out the similitude of two eagles taking away the branches, says, "Go to the city of Jerusalem, and say, Do ye understand these things, that God will avenge His broken covenant against the king of Jerusalem? And if they understand not these things, go and make them plain to them, and apply it to them; spare neither king nor prince, but tell them this my message: Thou hast broken my covenant; therefore, by this message which I send to you, the plague and the vengeance of God shall come upon you, as I live, saith the Lord."

And lest any of you, who sometimes have heard us press the oath of the covenant in these lands, should now-a-days think it alterable, and look upon it as a thing that may be dispensed with, we are, through God's strength, from Scripture, to make out the indissoluble tie of the covenant. And that we beat not upon the air, in speaking to that purpose, according to the faithfulness of the prophet's commission by the Lord, we intend to follow this rule, as we shall be answerable to our Lord and Master, and be free of your blood whose souls are committed to our charge, to lay it before you; and if you sin against the Lord, then your blood will be upon your own head. This we intend not to speak in general, but in particular, and if any man will justle himself against the Lord, then he will break himself for ever.

And, for making the words more clear, consider, that the king of Babylon did change Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah, and made him king of Jerusalem, and after Zedekiah entered into covenant with the king of Babylon that he should abide tributary to him; and for the confirmation of it, he puts the king Zedekiah to swear by the Lord. But after he had sent him home to Jerusalem, Zedekiah, upon some supposed advantage,

\* This sermon, upon breach of covenant, was preached in the year 1663, by that reverend and worthy servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. John Guthrie, Minister of the Gospel at Tarbolton.

which he saw not at that time, did break his covenant with the king of Babylon; therefore the Lord sends the prophet to him, and says, " Since thou hast broken covenant with the king of Babylon, and hast not kept it, as I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt not prosper." Yea, the Lord noticeth and owns it so much, that He makes the covenant sworn to the king of Babylon His covenant; and therefore says, "As I live, my oath which he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken," &c. This is the history that we have clearly set down in the prophet's commission, which he must not dare to fit, but faithfully doth deliver the same, as it is in the 33rd chapter of this prophecy, verses 7, 8, wherein the prophet tells the duty of the watchmen of Israel, "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at thy hand :"  
that is, whenever a land or kingdom is found guilty of such and such things—for which the Lord's wrath uses to come upon a people—if that be made known to the prophets, they are bound to preach and declare it, or else resolve that the blood of all those that are taken away with the stroke, shall be charged on them as unfaithful men in the house of God; and it were to be desired, that there were many to give warning. I fear there shall the blood of not a few in Scotland be required at the hands of ministers, for not giving faithful and timely warning. For as every man that shall be taken away in his iniquity, and for his defection, shall be made to smart for it, so it shall be no excuse to you the people that the ministers did not tell you. Oh, but dreadful shall be the account that ministers must give for not telling the people!

In the words there is, First, A threatening for breach of covenant And Secondly, There is the thing for which the prophet doth threaten; and that is, for despising the oath, and breaking the covenant of God. Thirdly, The confirmation that is affixed to the threatening. Would it not have been thought that this was enough, "Thus saith the Lord, I will punish thee for breaking my covenant." Now this is extraordinary, that it must have this put to it twice, "As I live, saith the Lord, shall he break my covenant, and escape?" All this, put together, speaks the certainty of the threatening, and also the greatness and the weightiness of the matter, and how the Lord looks upon breach of oaths and covenants.

The DOCTRINE from the words is, "That the oath is indissoluble, the breach whereof God recompenseth upon the heads of those that break it." It is inviolable; it is in the words not framed by my mouth. The Holy Ghost framed them in the mouth of Ezekiel the prophet long ago: "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head."

As applicable to our case, consider the doctrine, supposeth something that is not plainly spoken, and that is, that every oath and covenant of God, is a thing that is inviolable, that is, may not and cannot be broken. For the better understanding whereof, there is something that is needful to an oath and covenant of the Lord. I am not to speak here in relation to the covenant of works, between God and man in his integrity; neither am I to speak to the covenant of grace, either in the way of its dispensation on Mount Sinai, or as to the fullness of it under the New Testament, though all these are more properly called covenants, because they are of his own

devising. But we take the covenant in this place, to be of men's duties in the land; and for keeping them the better, we take an oath upon us in things that are neither morally evil nor good but indifferent. But a man once engaged by oath cannot retract. Though they be not commanded duties, yet once entered into, they must stand, for when we open our mouths to the Lord we cannot go back. But I say, for clearing this:—

Consider what makes an oath and covenant of God: First, It must be a thing in itself lawful. There is no man that warrantably, according to the word of God, may swear the thing which in itself is unlawful. Secondly, It must be a thing in itself possible, within the man's power. No man is warranted to swear that which he cannot perform. Thirdly, When we take the vows and oath of God upon us, we inter- pone the name of the Lord to it. We swear by the Lord. This is the thing here that makes this covenant the covenant of the Lord; the king of Babylon made Zedekiah king of Jerusalem swear by the Lord. And it is more the covenant of the Lord, when the thing is religious, and the thing commanded of the Lord, which we are bound to obey, though we had never sworn it; therefore it must stand, once entered into, lest we make enquiry after vows and so destroy that which is holy.

Now, for further clearing of the words, consider, First, How much the Lord counts an oath binding: "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it," "for it will be sin in thee not to perform it," "but if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee." The Lord gives out laws to Moses for vows, and will have them declared, "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." The Scripture is very full so that a man once engaged in duty, if he break, the vengeance of God shall be upon him.

Secondly, The inviolableness of the oath of God is founded upon the law of nature and nations. Wherefore is it that there is such an order in ordinances to swear by the name of the Lord? Is it not for this, think you, to make the thing stand sure? For the very law of nature teaches that, if a man swear, he must swear by his God, and must keep it; and in like manner the law of nations, for the matter of offensive and defensive arms, and as to the matter of cessation and peace. Is not all this to hold out that they design to secure themselves by interponing the name of God to it? Now once allow this, that men may retract and break covenant with God, then we break the law of nature and nations too, and so there is not a nation under the sun secure, because the way of continuing peace (which is by the name of the Lord being interponed) is broken, so that neither the law of nature nor of nations (if it be broken) can stand—if that be granted, then it may be retracted.

The third confirmation for the truth of this doctrine :—The Lord Himself in His word hath declared a man's tender keeping of the covenant, vow or oath, that it is exceedingly well pleasing to Him; and that He has declared such a man blessed :—" Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Would not any man think they are foolish that would not dwell in heaven? Then look through. He shall dwell "that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." A person that swears anything must keep it, though it be to his hurt.

The fourth thing for confirmation of the doctrine:—As to the inviolableness of the oath of God, it appears and is established, AS the Lord hath commanded the thing in His word, and as it is founded upon the law of nature and nations, and has the promises, so the Lord has appeared an eminent revenger upon the breaking of this oath and covenant;

that is to say, when folk have taken a lawful covenant upon them, and have broken it, God will appear eminently in sending plagues upon them. And for proving this, we are not here to speak of the covenant given upon Mount Sinai, of which see the ten commands, how He threatens eminently to punish the breakers thereof, or for not receiving Christ offered in the gospel covenant. Without question, He punisheth His people for the breach, thereof. But we mean these oaths and covenants we enter into, whether they be commanded or not, yet, once being entered into, we must keep them, or else He will punish us, as is clear from these following instances:—

The first instance you have is in Josh. ix.—compared with 2 Sam. xxi.—where it will be found clearly that the covenant being broken by Saul, many generations after it was made, he and his house and the people must be eminently punished for the breach of it, by three years' famine; for the princes, and all the people of Israel, are said to have sworn to the Gibeonites (wherein many a black face was seen among them). Now this covenant was merely civil, and the oath could not be very well warranted, but when it was made, it was binding. For the

Second instance to prove the judgments on them, consider Jer. xxxiv., where you read, after the people had broken the covenant they had made with the servants whom they had liberated, and yet brought them into bondage afterwards, that the Lord saith, " Since you have done so, I proclaim a liberty for you," &c., that is, " I shall pay you home in your own coin, I will proclaim a liberty to you for the sword, pestilence, and famine." The

Third instance is in that place of the text; "Shall he break, and shall he escape, saith the Lord?" Though the oath was given to an usurper, and Zedekiah being his prisoner at the time, yet it was required at his hand. I shall say no more to it, but consider how covenant breaches are reckoned among the deeds of the flesh, "without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers." And also I read of a great war betwixt the Turks and Christians, the Christians entering into covenant with the Turks, the Pope gives the Christians a dispensation to break it before the day come. Upon this Uladislus the king of Hungary came forth against Amurath, and when he came to the field he did first beat the Turks; then Amurath, having the covenant in his bosom, took it out, and lift up his eyes, and said, " If thou, crucified Christ, be a God, as the Christians profess Thee to be, then take vengeance on them for this broken covenant, and for the wrongs they have done to me." And presently the Turks fell upon the Christians, and gave them a fatal stroke, and gained the day, notwithstanding the Christians had scattered them before. A most remarkable instance! This, I think, except people be more than curious will satisfy them.

From all which you may see, that the inviolableness of oaths and covenants is founded upon the law of nature and nations; and Scripture and history are clear for it, that covenants cannot be broken, except folk resolve to meet with the deluge of God's wrath.

For Use of this, (1.) If it be so, that the oath and covenant of God once engaged into cannot be broken, then let no man despise the oath and covenant of God. Let folk be endeavouring to secure themselves in this truth, according to the word of God.

(2.) If it be so, then know this, that all who venture on the breach of it do sin against the Lord, against precept, promises, law of nature and nations, and against threatenings.

(3.) Since it is so, that everyone doth sin that makes void the covenant of God, then let all that are under this sin expect that the wrath and vengeance of God will be upon

them, which is the second thing in the text: " Because of my oath and covenant, which he hath despised, I will recompense it upon his own head." Understand now what I have been saying, and what I am driving at, lest it be to you as the similitude in the preceding verses was to this people. For I declare plainly to you, that these three kingdoms have despised the oath and covenant of God, and, therefore, according to the word of God, these three kingdoms are to expect His dreadful wrath and vengeance, if He in mercy prevent it not. Let no man or woman be ignorant of these things afterward. Remember I have told you that it shall be so.

But now I shall speak to some things which folk may have for excusing themselves about the Solemn League and Covenant; and for understanding of them, consider, the Parliament of Scotland, England, and Ireland, entered into a covenant for maintaining the word of God and the purity thereof, and putting away profanity; and engaged themselves against schism, heresy, error, Popery and Prelacy. And there was an oath of God taken for this end upon us, and our King took it at his coronation. This oath again is broken by our King and Parliament, and is despised, for which, according to the word of God, wrath will be upon the heads of those that have broken it, if God do not mercifully prevent it.

Now, there are many that have many excuses and many objections about this Solemn League and Covenant. I shall, therefore, speak to some of them, and I take you to record this day, I pretend not to preach rebellion against King or Parliament, but according to the word of God; and if it be rebellion, we must take our hazard of it.

Objection 1. We are not bound to a covenant and oath which is not lawful, &c., but this is such: *ergo, prob. minor*. Because it wanted the consent of the King, the supreme magistrate: *ergo*— I dare say, many of you have this objection, which have no ground for it; but to strengthen the argument, look at Numbers xxx. 3-5. The argument runs thus:—The subjects of the land taking upon them to covenant with God can do no more in it than a woman in her father's house, &c., but so it is with these lands. For seeing the King, who is supreme, did disallow it, therefore it is not binding.

Answer 1. The place alleged doth not speak directly to the thing, for though the king be a civil parent, he is not a natural parent.

2. This place cannot be alleged to prove the thing, for the matter is only spoken of a woman in her father's house, or subject to her husband, &c. It is true that a parent or husband may disannul her vows, being made without his consent, anent those things wherein she is subject to her parent or to her husband, but that place doth speak nothing of annulling the man's vow or the widow's (verse 2), for their vows must stand.

3. God makes no exception here but this one; and therefore it must stand. Will any of you who have this argument say that the king's taking or not taking the covenant made the covenant lawful or unlawful? Yet though the king was not consenting to it (which I will not grant, for there was at that time a power for it: I will not take upon me to dispute the power that Parliament has without a king, it is far above my hand) yet I say the Parliament has power to put folk to duty, nill they, will they.

4. For making the covenant valid and lawful, something may be added to it afterward, though not at the present time (yet seeing it is afterwards added, it is enough), but so was it with our covenant. There was a frequent consent given to it by our king, and also it was subscribed by him, which is sufficient to make our vows

stand. In Numbers xxx. we see if a husband or parent held their peace, when they heard a woman vow, the vow did stand— much more if the husband or parent take the vow upon themselves. I know no shadow imaginable of excuse for them; the word of God, which stands sure, makes against them: and since it is so, our king and parliament cannot retract what they have done.

Objection 2. Some will say, There is no man but knows that the king has taken the covenant, for it was not done in a corner; but he may break, because he was forced to it, and he was not absolutely free.

Answer 1. We did not hear tell of this before now. If any man would have said at that time that he was constrained to take it, he would have been counted a very uncharitable constructor.

2. Suppose that he was not free, which I will never grant, and suppose he was forced to the oath, yet Scripture makes it out that a man swearing, though he was not free, must stand to it. Though it was not a spontaneous act, yet it was a most voluntary act. Again, consider this in Zedekiah: He was a captive. To whom? To a heathen (now no man will say a captive is a free man and a liberate man), yet he swearing to the king of Babylon, a heathen, and breaking his oath afterwards, God's vengeance came upon him; for there is no dallying with God in these matters. For all casuists say, if a man swear to a robber to give him so much to spare his life, he must keep his oath if it be in his power, though it be to his hurt. I shall say no more on this; but I am hopeful, if you will receive the word in love, ye shall have wherewith to answer your adversaries in the gate.

Objection 3. The Solemn League and Covenant must be broken, because we are not bound to keep with them that broke to us first. But it is so betwixt us and England. *Ergo*—

Answer. Are there not many make this objection who, I dare say, never read the covenant? Thou poor, blind creature, how darest thou speak of it? These that will say so, it seems they never understood the League and Covenant, because it is not a bargain betwixt two parties on earth—the one whereof breaking, the other is free. But these three lands are one party, and the God of heaven is the other party; therefore, though England should break, should Scotland also break the covenant? It is not after this tenor: — we will endeavour reformation in these lands, but if you break, we will break also. No; it is each man swearing for himself that he shall, in his place and station, endeavour reformation, so that if it were left all to one man, he must endeavour reformation. For, consider the last words of the article. Each of them for himself did lift up his hands to the Most High; and so these three lands are one party, and the other party is the God of heaven. Consider seriously upon it, for it is the thing that you must either suffer for or sin, ere it be long, without remedy. Whatever England and Ireland have done in breaking the covenant, we say they justly must smart for it, according to the word of God, if God in mercy prevent it not. Nevertheless, as long as there are in these lands any who keep the covenant, we are bound to keep it; and suppose there are many who had rather suffer for it than sin, as witness the many scattered flocks and shepherds in these lands— and supposing this were not, though both England and Ireland should quit it, yet Scotland is bound to it.

Objection 4. We swear in the League and Covenant to that which is impossible, and therefore it cannot be kept.

Answer. If all these three kingdoms, who have taken the oath upon them, would sincerely stand to it, I hope there should be no need to stand out against it. The objection is in this: we have sworn to reform England. Now, for answer, we are not sworn to reform England, neither is England sworn to reform Scotland; but that which is sworn is this: they are each to endeavour, in their places and callings, the reformation of religion in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government in these lands, and to reform England, according to the word of God, and the best Reformed churches. For though we had never sworn an oath, we are bound to promote the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the objection is rather out of malice against the word of God than any conscionable principle. He is not worth the name of a Christian that condemns this, for it is contrary to the petition, "Thy kingdom come;" so that we should study all kingdoms' reformation, that they may become the kingdoms of our Lord. If the king and parliament were studying to reform, as much as they are studying to deface and deform, there should be no need of this objection.

Objection. 5. The covenant, which these kingdoms entered into as to their own reformation, and we to the reformation of all the rest, was too rashly and inconsiderately gone about.

Answer 1. I question if any of you who move the objection know what consideration is. Was there not deliberation when there were protestants and remonstrators for the poor lands? and at last they came to this with it, to enter into covenant; wherefore, it seems, it was not indeliberate.

2. There was more deliberation in it than many other oaths in Scripture, and yet they did stand. Who will deny but that the vow of Jephthah, when he met his daughter, was a rash oath, to vow whatsoever came out of his door first, he should offer it up to the God of heaven? And yet it did bind him, while he says, — "Alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low!" And might not his daughter have said, "Father, it is but a rash vow, break it?" "Nay," says he, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back."

3. To confirm it more, what would you think of a covenant made between the people of the Lord and heathens, and no counsel sought from the Lord? In the covenant made between the people of Israel and the Gibeonites, you will see a vow very rashly taken, yea, the Israelites did not so much as seek counsel from the Lord, and Israel made peace with them—"The princes of the congregation swear unto them." Now, I hope none of you will deny but God's counsel was sought to our covenants, which was not sought in that covenant; and yet, for the breach of it, all the land did smart. Therefore I conclude, though a covenant be entered into rashly, and want many things for making it complete, yet opening the mouth to the Lord we cannot go back, or else we must expect the wrath and vengeance of God.

Objection 6. The covenant cannot be binding, because the parties dealt craftily with us.

Answer 1. England is not the party that we covenanted with; but all the three lands together, as one party, and God the other party with whom they covenanted.

2. Consider Josh, ix, and you will find how little weight this objection hath in the matter of covenanting. It is said, in the 4th verse, "They did work wilily, and went as if they had

been ambassadors;" yet Joshua and the princes entered into covenant •with them; and when it was broken, the land of Israel did smart for it.

Objection 7. The covenant binds us to things that are not particularly set down, but are so general as to keep us in doubt; the ground whereof is this, because we swear in general to endeavour the reformation of England according to the best Reformed churches, but these churches were not particularly set down and pitched upon, therefore it cannot stand.

Answer 1. If there be any man that would have a more particular rule than the word of God for reformation, he must be sent to another land to seek another gospel from Jews or Turks; and if it be so, then there is not a rule among us.

2. Comparing one part of the covenant with another, it is most particularly set down and determined; As (First) The covenant is clear, the reformation must not be Popery. (Secondly). The Bishops, Prelates, Archbishops, Deans, Chapters, Curates, &c. I say, the Covenant is clear in chief. If it lays aside all these things, what, I pray you, remains in debate then? I know nothing, except you make it either a Presbyterian or Independent covenant, and, at that time, Independency was to be brought to Presbytery; now, since they pass by all these things, I hope the matter is not left in the dark, as some think it is.

Objection 8. Supposing the covenant binds the land, yet it binds none but those that took it.

Answer. Now I perceive there are many of you young and ranting blades, that think yourselves happy youths because ye never took the covenant. But I have a word to speak to such from the Scriptures, and therefore take it with you: Wherever a king and the princes of a land take a covenant the rest of the land are bound to it, as you may see in that covenant with the Gibeonites. The people there did not swear, yea, they murmured against the oath; but though the people did not swear, yet the princes say, "We have sworn unto the Lord, we cannot touch them." Therefore do not beguile yourselves. Ye stand as surely engaged to it as I or he who did subscribe it with our hands, therefore the breach of it shall be required at your hands, be you young or old, men or women; and remember "The children of Israel did not smite them, because the princes had sworn the oath." Might not the people have said, "Let them keep it, who did swear it?" But it is not so; for they say, "We have all sworn it, therefore we must not touch them."

Objection 9. Suppose it binds this generation, yet it cannot bind our posterity.

Answer. This same generation that did swear it hath broken it, and I fear the same generation shall be punished for it. The covenant did directly bind all following generations.—"that our children after us be found walking in faith and love that the Lord may dwell among us." These are the very words of the covenant. For what end were these words put in? Was it not to bind our posterity, and to keep uniformity and unity, and to bind them to the word of God? But you will say, "There is no mention of the posterity." There was no mention made of the posterity of Israel, when the people of Israel made that covenant with the Gibeonites, neither was there mention made of the Gibeonites' posterity; yet you may see the covenant binding on their posterity (Josh. ix.; 2 Sam. xxi.). So, then, you must understand that the covenant is absolute; therefore I conclude, that as sure as sun and moon endure in the firmament, if there be any generation in these three lands, God will require the

breach of His covenant at their hands, and His vengeance shall be upon them, if they repent not.

Objection 10. The King and Estates of the land found hurt in keeping it.

Answer. Ay, but "He that sweareth to his hurt and changeth not."

Objection 11. There will be eminent advantages by the breaking of it, *ergo*.

Answer. For myself I do not understand any advantage to these three lands comparable to the Solemn League. This is my judgment. But will you consider the covenant betwixt Joshua and the Gibeonites? It was a covenant contrary to God's command, yet, His name being taken in it, it could not be retracted. They dealt wilily with Joshua, and the Israelites sought no counsel from the Lord. They were suspecting it in the meantime, and they knew it within three days afterward; yet, because of the breach of it, though it was broken out of zeal to the children of Israel, the people did smart for it by three years' famine; and when it was broken, it was not the same generation that broke it. Set all the three kingdoms' wit together, they will not get as many excuses for the breaches of the covenant of our kingdom, as Zedekiah had for his covenant; for, First, His was contrary to God and his people. He had promised to the people within seventy years to be delivered. Now the covenant was to keep them in captivity, and to keep the kingdom in subjection. Secondly, he was a captive and so forced to it. Thirdly, the covenant was made with a heathenish king, and it was the direct intent of the covenant to make the kingdom base, that it might not lift up itself. Now, what could have been a greater excuse to have broken the covenant than for him to have said: "I cannot keep this covenant, because I will prove false to my people; for I was a captive when he made me swear?" Therefore might he say, "I will break it;" but saith God, "It is My covenant, therefore I will recompense it upon his own head." And therefore I conclude, That whoever enters into covenant, be what he will, especially when he is commanded, he must keep it; for he that breaks it, God's vengeance shall be upon him. Now, seeing it is so, we are to expect God will avenge His broken covenant upon these lands, according to His word.

Now, the next thing in the text is, that the breakers of the covenant with God, God will recompense it upon their own heads. This is the word of the text, "My oath that he hath despised," &c. Now, to clear it to you who they are that are despisers of the covenant, consider:—

First, That it is a covenant in opinion, and not in practice; that is to say, there is not a man that reforms not in his heart, according to the covenant, but he is a breaker of the same; for this is in the articles of the covenant. Therefore know assuredly, O ye drunkards, adulterers, despisers of ordinances and the people of God, Sabbath-breakers, covetous persons and civilians who care for no more than an outward profession, if ye be not endeavouring reformation, and to keep the covenant, God's vengeance shall be upon you. Indeed, we hear many folks, who pretend to keep the covenant, let an oath flee when they like. Thou by so doing art a good keeper of the covenant indeed! Thou art guilty before God, for thou never covenantedst in heart and affection.

Secondly, All those that despise the covenant, that care not for it; for there is no indifference here. Therefore all the three kingdoms may expect wrath from the Lord, except they repent.

Thirdly, those are despisers of the covenant who are fathers of lies and seditions, and find out shifts to shun it; but whoever they be that are seeking wiles to be freed of the covenant, whether king or parliament, God will send vengeance on them. We are not here to preach rebellion or treason, but what we shall warrant from the Lord's word. Zedekiah was a king, and yet you find vengeance came upon him for his breach of covenant, and so did it upon Saul's house and posterity; therefore let all take heed to it.

"But what would ye have us to do," say ye? First, Consider what case these lands stand in, and what it is they lie under. Is it not the breach of covenant? The judgment of God will come upon them, if He in mercy prevent it not. Because we have sworn the covenant and broken it, therefore God hath sworn that we will not prosper. Oh, is there none among the tribes of Israel to lament these things this day, this sad condition of these three lands, that they are guilty of breach of covenant, and are under the threatening of most severe judgments? Will you then bewail it, if you have any tenderness of heart, each man for himself, and for his family? I know some folk will say, "Let it even be so, for we will never lift it up again," but of this afterward. Now I would entreat you to beware of partaking of other men's sins, lest ye partake of their plagues and judgments. Wilt thou vote with the king in parliament to sin? Then thou must vote for judgments. And I shall only say this, endeavour to cover yourselves now with that which you would cover yourselves with at the day of judgment. There will never a man come in and say, "The king must answer for me;" no, no, the king must answer for himself. If you be not studying to keep these things, the covering will be too narrow for you that day. Again, I would advise you to lay your thoughts aside from getting much of the world; but see if ye can get this, "Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." It was a time then of great defection, and those of them that continued steadfast were as signs and wonders. Oh, then, walk now, as you would desire to walk afterward! For surely those that lie down with sin unpardoned in the grave must resolve to lie in an eternal bed of sorrow, and those that keep themselves clean shall walk with the Lamb in white.

Now, a word to that which I mentioned before. What shall we do since these lands have broken covenant with God? I tell you that Scotland is bound to keep it, although England and Ireland have broken it; and although Scotland break it, yet Ireland and England are bound to stand to it. "Though thou Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend;" that is to say, As for you at this present time, though England and Ireland have broken, yet let not Scotland do so too. Suppose there were but one family in these lands that would stand to it, and if all that family should turn their back upon it except one person, truly that person is bound to stand to it. "Choose you whom you will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Here is but a family, so that if all the kingdom should forswear the covenant, yet so long as I am master of a family, I must serve the Lord. I must not serve other gods, that is to say, we should not serve Popes nor Prelates, &c.

But what if it come to this, that there be no man to bide by it at all but one man? That man is bound to keep it according to Scripture. "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down

thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left." From these words I conclude, though England has forsaken yet Scotland is bound; and though Scotland should forsake yet England is bound; and though both forsake yet one family is bound to stand to it. Therefore study to know your duty lest the wrath of God come upon you and your posterity. Believe these things, for our king and princes, nobles and ministers, and all the people, and our posterity, are bound to it. So I leave it to you with this: Happy is that man that shall be steadfast in the covenant, though all the rest should forsake it. But as to the persons who shall continue steadfast, God has reserved that to Himself as a piece of His sovereignty. Again, we hear not tell of a public covenant ever sworn and broken but God visibly plagued the breakers thereof. There is no sin God would have folk laying more to heart than the breach of the covenant: "As I live, saith the Lord, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon, his own head." God useth not to trust folk long that break covenant without some visible stroke, *as* it was in Saul's and Zedekiah's days. If you would have a mark upon your foreheads, and be kept free from these things, be sighing for the abominations of these lands. Woe to the man that is rejoicing at this day! Is there no family found sighing for these things? If not, all the world shall hear tell of their punishment. This we recommend to you, and do not say that we do not give you warning; for we have told you this from the word of the Lord, therefore receive it in love.

As for myself, I know not what I may do; yet though I should shrink from the faith by my weakness, which God forbid, I oft-times remember the words of Nehemiah and Jeremiah, when they did testify against the people's sins; and I do protest against the breach of covenant, that I may not be made accessory to other folk's sins; and lest I be found guilty before the Lord, and be made partaker of other men's judgments. This is the way that the prophets did use. This is no rebellion or treason, and those who think it censurable I commit to the prophets who are gone to their place, who did these things. First punish them, and then me. I commit all these things unto you. The Lord engrave them on your hearts! Amen.

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THE  
SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT

FOR  
REFORMATION AND DEFENCE OF RELIGION, THE HONOUR AND HAPPINESS OF THE KING, AND  
THE PEACE AND SAFETY OF THE THREE KINGDOMS OF SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, AND IRELAND.

*Taken and subscribed several times by King Charles II., and by all ranks in  
The said three kingdoms.*

WITH  
AN ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1643 AND AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT 1644, RATIFYING AND APPROVING  
THE SAID LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

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*JER 1:5\_ Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.*

*PROV 25:5\_ Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.*

*2 CHRON 25:15\_ And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart.*

*GAL 3:15\_ Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed by an oath, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.*

THE  
SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT

Reformation and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Happiness of the King, and the Peace and Safety of the Three Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland; agreed upon by Commissioners from the Parliament and Assembly of Divines in England, with Commissioners of the Convention of Estates, and General Assembly in Scotland; approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and by both Houses of Parliament and Assembly of Divines in England, and taken and subscribed by them, *Anno* 1643; and thereafter, by the said authority, taken and subscribed by all Ranks in Scotland and England the same Year; and ratified by Act of the Parliament of Scotland, *Anno* 1644: And again renewed in Scotland, with an Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties, by all Ranks, *Anno* 1648, and by Parliament 1649; and taken and subscribed by *King Charles II.* at *Spey*, *June* 23, 1650; and at *Scoon*, *January* 1, 1651.

WE Noblemen, Barons, Knights, Gentlemen, Citizens, Burgesses, Ministers of the Gospel, and Commons of all sorts, in the kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, by the providence of GOD, living under one King, and being of one reformed religion, having before our eyes the glory of GOD, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, the honour and happiness of the King's Majesty and his posterity, and the true publick liberty, safety, and peace of the kingdoms, wherein every one's private condition is included: And calling to mind the treacherous and bloody plots, conspiracies, attempts, and practices of the enemies of GOD, against the true religion and professors thereof in all places, especially in these three kingdoms, ever since the reformation of religion; and how much their rage, power, and presumption are of late, and at this time, increased and exercised, whereof the deplorable state of the church and kingdom of Ireland, the distressed estate of the church and kingdom of England, and the dangerous estate of the church and kingdom of Scotland, are present and public testimonies; we have now at last, (after other means of supplication, remonstrance, protestation, and sufferings,) for the preservation of ourselves and our religion from utter ruin and destruction, according to the commendable practice of these kingdoms in former times, and the example of GOD'S people in other nations, after mature deliberation, resolved and determined to enter into a mutual and solemn League and Covenant, wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself, with our hands lifted up to the most High GOD, do swear,

THAT we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of GOD, endeavour 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.

II. That we shall in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, (that is, church-government by Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors, and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical Officers depending on that hierarchy,) superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness, lest we partake in other men's sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their plagues; and that the Lord may be one, and his name one, in the three kingdoms.

III. We shall, with the same sincerity, reality, and constancy, in our several avocations, endeavour, with our estates and lives, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms; and to preserve and defend the King's Majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion, and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his Majesty's just power and greatness.

IV. We shall also, with all faithfulness, endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be incendiaries, malignants, or evil instruments, by hindering the reformation of religion, dividing the king from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties amongst the people, contrary to this League and Covenant; that they may be brought to publick trial, and receive condign punishment, as the degree of their offences

shall require or deserve, or the supreme judicatories of both kingdoms respectively, or others having power from them for that effect, shall judge convenient.

V. And whereas the happiness of a blessed peace between these kingdoms, denied in former times to our progenitors, is, by the good providence of GOD, granted unto us, and hath been lately concluded and settled by both Parliaments; we shall each one of us, according to our place and interest, endeavour that they may remain conjoined in a firm peace and union to all posterity; and that justice may be done upon the wilful opposers thereof, in manner expressed in the precedent article.

VI. We shall also, according to our places and callings, in this common cause of religion, liberty, and peace of the kingdoms, assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, persuasion, or terror, to be divided and withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indifference or neutrality in this cause which so much concerneth the glory of GOD, the good of the kingdom, and honour of the King; but shall, all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein against all opposition, and promote the same, according to our power, against all lets and impediments whatsoever; and, what we are not able ourselves to suppress or overcome, we shall reveal and make known, that it may be timely prevented or removed: All which we shall do as in the sight of God.

And, because these kingdoms are guilty of many sins and provocations against GOD, and his Son JESUS CHRIST, as is too manifest by our present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof; we profess and declare, before GOD and the world, our unfeigned desire to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of these kingdoms: especially, that we have not as we ought valued the inestimable benefit of the gospel; that we have not laboured for the purity and power thereof; and that we have not endeavoured to receive CHRIST in our hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in our lives; which are the causes of other sins and transgressions so much abounding amongst us: and our true and unfeigned purpose, desire, and endeavour for ourselves, and all others under our power and charge, both in publick and in private, in all duties we owe to GOD and man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of a real reformation; that the Lord may turn away his wrath and heavy indignation, and establish these churches and kingdoms in truth and peace. And this Covenant we make in the presence of ALMIGHTY GOD, the Searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at that great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed ; most humbly beseeching the LORD to strengthen us by his HOLY SPIRIT for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with such success, as may be deliverance and safety to his people, and encouragement to other Christian churches, groaning under, or in danger of, the yoke of antichristian tyranny, to join in the same or like association and covenant, to the glory of GOD, the enlargement of the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, and the peace and tranquillity of Christian kingdoms and commonwealths.

