

ORDINANCE OF COVENANTING.

The Solemn League and Covenant.

(The Solemn League and Covenant, Pt. 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.”—Fourth Term of Communion.

The Fifth Article.

“V. And whereas the happiness of a blessed peace between these kingdoms, denied in former times to our progenitors, is, by the good providence of GOD, granted unto us, and hath been lately concluded and settled by both Parliaments; we shall, each one of us, according to our place and interest, endeavour that they may remain conjoined in a firm peace and union to all posterity; and that justice may be done upon the willful opposers thereof, in manner expressed in the precedent article.

Question 1.—*Is it a great blessing for diverse kingdoms and nations to be at peace?*

Answer.—Yes. Isa. 2:4. Peace, being the fruit of kingdoms and nations establishing the true religion and liberties of the subjects, constitutes a crowning blessing upon such as achieve it, Jer. 34:4-8. When the Lord is pleased to bless His people to dwell in safety, there is an accompanying peace, Ps. 4:8. Conversely, it is a false and conniving peace that the wicked promise unto themselves, 2 Sam. 17:3. There is no peace for the wicked, but only the curse of God, Isa. 48:22; John 3:36. Peace is the promise which belongs to those nations which submit themselves to the reign of Christ, and it shall be the hallmark feature of the Millennium, Isa. 2:2-5.

Question 2.—*Should it be a concern of governments to establish peace?*

Answer.—Yes. Jer. 29:7. It is the civil duty of all men, especially those professing the true religion, to seek peace with others as far as the interest of truth and true religion permit, Rom. 12:18. The king, or chief magistrate, being the civil head of the body politic, (*cf.* Deut. 1:13, *I will appoint them as your heads*); it is necessary that such a man be a man inclined toward peace, *cf.* 2 Kings 22:20. By their providence, justice is established and evil is scattered, Prov. 20:8; so that the people may dwell in peace and safety, *cf.* Acts 24:2. Likewise, we understand that the peace of the Lord’s people is bound up with the peace of those governments under which they find themselves, 1 Tim. 2:1-4. Magistrates establish peace through an enforcement of justice, without which the rulers themselves become the objects of scorn, Prov. 24:23, 24. Enforcement of justice demands a proper estimate of what is good and what is not good, Prov. 18:5. Thus, it was in Solomon’s day a characteristic of his kingdom that it was both unified and at peace, 1 Kings 4:24, 25.

Question 3.—*Ought we to endeavor the keeping of such peace unto all posterity?*

Answer.—Yes. Ps. 122:6-8. That for which we ought to pray, we ought also to endeavor to keep, Eph. 4:3. Additionally, if it is the duty of good men to leave behind an inheritance for their children, Prov. 13:22, which they yet maintain as theirs to give or withhold by title, Matt. 7:9-11; how much more are they obliged to keep such a peace unto posterity which they possess not as property, but by right? *cf.* Ps. 48:11-14. Thus, fathers may dispose of the inheritance of their children, because that inheritance belongs to the

father as well as to the son, *cf.* Gen. 31:14; Josh. 14:13; but he has no more power to resign the liberties of his children, than their lives, *cf.* Deut. 21:18-21. One of the most effective ways of endeavoring that this peace be maintained is instructing the posterity in the ways of the Lord, Isa. 54:13. As we noted before, this entails a careful instruction in these covenants, and to cause the children to make conscience thereof, Deut. 6:6, 7. For without such diligent instruction of our children, and good examples given by us to them, God may justly plague us, and let them forget and fall from this covenant, and the judgments of God will fall on the posterity, as on Israel, for King Saul's breaking of the oath to the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. 21:1.

Question 4.—*Should we seek that justice be done to those who are wilful opposers of such a covenanted unity?*

Answer.—Yes. Ezra 7:25, 26. The execution of justice is a matter of great rejoicing for a righteous people, but a slackness in punishing evildoers harms the morale of God's people, Prov. 29:2. It is imperative that justice be done that others beholding their example learn to fear to do evil, Deut. 13:9-11. The punishment of crimes committed is designed *to terrify*, and so to prevent their repetition, Rom. 13:3. When those who are exalted to places of trust and power (instead of putting the laws in execution against vice and injustice and punishing the wicked according to their merits, patronise and protect them, give them countenance, and support their reputation by their own example), then wickedness proliferates and the wicked swarm in all places, and go up and down seeking to deceive, debauch, and destroy others, *cf.* Ps. 12:8; they are neither afraid nor ashamed to discover themselves; they declare their sin as Sodom and there is none to check or control them, Isa. 3:9.

Question 5.—*Should we thus endeavor according to our places and interests?*

Answer.—Yes. Deut. 29:9-11. It is incumbent upon each person to endeavor the maintenance of the cause of God's truth in accordance both with his station or place and interest in the matters contemplated, 1 Pet. 2:14. Thus ministers must give themselves over to seeing that it is upheld as to matters ecclesiastical, *cf.* 1 Tim. 4:16; magistrates as to matters civil, *cf.* Tit. 3:1; and fathers as to matters familial, *cf.* Eph. 6:4.