

Debate: How the Solemn League & Covenant Binds the Usa, Canada, Australia, etc., Today (3/3)

by Greg Barrow

Greg Barrow discusses the enduring significance of the Solemn League and Covenant and its moral obligations for modern nations.

Duration: 1:18:09

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:13-15, Psalm 85:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 4:13, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 10:22, 2 Peter 3:13

Topics: "Covenant Theology", "Family Ministry"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the importance of being mindful of God's covenant and the word He has commanded for a thousand generations. It emphasizes the need for regeneration and righteousness, as mentioned in Titus 3:5 and Romans 4:13. The author highlights the neglect of family leaders in teaching the doctrine of Christianity, which contributes to the divisions and corruptions in the church. The devil seeks to undermine family duties and pervert the youth, but the solemn injunctions and dying charge of Jesus Christ protect the public duties in the assemblies of the saints.

Transcript

This is tape 3 of Covenanted Uniformity, the Protestant Remedy for Disunity, being chapter 3 of Greg Barrow's book, The Covenanted Reformation Defended Against Contemporary Schismatics. Please note that this entire book is free on Stillwater Survival Books' website, www.swrb.com. It is also available in hardcover from Stillwaters, along with a treasure trove of the finest Protestant, Reformed, and Puritan literature available anywhere in the world today. Stillwaters can be reached at 780-450-3730 or by email at swrb@swrb.com. Note that these tapes are not copyrighted, and we therefore encourage you to copy and distribute them to any and all you believe would be benefited.

And we continue our reading. While it isn't necessary to take the solemn league and covenant to become a Christian, it is necessary to own it in a land that is formally bound to this everlasting covenant with God. Once this covenant was sworn, it formed an obligation that became a test of Christian faithfulness and a subordinate and secondary rule of faith agreeable to God's word.

The intrinsic obligation of the solemn league and covenant is real and distinct. Ignoring it or railing against it will not make it disappear. Many covenanters and their children died telling us to take this seriously, and all who have now read this can no longer claim ignorance of what God will require at the last day.

All who ignore these just claims of God are without excuse. Covenant-breaking is a heinous sin. Suffice it here to warn and indict covenant-breakers in the words of our venerable ancestors.

This is August 20, Session 15, 1647, a declaration and exhortation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to their brethren in England. Yet we should betray our own sense and betray the truth if we should not resent so great a sin and danger as is the breach of a solemn covenant sworn with hands lifted up to the Most High God, which breach, however, varnished over with some colorful and handsome pretext, one whereof is the liberty and common right of the free people of England, as once saw break a covenant with the Gibeonites in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah. Yet God could not then and cannot now be mocked, yea, it is too apparent and undeniable that among those who did take the covenant of the three kingdoms, as there are many who have given themselves to a detestable indifference or neutrality, so there is a generation which has made defection on the contrary part, persecuting as far as they could that true reformed religion in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, which by the covenant they ought to preserve against the common enemies, hindering and resisting the reformation and uniformity which by the covenant ought to be endeavored, preserving and tolerating those cursed things which by the covenant ought to be extirpated.

That's from the Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, pages 333 and 334. O ye seed of Israel, his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones, he is the Lord our God, his judgments are on all the earth. Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, 1 Chronicles 16, verses 13 through 15.

F. Do the circumstantial details of the solemn leaving covenant bind us? Moving on to a different aspect of our present debate, I wish to allow Pastor Price to address Mr. Bacon's concerns relating to the circumstantial details of the solemn leaving covenant. Since our dear pastor had already completed this task, I saw no reason to duplicate his work. Mr. Bacon states, The Reformation Presbyterian Church thus has maintained and continues to maintain that the Westminster documents which we have adopted were, see the Westminster Bibliography, says Bacon, transacted upon the basis of the moral obligations of the solemn leaving covenant.

The moral and perpetual obligations of the solemn leaving covenant are met and fulfilled insofar as a church commits itself to those just requirements of God's word. The human constitutions by which those commitments are met may vary from 1643 Scotland to 1997 North America, and as from defense departed. Pastor Price responds, Are there circumstantial details within these covenants that do not apply to the United States and Canada? Yes, there are.

For example, the United States has neither king nor parliament nor national church. Canada has no national church. Neither the United States nor Canada as nations acknowledge their obligation to the solemn leaving covenant.

But that which is circumstantial does not alter the moral obligations contained within these lawful covenants. If there is anything in these instruments, that is, the national covenant and the solemn leaving covenant, of a circumstantial nature, we admit it may vary with the circumstances which produced it. But whatever is moral will remain as permanent as these nations and as unchangeable as the great legislator,

that is, the Lord God Himself.

That's from Samuel B. Wiley's Sermon on Covenanting, page 98. Consider that when the covenanted nations of Israel and Judah were sent into captivity, they also were unable to keep certain circumstantial elements of the covenant made with their fathers. For example, they had no king from among their brethren to reign over them.

They had no national church. They were unable to keep the worship required in the law as long as they were separated from the temple in Jerusalem. And yet God preserved a faithful remnant of covenant keepers even in the land of their captivity.

For example, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Esther, Mordecai, and so forth. How did they keep the covenant of their fathers? They obeyed all the terms of the covenant that were yet applicable to them while in captivity. All those in captivity were yet formally bound by the covenant of their fathers, despite the circumstantial differences that existed in captivity.

Some, like Ezekiel, Daniel, and so forth, were covenant keepers, while others were enduring the divine curses God had promised to bring upon them for breaking the covenant of their fathers. And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant, I will scatter you among the heathen. Leviticus 26, 15, 33 Observe that Ezekiel makes clear that Israel in captivity could not escape the formal bond of the covenant, and I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.

Ezekiel 20, 37 Calvin's exposition of this verse further evidences that Israel in captivity was yet formally bound by the covenant of their fathers, and not only morally bound to the law found in the covenant. For Calvin distinguishes between the covenant that formally bound Israel, but did not so bind the Gentiles, whereas if God were only speaking of the moral law contained in the covenant, that would equally bind the Gentiles as well. Quote, Hence the bond of the covenant means the constancy of his covenant as far as he is concerned, and the simile is suitable because God had bound his people to himself on the condition that they should be always surrounded with these bonds.

Hence when they petulantly wandered like untamed beasts, yet God had hidden bonds of his covenant, that is, he persevered in his own covenant so that he collected them all again to himself, not to rule over them as a father, but to punish their revolt more severely. Here is a tacit comparison between the Israelites and the Gentiles. For the Gentiles, through their never approaching nearer to God, wandered away in their licentiousness without restraint.

But the state of the elect people was different since the end of their covenant was this, that God held them bound to him even if the whole world should escape from him. As from Calvin's Commentaries on Ezekiel, page 332. Moreover, the faithful covenanters in Scotland, England, and Ireland of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could certainly have maintained that certain circumstances mentioned in the solemn league covenant no longer applied to them, and therefore they were no longer formally bound to keep it.

For example, when Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector, there was no king, or under Charles II and James II, the solemn league covenant was burned and made illegal or after 1707 Scotland and England became one nation, and so forth. But such evasions were always the proposed excuses on the part of covenant breakers as to why they were not formally obligated to own or to renew either the national covenant or the solemn league covenant. The faithful words of the Covenantant and Presbyterian General Assembly of the

Church of Scotland should put all such evasions to flight.

Quote, Albeit the legion covenant, that is, the solemn legion covenant, be despised by that prevailing party in England, and the work of uniformity, through the retardments and obstructions that have come in the way, be almost forgotten by these kingdoms, yet the obligation of that covenant is perpetual, and all the duties contained therein are constantly to be minded and prosecuted by every one of us in our posterity according to their places and stations. And again, that's from the Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, page 460. Pastor Price's response ends here, and again I would like to thank him for his faithful work and gracious assistance in this matter.

Positive application of the covenants to modern times and circumstances. Covenant renewal. I readily admit that many circumstances have changed from 1643 to 1997.

Many circumstances had also changed from 1643 to 1651. The unity of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was broken, and the reigning power had fled the country. Control was in the hands of the conquering usurper, Oliver Cromwell.

Did this radical change in circumstances change the obligation of the covenants? Did the intrinsic obligation to own and renew the covenants suddenly fly away when Cromwell usurped power? Is it true that the human constitutions by which those commitments are met may vary from 1643 Scotland to 1997 North America, as Mr. Bacon argues? If he means that we are to swear new covenants, entirely distinct from the Solemn League and Covenant, to meet our changing circumstances, then I emphatically say he greatly errs. If he means that we ought to faithfully renew the Solemn League and Covenant, recognizing its intrinsic moral obligation, while applying it to contemporary circumstances, then I wholeheartedly agree. This is what was done in Arkansas, Scotland, 1712, and again in Philadelphia, October 8, 1880.

The title of the Arkansas deed is instructive of its purpose and pertains directly to this question of accommodating the Solemn League and Covenant to our time and position, respectively. The title reads, The Arkansas renovation of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, with the acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties as they were renewed at Arkansas, near Douglas, compared with the additions of Paisley, 1820, and Belfast, 1835. Also, the renovation of these public federal deeds ordained at Philadelphia, October 8, 1880, by the Reformed Presbytery, with accommodation of the original covenants in both transactions to their times and positions, respectively.

From this it is readily observable that the Reformed Presbytery intended to accommodate the original covenants to the time in which they lived. They faithfully recognized their intrinsic moral obligation by holding to the original promises, and they also explicitly testified against any group who unfaithfully attempted to imitate a covenant renewal while evading its moral perpetual obligation. Quote, We adhere to the renovation of the national covenants at Arkansas, 1712, as comprising the same grand scriptural principles with the original deeds and preserving the identity of the moral person, which became more visible in 1761 by a judicial testimony, re-exhibited in 1858 and 1876.

We repudiate the renovation at Dervick, 1853, as being inadequate, defective, and unfaithful, part of the document couched in abstract and evasive and equivocal language. Also, we condemn and reject the Pittsburgh Bond, that is, that's the present bond of the RBC&A, as ambiguous, self-contradictory, and treacherous, a snare on MSPA, that's the Reformed Presbytery of America, act of adherence to our covenants, National and Solemn League, as adapted to the present time. Alexander Henderson agrees with the Reformed Presbytery, the so-called Stelites.

Do the so-called Stelites teach the same doctrine of covenant renewal as the men of the Second Reformation? In answer to this query, I think there is none better to turn to than the elder statesman of the Scottish Commissioners sent to the Westminster Assembly. Surely Alexander Henderson would give us a true impression of what was intended in the renewing of the National Covenant, as he preached on the occasion of swearing the covenant at St. Andrews in early April of 1638. In his sermon upon Psalm 110, verse 3, thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness from the womb of the morning, thou hast the due of thy youth, Henderson proclaims, and indeed ye have just reason to be willing now, because it is God's cause ye have in hand, and it is no new cause to us.

It is almost sixty years old, it is no less since this same confession of faith was first subscribed and sworn to, that is, in 1580 and 1581, and it has been still in use yearly to be subscribed and sworn to in some parts among those in this land to this day. And I think it would have been so in all parts of the land if men had dreamed of what was coming upon us. Whatever is added to it at this time, it is nothing but an interpretation of the former part, and if men will be willing to see the right, that they may see that there is nothing in the latter part but that which may be deduced from the first.

And in the keeping of the covenant, we are not found to keep only these same words that were before, but we must renew it, and in the renewing thereof, we must apply it to the present time when it is renewed, as we have done, renewed it against the present ills. And that's from Alexander Henderson's Sermons, Prayers, and Pulpit Addresses, page 21. Henderson's doctrine of covenant renewal is exactly the same as the Reformed Presbytery and the PRCE.

What is Mr. Bacon's doctrine of covenant renewal? He thinks the seventeenth-century covenant should stay in the seventeenth century, and the renewal of our Father's covenants are not included in his doctrine or his practice. Rather, he seems to be intent in slandering all attempts to accomplish that godly end by hurling aspersion at those who would promote it. Notice in the above sermon that Henderson says that the covenant is now almost sixty years old, and yet it was still being subscribed in some parts of Scotland on a yearly basis.

He urges his flock to renew it by making application to the present time that it might strengthen the Church of Christ against the devil's wiles. I am very thankful for the Reformed Presbytery who upheld the same doctrine which Henderson here teaches. If our nation were presently full of ministers like those found in the Reformed Presbytery, we would not so readily wallow in the confusion of the modern-day malignants.

Men such as Mr. Bacon will have us believe that the so-called Stelites taught something different than the great Reformers of the Second Reformation, and it is abundantly evident that such a sentiment is grossly inaccurate. Now, dear reader, you have hard evidence to prove who is telling the truth. Mr. Bacon's portrayal that we have no intention of accommodating these covenants to meet our present circumstances is now exposed.

The PRCE presently owns both bonds and is currently working on a covenant renewal to accommodate and adapt these original covenants to our time and circumstances respectively. We pray that God will send faithful laborers to strengthen our hands in this complex and difficult task. Moreover, those like Mr. Bacon, the RPCNA, the pretended covenanters, or most other so-called Reformed Presbyterians who wish to avoid or adulterate the intrinsic obligation of these faithful bonds will of course be welcome, only let them first repent and make proper restitution for their past covenant breaking, perjury, and present slander against the true covenanted remnant.

Mr. Bacon wishes us to believe that he is a staunch advocate of public covenanting when he says, The issue between the Stelites and the rest of the body of Christ is not whether we today should practice the ordinance of public covenanting. Not only do the Stelites believe public covenanting is for our present day, so too does the RPC and the RPCNA. In reality, every church that practices baptism believes in public covenanting.

It is not so clear and central with others of God's people, but when we baptize, we are covenanting publicly in an engagement to be the Lord's. That's from a defense departed. David Steele comments, The only plausible objection offered by opponents to the doctrine and practice of public social covenanting is taken from the assumption that it is superseded by the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper.

The assumption has never been proved and is utterly groundless as will at once appear to any unbiased mind by considering that God instituted all three forms of taking hold of His covenant. If it be so that baptism and the Lord's Supper are substantially the same seals of the covenant as circumcision and the Passover, then the consequence is inevitable that as the whole people of Israel were taken and engaged to at Sinai, He judged the two preceding forms incomplete. And since the privileges of God's covenant people are enlarged, not abridged, under the New Testament dispensation, and that public covenanting was a matter of frequent prediction and promise under the old dispensation, it follows that this instrumentality is to be continued and exemplified.

That's from Steele's *The Two Witnesses*, page 27. It is true that our baptismal vow includes the solemn duty of public covenanting, and I would never want to downplay its importance or obligation. The question is whether or not Mr. Bacon's practice of public covenanting in baptism exonerates him from the further duty of renewing the other covenants he is already formally bound to uphold.

Alexander Henderson, in the above-cited sermon preached at the renewal of the National Covenant, answers this question. Quote, Now is there any of you but ye are obliged to be holy? Ye say that ye are the people of the Lord. If so be, then ye must have your inward men purged of sin, and ye must stand at the stave's end against the corruption of the time, and ye must devote yourselves only to serve and honor God.

And your covenant, that ye are to swear to this day, obliges you to this, and it requires nothing of you but that which ye are bound to perform. And therefore, seeing this is required of you, purge yourselves within, flee the corruptions at the same time, eschew the society of those whom ye see to be corrupt, and devote yourselves only to the Lord. Yet this is not that we would oblige you to perform everything punctually that the Lord requires of you.

There is none who can do that, but promise to the Lord to do so, tell him that ye have a desire to do so, and say to him, Lord, I shall earnestly endeavor to do as far as I can. And indeed, there is no more in our covenant but this, that we shall endeavor to keep ourselves within the bounds of our Christian liberty. And albeit none of you would swear to this, ye are bound to it, that is, the national covenant, by your baptism.

And therefore, think not that we are precisians, or these who have set down this covenant, seeing all of you are bound to do it. That's from Henderson's *Sermons, Prayers, and Pulpit Addresses*, page 23. Henderson declares that by baptism we are already bound to the obligation of the covenant.

To him these ideas were joined together like husband and wife rejoicing side by side in the beauty of holiness, 1 Chronicles 16:29. The one entering in by the washing of regeneration, Titus 3:5, Hebrews

10.22, and the other endeavoring righteousness and peace with the solemnity of a promise, Romans 4.13, 2 Peter 3.13. He argues that neglecting to swear to that which they were already bound would be contradictory and sinful. To neglect the one while enjoying the other would mar the beauty of both. Each proclaim the glory of God, and together they promote unity of purpose and desire for holiness.

Mercy and truth are met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other, Psalm 85, verse 10. Whereas Henderson would marry these two ideas together, Mr. Bacon would counsel separation.

The covenant made at baptism does not allow us to evade our duty as Mr. Bacon seems to imply. Rather, our baptismal covenant in a covenanted land binds us to further uphold our other lawful covenant obligations laid upon us by our faithful forefathers in the same manner as parents obligate their children in baptism. I acknowledge that Mr. Bacon believes that public covenanting is for the present day.

The problem is that he does not recognize his entire covenant obligation as taught by Henderson in the above sermon. Like Mr. Bacon, those to whom Henderson spoke were already covenanted by virtue of their baptismal vows, but Henderson evidently believed that there existed an additional obligation to renew this sixty-year-old promise. According to Mr. Bacon's doctrine, Henderson should have been content to let the national covenant die a natural death due to the fact that he was already promoting social covenanting through baptismal vows.

According to Mr. Bacon, Henderson is making this sort of emphasis upon a covenant renewal too clear and central in his system of doctrine. Does the taking of a baptismal vow alter the necessity of renewing other previously binding covenants which are agreeable to the word of God? Not according to Henderson. On the other hand, Mr. Bacon is again mixing his apples and oranges, leading others astray by teaching half-truths.

His alleged advocacy for public covenanting falls far short of the faithful example set by the ministers of the Second Reformation. In view of this clear evidence, I cannot see how Mr. Bacon will ever again dare say that he adheres to the doctrine taught and practiced by the Second Reformation Scots regarding covenanting or covenant renewals. It is one thing to say that I believe in public covenanting, and quite another to understand the faithful application of the doctrine.

Sadly, Mr. Bacon appears to properly understand neither, and it is grievous that he would pass on such ignorance to others. He needs to publicly repent of what he has written, under the pretense of upholding public covenanting he has in reality upheld covenant breaking and counseled others to follow him in his stiff-necked violation of the Third Commandment. Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary which he hath sanctified forever, and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

H. The Negative Sanction of the Covenants Withdrawal, Censure, and Separation Has the PRCE unchurched all who will not take the covenant, as Mr. Bacon falsely claims? On his church's webpage, under the heading of the Necessity of the Covenants, Mr. Bacon represents the PRCE as having unchurched all who do not adopt the solemnly given covenant. As seems to be his practice when slandering others, Mr. Bacon fails to give us a precise definition of the term unchurched. His sinful and unscholarly lack of precision leaves us wondering, again, what he is attempting to say.

Does he mean unchurched as to being, or unchurched as to well-being? If, in the future, Mr. Bacon would provide us with a clear definition of what he means by this term, perhaps it could then be properly dealt

with. As it stands, his present charge is unqualified, undefined, and therefore meaningless. As such, it only serves to further demonstrate his readiness to uncharitably and imprecisely rail at others.

Though it is not presently possible to determine the exact nature of Mr. Bacon's charge, I do think it is wise to briefly discuss dissociation and separation as they pertain to our solemn covenants. We follow the practice of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638-1649, and censure, that is, bar from the Lord's Supper or withdraw from all those who will not own their covenant obligations. Though withdrawal or censure, depending upon the circumstance, removes one from a close and intimate communion with the PRCE, it does not mean that those who are thus dealt with are no longer deemed Christians.

As it pertains to the covenants, it simply means that those who are thus censured or withdrawn from are considered unfaithful Christians or churches who need to repent of covenant-breaking and perjury. Consider the many acts of the General Assembly of Scotland from 1638-1649 inclusive, subordinate, and agreeable to God's Word, which confirm us in our actions of withdrawing from or censuring all who will not take, own, and adopt their binding covenant obligations in this nation. Covenant subscription is a term of communion for all members of church and state in a covenanted nation, an examination of the acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638-1649 inclusive.

1. Act ordaining the subscription of the Confession of Faith and the Covenant, 1639. We, by our act and constitution ecclesiastical, do approve the foresaid covenant in all the heads and clauses thereof, and ordains of new, under all ecclesiastical censure, that the masters of universities, colleges, and schools, all scholars at the passing of their degrees, all persons suspect of papistry or any other errors, and, finally, all the members of this kirken kingdom subscribe the same. 2. August 8, Session 6, 1643 The General Assembly, considering the good and pious advice of the commissioners of the last assembly, upon the 22nd of September, 1642, recommending to presbyteries to have copies of the covenant to be subscribed by every minister at his admission, doth therefore ratify and approve the same, and further ordains that the covenant be reprinted with this ordinance prefixed thereto, and that every synod, presbytery, and parish have one of them bound in quarto, with some blank paper, whereupon every person may be obliged to subscribe, and that the covenants of the synod and presbytery be kept by their moderator respective of universities by their principals, of parishes by their ministers, with all carefulness, and that particular account of obedience to this act be required hereafter in all visitations of parishes, universities, and presbyteries, and all trials of presbyteries and synod books.

The General Assembly, considering that the Act of the Assembly at Edinburgh 1639, August 30, enjoining all persons to subscribe the covenant under all ecclesiastical censure hath not been obeyed, therefore ordains all ministers to make intimation of the said act in their kirks, and thereafter to proceed with the censures of the kirk against such as shall refuse to subscribe the covenant, and that exact account be taken of every minister's diligence herein by their presbyteries and synods as they will answer to the General Assembly. That's page 162. 3. August 5, session 10, 1640.

The Assembly ordains that if any expectant, that is, minister, shall refuse to subscribe the covenant, he shall be declared incapable of pedagogy, teaching in a school, reading at a kirk, preaching within a presbytery, and shall not have liberty of residing within a borough, university, or college, and if they continue obstinate to be processed. That's page 94. 4. August 1, session 5, 1640.

The Assembly ordains that such as have subscribed the covenant and speaks against the same, if he be a minister, shall be deprived, and if he continues so, being deprived, he shall be excommunicated, and if he

be any other man, he shall be dealt with as perjured and satisfied publicly for his perjury. Page 93. 5. Act against secret disaffectors of the covenant.

1644. The General Assembly, understanding that diverse persons dissatisfied to the national covenant of this kirk, and to the solemn legion covenant of the three kingdoms, do escape their just censure, either by private and inconstant abode in any one congregation, or by secret conveyance of their malignant speeches and practices, therefore ordains all ministers to take notice when any such person shall come into their parishes, and so soon as they shall know the same, that without delay they cause them to appear before the presbyteries within which their parish lies. And the Assembly ordains the said commissioners not only to proceed to trial and censure of such disaffected persons, but also to take a special account of the diligence of the ministers, elders, and presbyteries herein respective.

That's page 220. 6. August 20, section 15, 1647. And if by the declaration of both kingdoms, that is, Scotland and England, joined in arms in the year 1643, such as would not take the covenant, were declared to be public enemies to their religion and country, and that they be censured and punished as professed adversaries and malignant.

Page 335. 7. Act for taking the covenant at the first receiving of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The General Assembly, according to the former recommendations, doth ordain that all young students take the covenant at their first entry into colleges, and that hereafter all persons whatsoever take the covenant at their first receiving of the Lord's Supper, requiring hereby provincial assemblies, presbyteries, and universities to be careful that this act be observed, and account thereof taken in the visitation of universities and particular kirks, and in the trial of presbyteries.

Page 422. 8. That all students of philosophy at their first entry, and at their laureation, beholden to subscribe the legion covenant, and be urged thereto, and all other persons as they come to age and discretion before their first receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Page 368.

Let us summarize what the above-cited acts are saying. First, observe who were obliged to subscribe the covenants. All members of this kirk and kingdom subscribe.

Every person may be obliged to subscribe, enjoining all persons to subscribe the covenant under all ecclesiastical censure. Second, what happened to those who refused to subscribe? According to these acts, those who refused to subscribe the covenants were to be censured. Mr. Bacon's noting of an alleged exception, Zachary Boyd, has been proven false, though even if his scholarship was accurate, it would only serve to prove that the ministers of Scotland were being inconsistent and unfaithful to their stated acts of General Assembly.

The reader is asked to look again at the language used therein and to evaluate whether Mr. Bacon has faithfully represented the position of these faithful covenanters. The Scottish General Assembly states that such as would not take the covenant were declared to be public enemies to their religion and country, and that they be censured and punished as professed adversaries and malignant. Furthermore, the officers of the kirk were instructed to proceed with the censures of the kirk against such as shall refuse to subscribe the covenant.

Third, what happened to those who broke covenant after subscribing them? Those who did subscribe and spoke against the covenant suffered the same censure and were additionally cited for perjury. As I have demonstrated, once the distinct and superadded obligation derived from the voluntary self-engagement

takes effect, the charge of perjury and covenant-breaking are both appropriate and just. On August 1, section 5, 1640, the General Assembly said that such as have subscribed the covenant and speak against the same, if he be a minister, shall be deprived, and if he continue so, being deprived, shall be excommunicated, and if he be any other man, shall be dealt with as perjured and satisfied publicly for his perjury.

George Gillespie, Scottish Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, states, Those that refuse the covenant, reproach it, or rail against it, ought to be looked at as enemies to it, and dealt with accordingly. Refusers of the covenant and railers against it are justly censured. Thus it is clear that all were obliged to take the covenants, and those who refused or broke their vows were to be excommunicated.

Next we must ask ourselves, how long did the General Assembly intend these acts to remain in effect? One year? Ten years? Or perpetually? Obviously these acts were to be enforced as long as the covenant to which they refer remains in force. The PRCE recognizes the faithful court of our ancestors, and realizes that the everlasting covenant sworn on our behalf still applies to the churches of Canada and the United States, also many other lands, all His Majesty's dominions at the time the covenants were sworn. Consequently, as Presbyterians, we cannot contradict the ruling of a faithful General Assembly when it is agreeable to the word of God.

Our withdrawing from, admonishing, and censuring those who are guilty of breaking covenant is an example of our willingness to uphold their just and righteous rulings. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

2 Thessalonians 3, 14, 15 The Church of Scotland clearly censured those who would not subscribe to covenants. This is further evidenced by the following excerpt. And discerns and declares all and sundry who either gainsay the word of the evangel received and approved as the heads of the confession of faith professed in Parliament in the year of God 1560, specified also in the first Parliament of King James the Sixth, and ratified in this present Parliament, more particularly do express, or that refused the administration of the holy sacraments as they were then ministrated, to be no members of the said Kirk within this realm and true religion presently professed, so long as they keep themselves so divided from the society of Christ's body.

And the subsequent Acts 69, Parliament Six of King James the Sixth declares that there is no other face of Kirk, nor other face of religion, than was presently at that time by the favor of God established within this realm. That's from the National Covenant. When it is said that all and sundry who either gainsay the word of the evangel received and approved as the heads of the confession of faith are to be accounted no members of the said Kirk within this realm and true religion presently professed, so long as they keep themselves so divided from the society of Christ's body, they are saying precisely the same thing as the PRCE.

Those who will not covenant and confess the truth are to be barred from the sacraments and familiar fellowship. Is that the practice of the pretended presbytery of the RPC? Do they maintain that anybody who speaks or acts against the confession or covenants are no members of the said Kirk within this realm? No, on the contrary, they profess to hold communion and maintain familiar fellowship with a broad spectrum of Christians who openly speak and act against both. This is evidenced by the fact, which they do not deny, that they do not require their members to agree not to speak and act contrary to their church

standards prior to partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Rather, such requirements are only required of their officers. Is it not abundantly evident that they do not uphold the principles of the Second Reformation? Furthermore, Mr. Bacon's practice is contrary to the example set by the First Reformation under the godly influence of John Calvin in Geneva. As Reg Barrow has accurately stated in his article entitled Calvin Covenanting and Close Communion, it is a well-documented fact that the Genevan Presbytery, company of pastors, in 1536 sought to excommunicate anyone who would not swear an oath to uphold the Reformed doctrine as it was set forth in their Confession of Faith.

T. H. L. Parker writes, Since the evangelical faith had only recently been preached in the city, and there were still many Romanists, the ministers also urged excommunication on the grounds of failure to confess the faith. The Confession of Faith, which all the citizens and inhabitants of Geneva must promise to keep and to hold, had been presented to the Council on 10 November 1536. Let the members of the Council be the first to subscribe and then the citizens, in order to recognize those in harmony with the Gospel, and those loving rather to be of the kingdom of the Pope than of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Those who would not subscribe were to be excommunicated. And that's from John Calvin, a biography, page 63. Additionally, the company of pastors in Geneva took this one step further, enacting negative civil sanctions like those of the covenanted Reformations found in the Old Testament under Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Asa, and Hezekiah, by commanding those who would not swear to the Reformation to leave the city.

12 November 1537 It was reported that yesterday the people who had not yet made their oath to the Reformation were asked to do so, street by street. Whilst many came, many others did not do so. No one came from the German Quarter.

It was decided that they should be commanded to leave the city if they did not wish to swear to the Reformation. And that's from the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, page 138. See Reg Barrow's Calvin, Covenanting, and Close Communion, pages 6 through 8. Also, the fifth letter in his response to Doug Wilson, in his book entitled Saul and the Cave of Adullam.

These complete works are free on Stillwater's webpage at www.swrb.com and follow the free book's link. The faithful contendings of the protesters exemplifying their steadfast application of the biblical principles regarding withdrawal and separation from corrupt individuals and pretended assemblies. Another prime example of Reformation principles in speaking plainly and acting consistently against unfaithful churches and ministers was manifested by the faithful protesters of the General Assembly of Scotland in 1651.

At this time, an unfaithful majority faction of the General Assembly, called the Resolutioner Party, openly broke their covenant vows and initiated a dispute that quickly divided them from the faithful minority, the protesters. These compromisers, under pressure from the King, approved the placement of men, called malignants for their ungodly character, in the army and places of public trust, contrary to the covenants and previous acts of General Assembly. Thus, by evident perjury, these Resolutioners made themselves co-conspirators and accessories to the crimes that followed the sad division of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Matthew Hutchison explains, "...the former party, the Resolutioners, had among them men of high character and worth, some of whom afterwards regretted the position they had taken in this controversy.

They were more tolerant in the application of their principles. Among them, the second Charles found afterwards many of his willing tools, and they constituted the bulk of those who accepted the indulgences and toleration, that is, the later compromises." And that's from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, page 21.

The compromise of the Resolutioner party within the General Assembly of Scotland led to a division that remains unhealed, and a schism that effectively set aside the original constitution of the Church of Scotland. The seriousness of this schism can be observed in the following excerpts. Note the actions of the faithful protester ministers as they dealt with the unfaithful ministers of the Resolutioner faction.

Mr. Samuel Rutherford, a protester, would not serve the Lord's Supper with Pastors Blair and Wood, who were Resolutioners, though they had most other points of faith in common. In the time of the difference between the Resolutioners and Protesters, at a communion at St. Andrews, he, that is, Samuel Rutherford, ran to a sad height and refused to serve a table with Misters Blair and Wood after all the entreaty they could make. At length, Mr. Blair was forced to serve it himself.

And that's from Robert Gilmore's Samuel Rutherford, a study, biographical and somewhat critical in the History of the Scottish Covenant, page 201. Obviously, I do not concur with the assessment of Robert Gilmore that Mr. Rutherford ran to a sad height when he refused to serve the Lord's Supper with Robert Blair or James Wood. Rather, I believe Mr. Rutherford was acting consistently with the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith in refusing to serve the Lord's Supper with obstinately scandalous, perjured ministers.

Did Rutherford sin by refusing communion with perjured but otherwise godly men? No. Instead, he acted faithfully and consistently in refusing to serve the Lord's Supper with the scandalous. Was he saying these men were no longer Christians? No.

He was attempting to correct and restore the brethren he dearly loved by testifying against their sin and not complying with their compromise. And if Rutherford, who sought to apply faithfully the biblical obligations declared in the Solemn League and Covenant, was unable to serve the Lord's Supper with those who have scandalously compromised their covenant obligations, much more would he refrain from serving the Lord's Supper to those known to be guilty of such sins. Rutherford aptly states, quote, Because the churches take not care that ministers be savory and gracious, from stearmen all apostasy and rottenness begin.

O, if the Lord would arise and purge his house in Scotland! As for church members, they ought to be holy, and though all baptized be actu primo members, yet such as remain habitually ignorant after admonition are to be cast out, and though they be not cast out certainly, as paralytic or rottened members cannot discharge the functions of life, so those that are scandalous, ignorant, malignant, unsound in faith, lose their rights of suffrages in election of officers, and are to be debarred from the seals. Nor can we defend our sinful practice in this, it were our wisdom to repent of our taking in the malignant party, who shed the blood of the people of God, and obstructed the work of God into places of trust in the church, state, and the army, contrary to our covenants, they continuing still enemies. And that's from Rutherford's Survey of the Survey of the Sum of Church Discipline, page 373.

Not only would consistent protesters not administer the Lord's Supper with or to the Resolutioners, but applying their doctrine uniformly, they called the Resolutioner Assemblies pretended and would not compare before their courts. The records of the Church of Scotland reports the following events which

depict their godly and constant principles. At this session of General Assembly, Mr. Rutherford gave in a protestation against the lawfulness of the Assembly, containing the reasons thereof in the name of the Kirk, subscribed with twenty-two hands, and desired it might be read.

But it was delayed to be read, and all that subscribed the remonstrance with some others went away. And that is from page 628. Did the protesters sin when they walked out of the meeting of the Scottish General Assembly, 1651? Were they saying that the Resolutioner churches were not Christian churches? No, they simply would not recognize the pretended authority of the Resolutioner's compromised majority.

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to rest judgment. Exodus 23.2 How does Mr. Bacon explain the actions of these protesters? Does he accuse them of being rash and uncharitable for walking out of the General Assembly? How does he explain Rutherford not serving communion with Pastors Blair and Wood? To date, Mr. Bacon's politically correct commentary upon this matter seems decidedly undecided, and I could hardly believe my eyes when I read in his defense departed that the paper on dissociation goes on to speak of the protester and Resolutioner split in the Church of Scotland as though it were germane to our nation and time. Sadly, for Mr. Bacon and his indefensible position, the history of the Second Reformation is entirely applicable to our nation and time, and he is a living testimony that those who fail to learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.

Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set. Proverbs 22.28 The faithful warriors of the First and Second Reformation did not fail in their duty toward those who acted or spoke against their confessions and covenants. They admonished, withdrew from, and even excommunicated those compromised brethren who would not repent of their sinful deeds.

The fact that these compromisers were otherwise godly Reformed Presbyterians did not stop them from making a clear testimony against them. They would not recognize their pretended courts and the openly bore witness against their schismatic schemes. We simply seek to follow their godly example while encouraging others to do the same.

Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend. And come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear the Lord liveth. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer.

Now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place. Hosea 4 15 and 16 Accordingly, churches such as the Reformation Presbyterian Church who obstinately retain their unscriptural doctrine and practice must be withdrawn from and testified against by admonition and suspension from the Lord's table. Their pretended courts must not be recognized as anything other than schismatic attempts to destroy the unity of Christ's church.

They must be avoided, not attended. All the evidence points to the conclusion that they have receded from the truth and apostatized into a backsliding state of spiritual adultery. Although they are yet considered true churches of Christ as to being, they must sadly be viewed as unfaithful churches as to well-being.

Like Israel of old, such unfaithful churches have brought their lovers, false doctrine, unauthorized worship, tyrannical government and undisciplined toleration, into the presence of their heavenly husband. Thus saith the Lord God, Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children which thou didst give unto them, behold therefore, I will gather all thy lovers with whom thou hast taken

pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated, I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. John Calvin comments, That there is an universal church, that there has been from the beginning of the world, and will be even to the end, we all acknowledge.

The appearance by which it may be recognized is the question. We place it in the word of God, or, if anyone would so put it, since Christ is her head, we maintain, that as a man is recognized by his face, so she is to be beheld in Christ. As it is written, where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Matthew 24.28 Again, there will be one sheepfold and one shepherd. John 10.16 But as the pure preaching of the gospel is not always exhibited, neither is the face of Christ always conspicuous. 1 Corinthians 11.19 Thence we infer that the church is not always discernible by the eyes of men, as the example of many ages testified.

For in the time of the prophets, the multitude of the wicked so prevailed that the true church was oppressed, so also in the time of Christ we see that the little flock of God was hidden from men, while the ungodly usurped to themselves the name of the church. But what will those who have eyes so clear that they boast the church is always visible to them make of Elijah, who thought that he alone remained of the church? 1 Kings 19.10 In this indeed he was mistaken, but it is a proof that the church of God may be equally concealed from us, especially since we know, from the prophecy of Paul, that defection was predicted. 2 Thessalonians 2.3 Let us hold, then, that the church is seen where Christ appears, and where his word is heard, as it is written, My sheep hear my voice.

John 10.27 But that at the instant when the true doctrine was buried, the church vanished from the eyes of men. This church we acknowledge with Paul to be the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3.15 Because she is the guardian of sound doctrine, and by her ministry propagates it to posterity, that it may not perish from the world.

For seeing she is the spouse of Christ, it is meet that she be subject to him. And as Paul declares, Ephesians 5.24, 2 Corinthians 11, 2 and 3, her chastity consists in not being led away from the simplicity of Christ. She errs not, because she follows the truth of God for her rule, but if she recedes from this truth, she ceases to be a spouse, and becomes an adulteress.

And that's taken from the articles agreed upon by the faculty of Sacred Theology of Paris, in reference to matters of faith at present controverted with the antidote. And that's from Calvin's Selected Works, Volume 1, pages 102-103. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? Proverbs 5.20 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah 3.1 To properly understand the Reformer's doctrine of dissociation and separation, we must distinguish between the settled and the broken state of the church. To properly understand the Covenanter position regarding dissociation and separation from pretended authorities, the reader must become familiar with another important distinction, that is, the settled versus the broken state of the church. The nation of Scotland, 1638 to 1649, possessed both a truly constituted General Assembly, and the civil establishment of the true Reformed religion, thereby enabling the church to enjoy the blessed privilege of being settled in the land.

Our case in 1997 is vastly different. We have no national Presbyterian General Assembly, nor do we possess the civil establishment of the one true Reformed religion. Among the Reformers, such a disorganized state of affairs was referred to as the broken state of the church.

One of the most serious errors of Mr. Bacon, and those like him, and one of the main reasons he so frequently misunderstands the Reformer's doctrine of dissociation and separation, is his failure to grasp this important distinction. Mr. Bacon is fond of quoting men like Samuel Rutherford, James Durham, and George Gillespie, who wrote extensively regarding true principles of separation. What he fails to take into account is that they were applying their principles to a time when the church was nationally established and bound by faithful Reformed covenants.

Those who fail to make this distinction are constantly taking the scriptural principles of separation pertaining to a national church, settled, and applying these principles to the church in her broken and unsettled state. The results are disastrous. Books are written like Mr. Bacon's *The Visible Church in the Outer Darkness*, a book filled with both popish error and independent confusion.

In his public misrepresentation of Kevin Reed, Mr. Bacon practically ignored the necessary distinctions of the Reformers being versus well-being, settled versus broken state, and consequently led his readers to believe something far different than the doctrine they actually taught. Through his false teachings, sincere children of God are led to believe that separation from a Christian church, even in a time of great apostasy that is a broken state, should be exceedingly rare. Citing men like John McPherson, James Wood, and Thomas Boston, who did not stand upon the biblical principles of covenanted protesters like Samuel Rutherford, George and Patrick Gillespie, James Guthrie, Robert McWard, John Brown of Wemphrey, Richard Cameron, Donald Cargill, and James Renick, Mr. Bacon has confused his readers into confounding the faithful teaching of the Second Reformation with the dissimulation of those who were attempting to justify their backsliding and compromise.

He must be called to account for his error. See Appendix G, which is also read on a separate tape entitled *Eschewing Ecclesiastical Tyranny, The Duty of Christ's Sheep*. Dear reader, take the time to carefully read the following quotations.

Those who understand what is being said will no longer be ensnared by Mr. Bacon's false interpretation of the reformers. Faithful martyr of God, James Renick, explains the importance of this crucial distinction. Quote, We distinguish between a church in a reformed and settled state, and confirmed with the constitutions of general assemblies and the civil sanctions of parliament, and a church in a broken and disturbed state.

In the former, abuses and disorders can be orderly redressed and removed by church judicatories, but not so in the latter. Wherefore the most lawful, expedient, and conducive mean for maintaining the attained unto reformation is to be followed in the time of such confusions and disturbances, and that is, as we think, abstraction and withdrawing from such disorders in ministers, which we cannot get other ways rectified. And that's from an *Informatory Vindication*, page 61.

Again from Renick, we distinguish between a reformed church enjoying her privileges and judicatories, and a reformed church denuded of her privileges and deprived of her judicatories. In the former, people are to address themselves unto church judicatories, and not to withdraw from their ministers, especially for ordinary scandals. But in the latter, when ministers are really scandalous, though not juridically declared so, and duly censurable according to the word of God, and their own church's constitutions and censures

cannot be inflicted through the want of church judicatories, and yet they still persist in their offensive courses, people may do what is competent to them, and testify their sense of the justness of the censure to be inflicted by withdrawing from such ministers, even without the presbyterial sentence.

Again, an Informatory Vindication, pages 61 and 62. We hold that schism, or disowning and rejecting of, or groundless and unwarrantable separating from, true and faithful ministers, to be a very heinous, hateful, and hurtful sin. Yet this doth not hinder, but that it may be a duty in a broken state of the church to withdraw from ministers chargeable with defection.

For seeing this church hath attained to such a high degree of reformation, and seeing by solemn covenants to the Almighty we have bound ourselves to maintain and defend the same, seeing by reason of the enemy's subtlety and cruelty, and the fainting, falling, and failing of ministers, so many dreadful defections have been introduced, embraced, and countenanced, seeing in these times of distempering confusions, we are now deprived of the remedy of settled judicatories, whereunto we might recur for rectifying of disorders, and seeing we are bound to witness against these complying and backsliding courses, whereby the wrath of God is so much kindled against the land, therefore we hold it as our duty that when a backsliding or defection is embraced, avowed, and obstinately defended in such things as have been reformed, either expressly or equivalently, especially being witnessed against doctrinally, and further confirmed by other testimonies, we judge it lawful, reasonable, and necessary, in a declining, backsliding, and troubled state of the church, to leave that part of the church which hath made such defection, whether ministers or professors, as to a joint concurrence in carrying on the public work, according as it is given in command to Jeremiah 15.19, let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And to adhere unto the other part of the church, ministers and professors, whether more or fewer, who are standing steadfastly to the defense of the Reformation, witnessing against others who have turned aside and declined therefrom, until the defections of the backsliding party be confessed, mourned over, and forsaken. This is no separation from the church of Scotland, but only a departing and going forth from her sins, backslidings, and defections, as we are commanded by the Lord." Again from Informatory Vindication, pages 36 and 37.

Finally, I quote Alexander Shields, who wholeheartedly concurs with Rennick, quote, In a constitute and settled case of the church, enjoying her privileges and judicatories, corruptions may be foreborne, and the offended are not to withdraw before recourse to the judicatories for an orderly redress. But in a broken and disturbed state, when there is no access to these courts of Christ, then people, though they must not usurp a power of judicial censuring these corruptions, yet they may claim and exercise a discretive power over their own practice, and by their withdrawing from such ministers as are guilty of them, signify their sense of the moral equity of these censures that have been legally enacted against these and the equivalent corruptions, and when they should be legally inflicted. As we do upon this ground, withdraw from the paralytic curates, and likewise from some of our covenanted brethren, upon the account of their being chargeable with such corruptions and defections from our Reformation, as we cannot but show our dislike of.

Dear reader, do you see the importance of these distinctions? Do you see the error that can arise from taking the just rules of separation and applying them without distinction? In the settled state of the Church, where rightly constituted and established judicatories allow for the orderly redress of abuses, separation should be exceedingly rare, like Rutherford, Durham, and Gillespie teach. However, in our broken state of the Church, while we have no recourse to nationally established judicatories, only to independent rival judicatories, we are left to claim and exercise a discretive power over our own practice, as Rutherford and

the protesters practiced when the corrupt resolution or majority broke the Church of Scotland. See Appendix G. We testify against the corruptions of our nation's churches and ministers by barring them from our communion table, writing against their errors, and praying for their reformation.

In this broken state of the Church, there is no difference between how we are to treat unfaithful churches and unfaithful individuals. If God has commanded us to withdraw from and avoid disorderly and obstinate brethren, how can we deduce that we are to tolerate disorderly and obstinate churches? If the Church is so divided that gross sin and error is protected by false judicatories, then how are the children of God to obtain a lawful hearing for their grievances? Should they submit themselves to those who frame mischief by abusing their pretended authority? When the Church is so broken and disorganized that disorderly and obstinate churches are going from bad to worse, the answer is not to plead for toleration. Such toleration proclaims a liberty to sin and promises ecclesiastical protection for unfaithfulness.

When the hands of the wicked are strengthened and the children of God are encouraged to tolerate evil, true religion is destroyed and reformation is hindered. Thus, Scripture teaches that true religion ought never to require toleration, and false religion ought never to be tolerated. Those who rightly understand the distinction between the broken and settled state of the Church know that dissociation and separation are the only true means of reformation when the Church has divided into rival judicatories and receded from the truth.

Those who follow Mr. Bacon's impropriety will be found propping up the hands of backsliders while condemning those who plead for true reformation. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood. But the Lord is my defense, and my God is the rock of my refuge.

Psalms 94, 20-22 If thy brother the son of thy mother, or thy son or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go up and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, namely of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth, thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him, thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. Deuteronomy 13, 6-9 No doubt Mr. Bacon thinks the Reformation Presbyterian Church to be a faithful judicatory, and perhaps he would also include such rival and contradictory judicatories as the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the pretended Covenanters, or the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These churches, ministers, and brethren have all broken covenant with God, and we can no more own their judicatories than we can own the judicatory of the Church of Rome.

While these brethren are more faithful than any Romish communion, their defection and backsliding are of such a scandalous nature that we can in no way tolerate it for the sake of unity. For us to pass over something as serious as perjury and covenant breaking would be for us to join hands in silent compliance with those things which we have sworn in our covenants to extirpate and uproot. Unless our brethren, whom we love, humble themselves and repent, we see no other option than to continue to pray for their restoration while testifying against their defection.

And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow

and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3.5 I close this section with a faithful warning from the General Assembly of Scotland, August 6, 1649, and would ask the reader to apply their words to the ministers and professing Christians across Canada and the United States, even unto all the covenanted lands who remain bound by the covenants of their forefathers. Quote, It is no small grief to us that the gospel and government of Jesus Christ are so despised in the land that faithful preachers are persecuted and cried down, that toleration is established by law and maintained by military power, and that the covenant is abolished and buried in oblivion.

All which proceedings cannot but be looked upon as directly contrary to the oath of God lying upon us, and therefore we cannot eschew his wrath when he shall come in judgment to be a swift witness against those who falsely swear against his name. The Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, pages 472 and 473. This concludes Covenanted Uniformity, the Protestant Remedy for Disunity, being Chapter 3 of Greg Barrow's book, The Covenanted Reformation Defended Against Contemporary Schismatics.

Please note that this entire book is free on Stillwater's Revival Books website, www.swrb.com. It is also available in hardcover from Stillwaters, along with a treasure trove of the finest Protestant, Reformed, and Puritan literature available anywhere in the world today. Stillwaters can be reached at 780-450-3730, or by email at swrb@swrb.com. Again, these tapes are not copyrighted, and we therefore encourage you to copy and distribute them to any and all you believe would be benefited. Thank you for listening.

Mr. Thomas Manton's Epistle to the Reader, which is published in the Free Presbyterian Publications edition of the original Westminster Confession of Faith. Christian reader, I cannot suppose thee to be such a stranger in England as to be ignorant of the general complaint concerning the decay of the power of godliness, and more especially of the great corruption of youth. Wherever thou goest, thou wilt hear men crying out of bad children and bad servants, whereas indeed the source of the mischief must be sought a little higher.

It is bad parents and bad masters that make bad children and bad servants, and we cannot blame so much their untowardness as our own negligence in their education. The devil hath a great spite at the kingdom of Christ, and he knoweth no such compendious way to crush it in the egg as by the perversion of youth and supplanting family duties. He striketh at all those duties which are public in the assemblies of the saints, but these are too well guarded by the solemn injunctions and dying charge of Jesus Christ, as that he should ever hope totally to subvert and undermine them.

But at family duties he striketh with more success, because the institution is not so solemn, and the practice is not so seriously and conscientiously regarded as it should be, and the omission is not so liable to notice and public censure. Religion was first hatched in families, and there the devil seeketh to crush it. The families of the patriarchs were all the churches God had in the world for the time, and therefore, I suppose, when Cain went out from Adam's family, he is said to go out from the face of the Lord, Genesis 4, 16.

Now the devil knoweth that this is a blow at the root, and a ready way to prevent the succession of churches, if he can subvert families, other societies and communities will not long flourish and subsist with any power and vigor, for there is the stock from whence they are supplied both for the present and future. For the present, a family is the seminary of church and state, and if children be not well principled there, all miscarrieth. A fault in the first concoction is not mended in the second.

If youth be bred ill in the family, they prove ill in church and commonwealth. There is the first making or marring, and the presage of their future lives to be thence taken, Proverbs 20, verse 11. By family discipline, officers are trained up for the church, 1 Timothy 3, 4, one that ruleth well his own house, and so forth.

And there are men bred up in subjection and obedience. It is noted, Acts 21, verse 5, that the disciples brought Paul on his way with their wives and children. Their children probably are mentioned to intimate that their parents would, by their own example and affectionate farewell to Paul, breed them up in a way of reverence and respect to the pastors of the church.

For the future, it is comfortable certainly to see a thriving nursery of young plants, and to have hopes that God shall have a people to serve him when we are dead and gone, the people of God comforting themselves in that, Psalm 102, 28, the children of thy servants shall continue, and so forth. Upon all these considerations, how careful should ministers and parents be to train up young ones whilst they are yet pliable, and, like wax, capable of any form and impression in the knowledge and fear of God, and betimes to instill the principles of our most holy faith as they are drawn into a short sum in catechisms, and so altogether laid in the view of conscience. Surely these seeds of truth planted in the field of memory, if they work nothing else, will at least be a great check and bridle to them, and, as the casting in of cold water doth stay the boiling of the pot, somewhat allay the fervors of youthful lusts and passions.

I had, upon entreaty, resolved to recommend to thee with the greatest earnestness the work of catechizing, and, as a meet help, the usefulness of this book, as thus printed with the Scriptures at large. But meeting with the private letter of a very learned and godly divine, wherein that work is excellently done to my hand, I shall make bold to transcribe a part of it, and offer it to public view. The author, having bewailed the great distractions, corruptions, and divisions that are in the church, he thus represents the cause and cure.

Among others, a principal cause of these mischiefs is the great and common neglect of the governors of families in the discharge of that duty which they owe to God for the souls that are under their charge, especially in teaching them the doctrine of Christianity. Families are societies that must be sanctified to God as well as churches, and the governors of them have as truly a charge of the souls that are therein as pastors have of the churches. But alas, how little is this considered or regarded! But while negligent ministers are, deservedly, cast out of their places, the negligent masters of families take themselves to be almost blameless.

They offer their children to God in baptism, and there they promise to teach them the doctrine of the gospel and bring them up in the nurture of the Lord, but they easily promise and easily break it, and educate their children for the world and the flesh, although they have renounced these and dedicated them to God. This covenant breaking with God and betraying the souls of their children to the devil must lie heavy on them here or hereafter. They beget children and keep families merely for the world and the flesh, but little consider what a charge is committed to them and what it is to bring up a child for God and govern a family as a sanctified society.

Oh, how sweetly and successfully would the work of God go on if we would but all join together in our several places to promote it! Men need not then run without sending to be preachers, but they might find that part of the work that belongeth to them to be enough for them and to be the best that they can be employed in. Especially women should be careful of this duty, because as they are most about their

children and have early and frequent opportunities to instruct them, so this is the principal service they can do to God in this world, being restrained from more public work. And doubtless many an excellent magistrate hath been sent into the commonwealth, and many an excellent pastor into the church, and many a precious saint to heaven through the happy preparation of a holy education, perhaps by a woman that thought herself useless and unserviceable to the church.

Would parents but begin betimes and labor to affect the hearts of their children with the great matters of everlasting life, and to acquaint them with the substance of the doctrine of Christ, and, when they find in them the knowledge and love of Christ, would bring them then to the pastors of the church to be tried, confirmed, and admitted to the further privileges of the church, what happy, well-ordered churches might we have! Then one pastor need not be put to do the work of two or three hundred or thousand governors of families, even to teach their children those principles which they should have taught them long before, nor should we be put to preach to so many miserable ignorant souls that be not prepared by education to understand us. Nor should we have need to shut out so many from holy communion upon the account of ignorance that yet have not the grace to feel it and lament it, nor the wit and patience to wait in a learning state till they are ready to be fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. But now they come to us with aged self-conceitedness, being past children and yet worse than children still, having the ignorance of children, but being overgrown the teachableness of children, and think themselves wise, yea, wise enough to quarrel with the wisest of their teachers, because they have lived long enough to have been wise, and the evidence of their knowledge is their aged ignorance.

And they are readier to flee in our faces for church privileges than to learn of us and obey our instructions till they are prepared for them, that they may do them good, like snappish curs that will snap us by the fingers for their meat, and snatch it out of our hands, and not like children that stay till we give it to them. Parents have so used them to be unruly, that ministers have to deal but with too few but the unruly. And it is for want of this laying the foundation well at first that professors themselves are so ignorant as most are, and that so many, especially of the younger sort, do swallow down almost any error that is offered them, and follow any sect of dividers that will entice them, so it be but done with earnestness and plausibility.

For alas, though by the grace of God their hearts may be changed in an hour, whenever they understand but the essentials of the faith, yet their understandings must have time and diligence to furnish them with such knowledge as must establish them, and fortify them against deceits. Upon these and many the like considerations, we should entreat all Christian families to take more pains in this necessary work, and to get better acquainted with the substance of Christianity. And to that end, taking along some moving treatises to awake the heart, I know not what work should be fitter for their use than that compiled by the assembly at Westminster, a synod of as godly, judicious divines, notwithstanding all the bitter words which they have received from discontented and self-conceited men, I verily think, as ever England saw.

Though they had the unhappiness to be employed in calamitous times, when the noise of wars did stop men's ears, and the licentiousness of wars did set every wanton tongue and pen at liberty to reproach them, and the prosecution and event of those wars did exasperate partial discontented men to dishonor themselves by seeking to dishonor them, I dare say if in the days of old, when councils were in power and account, they had had but such a council of bishops as this of presbyters was, the fame of it for learning and holiness, and all ministerial abilities would, with very great honor, have been transmitted to posterity. I do therefore desire that all masters of families would first study well this work themselves, and then teach it their children and servants, according to their several capacities. And if they once understand these grounds of religion, they will be able to read other books more understandingly, and hear sermons more

profitably, and confer more judiciously, and hold fast the doctrine of Christ more firmly than ever you are like to do by any other course.

First, let them read and learn the shorter catechism, and next the larger, and lastly, read the Confession of Faith." Thus far he whose name I shall conceal, though the excellency of the matter and present style will easily discover him, because I have published it without his privity and consent, though I hope not against his liking and approbation, I shall add no more but that I am thy servant in the Lord's work, Thomas Manton.

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