

ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

Renovation of Covenants.

(Part 6.)

“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.—*How may a nation or church be guilty of breach of covenant?*

Answer.—They may incur guilt: 1.) By transgressing the articles of the covenant, as by serving other gods, Deut. 29:26; putting forth the hand to any accursed thing, which, though it was the personal sin of Achan only, yet the whole congregation was involved in it, Jos. 7:11, 15—especially when it is discovered, and yet connived at, not witnessed against, not mourned over. 2.) By rashness or falsehood in making the covenant, Hos. 10:4. When it is not taken in truth, righteousness and judgment, when only in hypocritical flattery, without right and steadfast hearts it is engaged into, Ps. 78:36, 37. 3.) By forgetfulness, Deut. 4:23. Forgetting is a step towards forsaking, Ps. 44:17. A covenant of descending obligation should not be forgotten, Jer. 50:5. 4.) By seeking shifts to elude it, and arguments to defend the breach of it, Prov. 20:25. 5.) By despising and undervaluing the bond of it, Ezek. 16:59; 17:16, 19. 6.) By defection to the iniquities abjured in it, Jer. 11:10. 7.) By changing the institutions sworn to be maintained, Isa. 24:5. Either the state government, without consulting divine directions and boundaries, Hos. 8:1, 4. Or church government, without respect to the pattern of the revealed will of Christ, 2 Chron. 13:9-11. 8.) By disowning it, and downright denying the obligation of it, Dan. 11:30. 9.) By stating an opposition to it, and persecuting them that adhere to it, 1 Kings 19:10; Dan. 11:30.

Question 2.—*What are the aggravations of this sin of covenant breaking?*

Answer.—Deut. 29:25. This forsaking implies a willing and willful deliberate resolution, and presumption in avowing, or owning, the breach of covenant. The aggravations, which are contemplated in such a forsaking, are: 1.) A forsaking of the commandments of God, which carries with it a brand of hateful heinousness, 1 Kings 18:18; 2 Chron. 12:1, 5; Ezra 9:10; Jer. 9:13. 2.) It imports and infers a greater aggravation, to forsake a covenant of long standing, a perpetual covenant, Jer. 50:5. 3.) It imports a greater aggravation to forsake a covenant that is holy, Dan. 11:30. 4.) It imports a greater aggravation to forsake a covenant that is so solemnly engaged unto, Jer. 34:18. 5.) It imports a greater aggravation to forsake a covenant that has been frequently renewed, and that under such sanctions, certifications, adjurations and curses as appears, Jos. 24:1-25; Jer. 11:2, 3. 6.) Furthermore, it is a forsaking of the covenant of the Lord God, Ps. 50:16. Though it were but a man’s covenant, yet it could not be forsaken without treachery, Gal. 3:15; but it is

much more to forsake God's covenant, which is to forsake Himself, a dreadful sin, so much aggravated in Scripture, Deut. 31:16; 32:15; Jos. 24:19, 20; Judg. 10:13; 2 Chron. 24:20; Isa. 1:4; Jer. 2:10, 11, 13. 7.) It is the breaking of a covenant, which, because of its existence, the Lord has respect unto, and for which, sometimes He will not destroy, but have compassion upon posterity, 2 Kings 13:23. This is charged as a great aggravation of breaking covenant, Jer. 11:10; Mal. 2:10; because it was the covenant of their fathers, or of the God of their fathers.

At its height, this forsaking displays itself in worshipping and serving other gods—whether a breach of the first or second commandments, Deut. 29:26. And this is aggravated from two grounds: 1.) They are gods that are unknowable, Deut. 29:26. Worshipping an unknown god is a peculiar stench of idolatrous superstition, Acts 17:22, 23. Ignorance is not the *mother* but the *murder* of true devotion. 2.) They are gods that have not been given to such as worship them, Deut. 29:26. If anything is received, admitted or allowed in worship or religious service, which God has not given, granted or commanded, it is a breach of His law and covenant. His law is so perfect, that not only what He has forbidden is sin, but what He has not commanded in religious service is, as well, Deut. 12:32.