

## ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

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

(Part 3.)

“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.

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Question 1.—*Is covenanting a duty commanded by God and conformable to the practice of the godly in former times?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Kings 11:17. Covenanting is a joining ordinance whereby a sure and indissoluble knot is tied between God and his people, Jer. 50:5. It is also the great means ordained by God to put an end to distrust, and remove all doubt, Heb. 6:16.

Question 2.—*Is covenanting especially appropriate at times when the true religion stands in danger or the nation stands in peril?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Chron. 34:29-32. In the reign of Josiah, the people of Judah, their king, the officers, the judges, the priests, the Levites and all the citizens small and great renewed their covenant with the God of their fathers. In the preceding reign, the condition of the church had become deplorable, by the immorality, idolatry and cruelty of Manasseh, who gave himself up to work all manner of evil with greediness. The holy scriptures had been disregarded, and banished from the court of the irreligious monarch. So rare were the known copies, that even the young king, Josiah when he ascended the throne, appears never to have seen, nor to have heard read, the book of the law. To consolidate the strength of the godly, by bringing them into the bond of public covenant, and stirring them up to place their reliance on the God of Israel, he and they engaged their hearts to seek the divine favor and blessing, in their good work of reformation, by an act of public covenanting.

Question 3.—*Ought the Confession of the Church to be interpreted in such a way that extends itself even to those things, though not explicitly mentioned, yet stand condemned in the spirit of the creed?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Matt. 5:21, 22. It is a Scriptural principle to understand that where one sin or duty, is forbidden or commanded, all like sins or duties are to be contemplated, Matt. 15:4-6; 1 Thess. 5:22.

Question 4.—*Is it proper to swear in the great Name of the Lord our God?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Deut. 10:20. This is made plain when we consider the following: 1.) There is no greater or higher Name by which an oath can be confirmed, Heb. 6:13, 16. 2.) We are expressly enjoined to swear by His Name, Deut. 6:13. 3.) Although swearing

falsely in the Name of God is punishable, this presumes a swearing truly which is not punishable, Lev. 19:12.

Question 5.—*Is it necessary that practical godliness accompany outward acts of covenanting?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Lev. 26:25. The Lord is a covenant avenging God Who will not suffer those entering into covenant with Him to profane it with their graceless and careless breaking of it. This wickedness is sometimes open contempt for the true religion, 1 Kings 19:14. Other times it is manifested in a stubborn refusal to abide in God's law, Ps. 78:10; or an unsteadfastness in maintaining the ends contemplated in the covenant, Ps. 78:37. All transgressing of God's law is accounted a matter of covenant breaking, Isa. 24:5.

Question 6.—*Is it proper to call God to witness, as the great searcher of hearts?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 1 Chron. 28:9. The Lord requires those entering into covenant with Him to have their hearts set in order. It is accounted a great sin of the Israelites that they flattered God with their mouth, but left their hearts set upon sinful courses, Ps. 78:36, 37; Ezek. 33:31.

Question 7.—*Is it necessary to rely on the Holy Spirit working in the covenanter to strengthen him to keep the ends contemplated?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Rom. 8:26. No one is able apart from the Spirit of God working in him to do those good works contemplated in covenanting, John 15:4-6; Phil. 2:13; 2 Cor. 3:5.