

## ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

*The National Covenant; or the Confession of Faith.*

(Part 2.)

“That public, social covenanting, is an ordinance of God, obligatory on churches and nations under the New Testament; that the National Covenant and the Solemn League are an exemplification of this divine institution; and that these Deeds are of continued obligation upon the moral person.”—Fourth Term of Communion.

---

Question 1.—*Is it the duty of the magistrate to see that the true religion is established by law?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Isa. 60:5, 10. This is cleared by the following: 1.) Because it is foretold by the prophet Isaiah, that in the days of the Gospel, kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers to the church of God, Isa. 49:23. 2.) Because Artaxerxes, who was but a heathen king, was very careful to make a decree, that whatsoever was commanded by the God of heaven, should be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven. And whosoever would not obey the law of God and the king was punished speedily. For which singular mercy Ezra blessed the God of his fathers, who had put such a thing in the king's heart, Ezra 7:23, 25-28. So, too, did Nebuchadnezzar make such a decree, Dan. 3:29. The like we read of Darius, Dan. 6:26. 3.) Because the supreme magistrate is to be a keeper of both tables of the law of God. As well the first, which relates to religion, and of our duty to God; as of the second, which relates to righteousness, and our duty to our neighbour, Deut. 17:18, 19. 4.) Scripture exhorts magistrates to the service of the Son of God, Ps. 2:10-12. This is an exhortation and command to the rulers, to lay aside that enmity and opposition which they had managed against Christ and His kingdom, and to do homage and service to Him. If the question be asked, in what *character* are they to serve Christ? It may be answered by proposing another. In what character did they *oppose* Him? Was it not in their *public* character, as rulers? 5.) Sometime after the apostasy, it is prophesied that the kingdoms of this world will turn to Christ in their national capacities, Rev. 11:15. 6.) Apart from this how can these prophecies of old ever have accomplishment, Isa. 45:4; Jer. 4:2?

Question 2.—*Should the magistrate punish those who maintain and spread doctrines and practices contrary to the true Reformed religion?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Ezra 7:25, 26. This we derive: 1.) From the example of Hezekiah, who removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent, to which the Israelites did burn incense, 2 Kings 18:4. 2.) From the example of Josiah, who made a thorough reformation; and made all Israel serve the Lord their God. The word in the Hebrew imports, that he in a manner forced and compelled them to the pure worship of God, as a servant is forced and compelled to his work. He, by his royal power and authority, kept them in order, forbidding idolatry, and commanding them to serve God no otherwise, than according to his word, 2 Chron. 15:12, 13; 34:33. They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and

whosoever should not was to be put to death. 3.) Because whosoever blasphemed the name of the Lord, was surely put to death, Lev. 24:16. This blaspheming was a piercing through or stabbing the name of the Lord, as is indicated in the Hebrew, which may also be done by maintaining blasphemous errors and heresies. 4.) Such is prophesied to be carried out by those nations which repent, after the period of the apostasy, Rev. 17:16.

*Question 3.—Should the magistrate suppress all things designed to lead the people under his care out of the truth and study to promote the welfare of God's people?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Sam. 23:3. The fear of God disposed Nehemiah, the governor, to “seek the welfare of the children of Israel,” not only by generously sacrificing the emoluments of his office, but by exerting his authority for preventing the profanation of the Sabbath, and issuing his commands and threatenings to those who persisted in its violation, Neh. 13:17, 18. In the same religious manner did he act in repairing the house of God, purging it from the defilement which the priest had suffered, and in providing for the regular performance of divine ordinances, Neh. 13:9-14.

*Question 4.—Should the magistrate condemn the monuments of bygone idolatry and punish those who persist in their use?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Kings 18:4. It was the practice of godly magistrates to remove the remaining monuments of bygone idolatry and make the people to follow after the Lord, 2 Chron. 34:33.

*Question 5.—Is the true security of a nation bound up with its profession of the true religion and defense thereof?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Ezra 7:23. Scripture assures us that all nations shall serve Christ, Ps. 72:10, 11. Conversely, it issues stern warnings to those kingdoms which refuse to serve Christ by securing the prosperity of His church, Isa. 60:12. Furthermore, God threatens to bring judgments upon those nations that fail to worship Him as He has commanded, Zech. 14:17-19.