

ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

Renovation of Covenants.

(Part 4.)

“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, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God.”—Fourth Term of Communion.

Question 1.—*What are the chief temptations inducing to the sin of covenant-breaking?*

Answer.—The chief temptations which induce God’s people to break covenant are: 1.) Dwelling among, and conversing with, a people of a false religion, Deut. 29:16, 17. This induces persons, families and tribes to symbolize with them in perjury, Deut. 29:18. People are more easily seduced to sin, by the perverse example of those they live among, than they can be induced to abide in duty, by the best instructions of those that watch over them. No wonder if a people dwelling among infidels is in hazard of seduction, when a few infidels tolerated to dwell among the Lord’s people will readily seduce them, Ex. 23:33.

2.) Heart defection, Deut. 29:18, is the first step to external defection, in profession, practice or principle, from the covenant of God, Prov. 14:14; Heb. 10:38. Then, such a person is plagued with hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, to run upon sins against the covenant of God, not seeing nor fearing the curse of it, 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. 3.) Inclinations to idolatry of any sort ensnares those so inclined to the guilt of idolatry, Deut. 29:18; 30:17. 4.) A bribed, blinded, or seared conscience tempts men to run further into covenant-breaking, Deut. 29:18; Heb. 3:12; 12:15. When the heart turns away from God, then it inclines to idols. When it is so bewitched, then the conscience, that is first reclaimant, gets a bribe from the perverted will and affections to hold its peace at, and excuse sin, and then its dictates are gall and wormwood, being blinded with error, it seeks arguments to justify the sinful practice, and at length is so seared, that it is hardened against all reproof, and wholly benumbed with the deceitfulness of sin under the energy of strong delusions, which are bitter in the end. 5.) Lastly, self-flattering presumption tempts covenant breakers to go ever so much farther. Such oftentimes bless themselves in their sinful course, Deut. 29:19. This is the most heinous aggravation of the sin of perjury.

3.)

Question 2.—*What may every covenant-breaker expect?*

Answer.—The Spirit of God answers: 1.) The Lord will not spare him, Deut. 29:20. This indicates a threatening of inexorable, inevitable and irresistible judgment wherein there shall be no mercy tendered, Ezek. 5:11; 7:4, 9; except there be repentance. 2.) The Lord’s anger and jealousy shall smoke against him, Deut. 29:20. Covenant breakers call down upon themselves the fiery indignation of the Lord, Deut. 31:16, 17; Jos. 23:16; Mal.

3:5. 3.) All the curses written in the book of the covenant shall be against such, Deut. 29:20. All covenants have a curse, Neh. 10:29. The curse of this covenant is someway greater than the curse of the law, and deserving and procuring of the Mediator's vengeance, which is sorer punishment than the vengeance of a broken law, Heb. 10:28, 29. It comprehends all miseries, temporal, spiritual and eternal. It is the flying roll of God's swift and certain judgments, Zech. 5:2-4. There is a broad and black list of curses appointed unto covenant breakers, Lev. 26:15-39. 4.) The Lord shall blot out the name of covenant breakers from under heaven, Deut. 29:20. Though they think to keep their esteem and renown or their possessions, the Spirit of the Lord says their name shall be blotted out and stink, Job 18:17; 20:7; Ps. 37:35, 36; 52:5-7; Prov. 10:7; 13:9.

Question 3.—*Why is the punishment of national and ecclesiastical breaches of covenant so public, that it is observed of posterity and strangers?*

Answer.—This is in order: 1.) To vindicate the glory of God, which would be very much obscured and wronged, in the sight of the nations, if the punishment were not as public as the sin, which was observed by them, Isa. 42:8. And to vindicate true religion, from the imputation of allowing perjury, which is hateful to all nations, Isa. 54:17. 2.) To proportion the punishment with the sin, in justice, Jer. 5:19; Ezek. 16:59. The despising of the oath of God, and breaking His covenant was public and national (or corporate), and therefore must be punished with judgments that are public and national (or corporate), Ezek. 17:18-21. 3.) To remove the stumbling block from the nations about, and posterity, that this impunity would lay before them, if such a sin might pass without signal and stupendous strokes. And to set up a beacon, to warn all of the hazard of splitting upon this rock, Deut. 31:21.