

ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

The Solemn League and Covenant.

(The Solemn League and Covenant, Pt. 7.)

“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.

The Sixth 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shall not suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, persuasion, or terror, to be divided or withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality in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.

Question 1.—*Is it the duty of those in covenant to assist and defend one another in the common cause?*

Answer.—Yes. 1 Sam. 20:8-17. It is a great purpose and end of covenants and covenanting between men that they enlist themselves in the mutual defense and help of one another, Gen. 14:1-4; Isa. 41:5, 6. It is for this very reason that God forbade His people from making such covenants with the heathen nations around them, Judg. 2:2.

Question 2.—*May we suffer ourselves to be withdrawn from covenant union for any cause?*

Answer.—No. Rom 1:31. It is accounted a great and degrading sin (particularly, against the Third and Ninth commandments) when men break covenant, 2 Tim. 3:3. There is great peace in the maintenance of a covenant relation, 1 Kings 5:12. Such who enter into such covenants become covenant brethren, 1 Kings 9:13. It is a great aggravation of enmity and malice when it is the violation of friendship and of a *brotherly covenant*, Amos 1:9; and it calls for great judgments from the Lord, Lev. 26:25.

Question 3.—*Are we permitted to make defection to the contrary party?*

Answer.—No. 1 John 2:19. Those that apostatize from religion sufficiently indicate that, before, they were hypocrites in religion: those who have imbibed the spirit of gospel truth have a good preservative against destructive error, 2 Thess. 2:16, 17. Those who make defection to the contrary party call forth the curse of the covenant, Ezek. 20:37. The words of the covenant shall not fall to the ground, Deut. 32:35. If we do not by our obedience qualify ourselves for the blessings of it, we shall by our disobedience bring ourselves under the curses of it, Jer. 11:8-11.

Question 4.—*May we give ourselves over to neutrality in the cause of the covenant?*

Answer.—No. Acts 18:12-17. Indifference in the cause of God and His truth is always a detestable thing, Matt. 12:30. There are two great interests on foot in the world, with the

one or the other of which all the children of men are siding, Gen. 3:15. The interest of sin and wickedness is the devil's interest, and all wicked people side with that interest; the interest of truth and holiness is God's interest, with which all godly people side; and it is a case that will not admit a neutrality, Ex. 32:21, 26; Jos. 5:13.

Question 5.—*Should we zealously and constantly continue in the cause of the covenant, against all opposition?*

Answer.—Yes. Prov. 28:1. The righteous must be bold as a lion; a cowardly Christian, who is afraid to profess the doctrines or practice the duties of the gospel, must expect that Christ will be ashamed of him another day, Mark 8:38. Phinehas is commended and blessed for his zeal in the cause of the true religion in his day, Num. 25:11-13.

Question 6.—*Should we promote the covenant against all impediments, according to our power, all the days of our lives?*

Answer.—Yes. Ezra 10:1-5; 2 Chron. 29:10. Those that are duly sensible of the terrors of the Lord will do all they can, in their places, to promote religion, and encourage all the methods of reconciliation for the turning away of God's wrath, 1 Chron. 21:18-24. It was the happiness of Israel that they had among them such a considerable body of men who were obliged by their office to promote and keep up religion among them, 1 Chron. 23:4, 5. Those do the greatest good to their country that lay out themselves in their places to promote religion, 2 Chron. 24:15, 16.

Question 7.—*Should we reveal that which we cannot suppress or overcome, that it might be prevented in a timely fashion?*

Answer.—Yes. Est. 7:1-6. The Lord accounts those that stand by in silence equal in guilt to those committing the offences, Ps. 50:18. Instead of reprovng him and witnessing against him, as those should do that declare God's statutes, there was a silent approval of his practices. Unto them He administers a stinging rebuke, Ps. 50:16.

Question 8.—*Ought all of this to be done as in the sight of God?*

Answer.—Yes. 1 Tim. 6:13. We are commanded to do all that we do as in the sight of God—with an eye to His glory, 1 Cor. 10:31. How much more then ought we to be conscious of this when prosecuting the ends of His ordinance of covenanting? *cf.* Ezek. 17:15.