

Debate: Protestant Antidote to Modern Disunity (4/5) Protestant Fundamentals of Separation and Unity

by Greg Barrow

Greg Barrow's sermon emphasizes the necessity of adhering to church standards and the Westminster Confession to maintain unity within the Protestant faith amidst modern disunity.

Duration: 1:18:07

Scripture: Psalm 35:24

Topics: "Protestant Reformation", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

The video is a chapter from Greg Barrow's book, 'The Covenanted Reformation Defended Against Contemporary Schismatics.' It discusses the importance of accepting and understanding the doctrine before trying to explain it. The speaker emphasizes the need for studying and understanding the Protestant Reformed and Puritan literature to have a solid foundation in the faith. He addresses objections such as lack of time and difficulty, urging listeners to prioritize their spiritual growth and not neglect their religious duties. The video concludes with a reminder of the consequences of neglecting the truth and living in falsehood.

Transcript

This is tape four of the Protestant antidote to modern schismatical disunity, being chapter four of Greg Barrow's book, The Covenanted Reformation Defended Against Contemporary Schismatics, narrated by Larry Berger. Please note that this entire book is free on Stillwaters 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. Please note as well 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.

Continuing our reading, was the Scottish General Assembly saying, first accept the doctrine and we'll explain it later? Of course not. Mr. Bacon doesn't seem to understand that every time he accuses us, he accuses the men of the Second Reformation. Is requiring external conformity to church standards to be equated with compelling others to believe something against their will? Is requiring external compliance

with terms of communion forcing others to trust in a standard other than Scripture? God forbid! I am truly amazed that Mr. Bacon would substitute such railing for argument.

We do not require the ignorant to affirm what they don't understand, nor are we encouraging an unthinking acceptance of our church standards. On the contrary, we urge all who join with us to become as familiar as possible with the standards of our church. Like the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, we simply require those who wish to join with us not to speak, write, or act contrary to our standards while they profess to be members of our church.

If one of our brethren comes to a studied and settled disagreement with something in our standards, we then patiently work together to find out if the issue can be resolved. If he obstinately promotes a doctrine or practice contrary to that which our standards teach, we will not pretend to have familiar fellowship or close communion until we can come to an honest agreement in the truth. To proceed otherwise is sectarian, dishonest, and sinful.

Why does Mr. Bacon fight with us for governing the church by the same principles as the General Assembly of Scotland, 1638 to 1649? Why does he call us Popes and Pharisees for upholding the standards of the Second Reformation? Why does he rail so violently against the Covenanter cause? Why? Because the whole drift of his erroneous system of latitudinarian toleration drives him through this mire. He cannot tolerate those who speak up against his errors. His erring principles lead him to false practice, and his false practice leads him to fight against those who contend for the truth.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you, Matthew 5, verses 10 through 12. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved, Mark 13, 13. The extensive nature of terms of communion.

Next, so as to establish the extensive nature of faithful terms of communion, I will employ the acts of the General Assembly of Scotland to expose Mr. Bacon's vain imagination that the Church of Scotland, 1638 to 1649, required, for admission to the Lord's Table, a simple profession of faith as displayed by the Ethiopian eunuch in the Book of Acts. I will assume from what has been said thus far that I may dispense with proving that the acts of General Assembly require, quote, an acknowledgement of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the alone infallible rule of faith in practice, as a legitimate term of communion. Consequently, I will begin with our second term of communion, that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, larger and shorter, are agreeable unto and founded upon the Scriptures.

A. Fully subscribing to confessions and catechisms is a term of communion. Did the General Assembly require negative agreement with the Confession of Faith and catechisms before allowing people to the Lord's Table? Was it necessary to refrain from speaking or writing against these standards if one wished to come to their communion table? Yes. Quote, March 26, Session 7, 1638.

The Assembly alloweth this article. Whereas the Confession of Faith in this kirk, concerning both doctrine and discipline, so often called in question by the corrupt judgment and tyrannous authority of the pretended prelates, is now clearly explained, and by this whole kirk, represented by this General

Assembly concluded, ordained also to be subscribed by all sorts of persons within this said kirk and kingdom, the Assembly constitutes and ordains that from henceforth no sort of person of whatsoever quality or degree be permitted to speak or write against the said confession, this Assembly, or any act of this Assembly, and that under the pain of incurring the censures of this kirk. That's from the Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, 1638 to 1649 inclusive, page 51.

Here we find that all who would obstinately speak or write against the Confession of Faith, the General Assembly, or any act of General Assembly, would incur the censures of the church, that is, would expose themselves to all censures of the church, including suspension from the Lord's Table, or excommunication, if obstinate and scandalous. Is this binding one's conscience with the unlawful use of ecclesiastical power? Notice in the following quote that the Church of Geneva agrees with the so-called Stelites that faithful creeds and confessions, that is, fallible human compositions that are agreeable to the Word of God, may lawfully bind the conscience and be used as terms of ecclesiastical communion. Francis Turretin states, quote, we treat here of the first part or the power concerning articles of faith.

This power is properly to be attended to in the judgment which the church ought to make concerning doctrine, also in the creeds and confessions which she ought to compose for the conservation of doctrine and the bond of ecclesiastical communion. That's from Turretin's Institutes of Elenctic Theology, volume 3, page 282. Turretin clearly states that the church is to compose uninspired creeds and confessions agreeable to God's Word and is to use them as a bond of ecclesiastical communion.

Notice what a far cry Mr. Bacon's simple profession of faith is from the doctrine of the Church of Geneva. Perhaps Mr. Bacon would say Turretin also is elevating human constitutions to the level of absolute necessity. That's from Defense Departed.

With Turretin, I would respond, quote, however, two things can be asked about these confessions. First, their necessity, then their authority. As to necessity, we say that it is not absolute as if the church could not do without them.

For there was a time when she was without them, being content with ecumenical creeds alone, or even without these, content with the formula of Scripture alone. But hypothetical on the hypothesis of a divine command and of the condition of the church, from the time when heresies, the danger of contagion, the calumnies of adversaries and intestine discords in religion began to disturb her, that the necessity and justice of our secession from the church might be manifested, that they might be held together in one body, and so all distractions, dangerous dissents, and schisms wounding the truth and the unity of the church might be shunned. Their authority ought indeed to be great with the pious in the churches, but still sinking below the authority of the Scripture.

For the latter is a rule, they the thing ruled. It, the Scripture, alone is self-credible, autopistos, with respect to words as well as to things, divine and infallible. They, as divine in things, still in words and manner of treatment, are human writings.

Faith is immediately and absolutely due to it, that is the Scripture. To them an examination is due, that having been made, if they agree with the word, faith. It, the Scripture, is the constant and immutable canon of faith.

While they are subject to revision and new examination, in which it is right not only to explain and amplify them, but also to correct whatever fault should be found in them, and reform according to the rule of the

word. Hence it is evident that they err here in excess, who hold such confessions as the rule of the truth itself, and make them equal to the word of God. They are at best secondary rules, not of truth, but of the doctrine received in any church, since from them can be seen and decided what agrees with or what differs from the doctrine of the church.

Therefore their true authority consists in this, that they are obligatory upon those who are subject to them in the court of external communion, because they were written by the churches, or in the name of the churches, to which individual members in the external communion are responsible, 1 Corinthians 14:32. Hence, if they think they observe anything in them worthy of correction, they ought to undertake nothing rashly or disorderly, etactos, and unseasonably, so as to violently render the body of their mother, which schismatics do, but to refer the difficulties they feel to their church, and either to prefer her public opinion to their own private judgment, or to secede from her communion, if the conscience cannot acquiesce in her judgment. Thus they cannot bind in the inner court of conscience, except inasmuch as they are found to agree with the word of God, which alone has power to bind the conscience. Therefore they err in defect, who acknowledge no authority, or a very slight authority, in confessions.

Such are the neutrals and libertines, who, to consult their own interests, profess nothing certain and determinate, but amid the conflicts of contradictions, are undecided and fluctuate, and, falling in with the winds of fortune, bend their sails to their influence. Their religion, consequently, you would properly call, if they have any, a monthly faith, nay, even a daily, hemorrhobion, or hourly. Unorthodox persons and heretics are such who, seeing that they are checked by such formulas as by a bridle that they may not scatter their errors to the winds, endeavor in every way, either openly or secretly, and by cunning, to destroy their authority, as was done by the Arminians, who frequently have calumniously charged us with ascribing to these formulas an authority canonical and equal to the Scriptures, when they were read and explained in the public assembly, as if they were considered as the very word of God.

But the groundlessness of this accusation appears from the acknowledged difference between confessions and the word of God, and that's from Turretin's Institutes of the Atlantic Theology, volume 3, pages 284 and 285. We ask the reader to notice that Turretin charges those like Mr. Bacon of being guilty of using the tactics of the Arminians when they unjustly and calumniously attack others and charge them with making faithful subordinate standards equal to the word of God. Mr. Bacon applies these Arminian tactics when he says, quote, the National Covenant confession of faith is to be sworn not because the church has required it, but because it is an accurate representation of the sense of God's law.

It is not, as the Stelites claim, because the church's testimony tells us what to believe. And again, we praise God for his grace that the Apostles did not multiply burdens and lay them on the backs of God's people, as did the Pharisees in Rome, and now these newest children of the Pharisees, the Stelites. And again, the Stelites are at a significant disadvantage here in that they do not have a pope, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say they have too many popes.

Those are all from Defense Departed. Notice how Mr. Bacon will libel us with the odious names of popes and Pharisees in the vain hope of convincing the simple-minded by the use of disparaging language. Before I continue, and to restrain evil thoughts from rising up from within those who agree with my sentiments, I will quote from James Pierce's Vindication of Dissenters, "...bear patiently, my brethren, the indignity offered you, and the less you see there is of respect and civility in their treatment, the more cheerfully accept our friendship." And that's from the Dedication.

"...keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." Psalm 34:13. Mr. Bacon seems to think it is warrantable to accuse the PRCE of making her Confession of Faith equal to the Word of God simply because we use it as a bond or term of communion for all our members. Like Turretin, we respond by saying, "...this power of preserving and vindicating articles of faith is properly to be attended to in the judgment which the Church ought to make concerning doctrine, also in the creeds and confessions which she ought to compose for the conservation of doctrine and the bond of ecclesiastical communion.

Their true authority consists in this, that they are obligatory upon those who are subject to them in the court of external communion, because they were written by the churches or in the name of the churches, to which individual members in the external communion are responsible." That's from his Institutes of Elinctic Theology, pages 284 and 285. Not only does Mr. Bacon's slander fly against the PRCE and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, but now we have seen that he wishes to accuse the Church of Geneva as well. While I do not conclude that Mr. Bacon is an Arminian, nevertheless he has spoken like one for the second time.

Rutherford rebuked him the first time, and Turretin the second, first Scotland and then Geneva. I pray that he will recognize his folly, and that there will be no need for a third rebuke. He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

Proverbs 14:29. B. Term number 3, that Presbyterial Church government and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable, and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained is exhibited in the form of government and directory for worship adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation. 1. The determination of superior courts are authoritative and obligatory, and not consultatory only.

Our unanimous judgment and uniform practice is, that according to the order of the reformed Kirks, and the ordinance of God in his word, not only the solemn execution of ecclesiastical power and authority, but the whole acts and exercise thereof, do properly belong unto the officers of the Kirk. Yet so that in matters of chiefest importance the tacit consent of the congregation be had before their decrees and sentences receive final execution, and that the officers of a particular congregation may not exercise this power independently, but with subordination unto greater presbyteries and synods, provincial and national, which as they are representative of the particular Kirks conjoined together in one under their government, so their determination when they proceed orderly, whether in causes common to all or many of the Kirks, or in causes brought before them by appellations or references from the inferior, in the case of aberration of the inferior, is to the several congregations authoritative and obligatory and not consultatory only. And that's from the Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, page 108.

I note this letter from the General Assembly to show that they especially detested the false doctrine of the independents, who vainly believed that superior courts were consultatory only. May the Lord's people pray earnestly for an end to this gross delusion brought into the Church by the promoters of anarchy. 2. A list of dangerous errors, quote, nevertheless we also very sensible of the great and imminent dangers into which this common cause of religion is now brought by the growing and spreading of most dangerous errors in England to the obstruction obstructing and hindering of the begun Reformation, as namely, beside many others, Sicinianism, Arminianism, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Brownism, Erastianism, Independency, and that which is called by abuse of the word liberty of conscience being indeed liberty of error, scandal, schism, heresy, dishonoring God, opposing the truth, hindering Reformation, and seducing others.

And again that's from the Acts of the General Assembly of the Churches of Scotland, page 333. Notice that the General Assembly faithfully included independency as a dangerous error. As discussed earlier in this book, this is one error that deceives the majority of the professing Reformed churches in the United States and Canada.

Independent denominationalism and independent congregationalism equally drink from the foul well of independency. Presbyterianism, as promoted by the Westminster Standards, defends neither independent denominationalism nor independent congregationalism, but rather promotes the establishment of one church in each nation, a covenanted Presbyterian Church. It is notable that the General Assembly included independency in the same list with other gross heresies.

Three, those who hold opinions contrary to the form of government or directory for worship are schismatic and sectarian. Quote, Whosoever brings in any opinion or practice in this kirk contrary to the confession of faith, directory of worship, or Presbyterian government may be justly esteemed to be opening the door to schism and sex. That's the Acts of Assemblies, page 396.

Knowing that the General Assembly would censure anyone who was opening the door to schism and sex, we may safely infer that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland believed that the Presbyterian Church government and manner of worship are alone of divine right and unalterable, and that the most perfect model of these as yet attained is exhibited in the form of government and directory for worship adopted by the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation. These things were undoubtedly made terms of communion by the Scottish General Assembly. C. Taking and renewing covenants are a term of communion.

Term number four, 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, and in consistency with this, that the renovation of these covenants at Arkansas, Scotland, 1712, was agreeable to the word of God. Quote, Act for taking the covenant at the first receiving of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The General Assembly, according to 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, on account thereof taken in the visitation of universities and particular kirks, and in the trial of presbyteries, as the Acts of Assembly, page 422, and again, that all students of philosophy, at their first entry, and at their laureation, beholden to subscribe the Solemn League and 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, the Acts of Assembly, page 368.

Why would the General Assembly ordain that all persons whatsoever take the covenant at their first receiving of the Lord's Supper, or that all other persons, as they come to age and discretion, must take the covenant before their first receiving of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, if knowledge of the Solemn League and Covenant was not a prerequisite term of communion? Those who were ignorant of the covenant, or who wouldn't take it, were clearly to be kept from the Lord's Supper until such time as they were prepared. How do these actions of the General Assembly square with Mr. Bacon's notions? Does he say to the Scottish General Assembly, Note also what a far cry steals, read the General Assembly's position regarding the necessity of uninspired history, read Covenants, as part of the terms of communion

is from the simple profession of faith of the Ethiopian eunuch and of Peter, as from defense departed. From this we learn that knowledge of and compliance with the covenant was required as a term of communion.

Failure to take the covenant was clearly judged as a public scandal and such refusers were barred from the Lord's Supper. 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 malignants.

That's the Acts of Assemblies, page 335. George Gillespie, Scottish Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, writes, quote, That which is not only sinful in itself, but a great dishonor to God, a great scandal to the church, and with all a disobedience to the lawful ordinance of authority, may and ought to be punished by this Christian in reforming Parliament. But their offense, which still refused to take the covenant, is not only sinful in itself, but a great dishonor to God, a great scandal to the church, and therefore a term of communion, Vero notes, and with all a disobedience to the lawful ordinance of authority.

Therefore the offense of those who still refuse to take the covenant may and ought to be punished by this Christian in reforming Parliament. It is no tyranny over men's consciences to punish a great sin and scandalous sin, such as the refusing and opposing of the covenant, or dividing from it. Although the offender in his conscience believe it to be no sin, yea, peradventure, believe it to be a duty, otherwise it had been tyranny over the conscience to punish those who killed the Apostles because they thought they were doing God's service, John 16, 2 and 3. And that's from Gillespie's Treatise of Miscellany Questions, volume 2, page 87.

And compare that with pages 80 and 81. As Gillespie unequivocally states, barring people from the Lord's table for refusing to take the covenant is not imposing tradition upon the conscience of men, but rather it is consistent with and agreeable to the Word of God and our subordinate standards. Those like George Gillespie, who drew up our subordinate standards, understood their obligations and so does the PRCE.

Mr. Bacon, on the other hand, is again clearly out of sync with the doctrine and practice of our reformed and covenanted forefathers. D. Historical testimony as a term of communion. Term number five, an approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against paganism, potpourri, prelacy, malignancy and sectarianism, immoral civil governments, Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them, and of the judicial testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, with supplements from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as containing a noble example to be followed in contending for all divine truth and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states.

Finally, what about historical testimony as a term of communion? This is by far the most maligned and least understood term. Mr. Bacon makes his most foolish comments in regard to this particular term. He says, quote, but one must remember that the Steelites invest a similar meaning in the term historical testimony that the Romanist does with his inspired tradition of the Fathers.

That is from Defense Departed. The Reformed Presbytery registers their protest against those who would palm off upon a credulous world a confession instead of a testimony when they state, quote, one, the Bible, both Old and New Testament, is largely historical, the books of Genesis and Matthew beginning

with narrative, the wonderful works of God. It is thus adapted to the rational nature of man and equally to the spiritual nature of the new man, and that's from the minutes of the Reformed Presbytery, September 30, 1875, as cited in the Reformation Advocate, page 250.

For he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God, Psalm 78, verses 5 through 8. And that scripture proof has been added to this quotation, so Barrow carries on with the quotation of the Reformed Presbytery. Two, without the use of uninspired history, the Church cannot ascertain the fulfillment of prophecy, accumulating external evidence of its divine original. Especially can Christ's witnesses know otherwise than by history identify her confederated enemies, the man of sin and son of perdition, his paramour, the well-favored harlot and her harlot daughters, the offspring of her fornication with the kings of the earth.

That's the minutes of Reformed Presbytery, September 30, 1875, as cited in the Reformation Advocate, page 250. Then he said unto them, Nations shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in diverse places, and famines and pestilences, and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, and it shall turn to you for a testimony.

Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what you shall answer. Luke 21, verses 10 through 14. Again the scripture proof has been added.

Three, the present cannot in faith confess the sins or express thanks to God for the mercies of a former generation except on the credibility of human history. Again from the same minutes. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Nehemiah 9, 2. And again the scripture proof has been added. Four, no otherwise can a Christian know the time and place of his birth or the persons whom God commands him to honor as his father and mother than by uninspired testimony. And the same is true of his covenant obligation if baptized in infancy.

Against all who ignorantly or recklessly reject or oppose history as a bond of fellowship in the family, in the state, but especially in the church, we thus enter our solemn and uncompromising protest. And those are from the same minutes as found page 250 of the Reformation Advocate. My son, hear the instruction of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother.

Proverbs 1.8. Did the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638 to 1649 include history as a term of communion? One, Robert McWard, amanuensis to Samuel Rutherford at the Westminster Assembly, was a zealous minister and protester against the faction calling herself the Church of Scotland. This protégé of Rutherford collected and edited Rutherford's letters and is notable for many of his faithfully written works, not the least of which is his excellent book entitled Ernest Contendings for the Faith. Citing a letter from John Welch to Robert Bruce, Robert McWard comments upon the importance of judicial history to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Quote, but whether I have reason to deny what is so confidently asserted, let the following testimony be considered that it may decide. Great Mr. Welch in his letter to Mr. Bruce writes thus. Quote, what my mind is, saith he, concerning the root of these branches, the bearer will show you more fully.

They are no more to be accounted Orthodox but apostates. They have fallen from their callings by receiving an anti-Christian and bringing in of idolatry to make the kingdom culpable and to expose it to fearful judgments for such in high perfidy against an oath so solemnly exacted and given, and are no more to be accounted Christians but strangers and apostates and persecutors, and therefore not to be heard any more either in public or in consistories, colleges, or synods. For what fellowship hath light with darkness, and so forth? Calderwood's History, page 743.

Now, sir, here is not only a testimony of one of the greatest lights that ever shined in our church, directly contradicting what you assert, but considering how carefully this history was revised by our General Assembly, we are to look upon it as the judgment of our whole church, that letter being therein insert as a commendation and vindication of that eminent man of God. And that's from Ernest Contendings of the Faith, or for the Faith, page 127. As a second witness, I quote from the preface to the reader in the eighth book of Calderwood's History of the Church of Scotland, quote, As therefore we are hopeful that this notable history, compiled and written by such an accomplished and credit-worthy author, thereunto appointed and authorized by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, several times revised, amended, and at length approved, as could be evidenced by the Acts of our Assembly, which herewith had been published for verification, if our church records, registers, had not been seized, will be the more commended and endeared unto thee, that it is almost the only monument left, all the public registers of the Church of Scotland, having, as was hinted by divine permission, for our farther trial and affliction, lately fallen into the hands of the prelates and their partners, the known enemies of her true liberties.

And that's from Calderwood's History of the Kirk of Scotland, volume 8, page 21. Especially notice these words, quote, But considering how carefully this history, that is Calderwood's History, was revised by our General Assembly, we are to look upon it as the judgment of our whole church. Why would Robert McWard say such a thing? Imagine, history being looked upon as the judgment of the whole church.

Would such a statement come out of Mr. Bacon's mouth? I doubt it. Considering that Robert McWard was a close friend of Samuel Rutherford and of John Brown of Wamphre, this is quite a statement to hear him make. Consider that the General Assembly was pouring their resources into and carefully revising Calderwood's history.

Why would the General Assembly of 1648 allow David Calderwood an annual pension while he labored upon this massive task of writing the true history of the Church of Scotland? Because this history was written and thereunto appointed and authorized by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, several times revised, amended, and at length approved, as could be evidenced by the Acts of our Assembly, which herewith had been published for verification if our church registers had not been seized, for the purpose of passing on an authentic judicial and historical testimony to posterity. It was entered into the registers of the Church of Scotland to show that with one voice the General Assembly concurred with its contents and that it could be considered a credible testimony of the application of their principles and subordinate standards to their history. They knew that history is not neutral and that the uninterpreted facts of history did not speak for themselves.

They would not rely upon the godless world to testify against the faith of their forefathers. They understood that they must come to an agreement about who contended for the truth and who contended against it. They understood that they had a duty to extinguish the remembrance of the wicked and to exalt the mighty works of the Lord through his children.

Like Israel of old, they would write it for a memorial and rehearse it to their children. They would remember the covenant of their ancestors and pass it on from generation to generation. Why? Because God is the creator of time and history and he is glorified when we rehearse his mighty works.

Our agreement upon the mighty deeds of God is essential to our communion with one another. The General Assembly knew this and so did the faithful covenanters who followed in their footsteps. Sadly, Mr. Bacon seems to imply that communion and agreement in the truth has little to do with the history of our forefathers or their mighty victories in Christ Jesus.

Do not be fooled by his false argumentation. He opposes himself and the testimony of the faithful when he speaks against history as a term of communion. Under the disguise of Christian tolerance he teaches that which would steal away our covenanted inheritance.

And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Exodus 17 14. They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel.

Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates. Judges 5 11. Remember his marvelous works that he has done, his wonders and the judgments of his mouth.

O ye seed of Israel, his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God. His judgments are in all the earth.

Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, even of the covenant which he made with Abraham and of his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. 1 Chronicles 16 12-17. We have sinned with our fathers and have committed iniquity.

We have done wickedly. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt. They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.

Psalms 106 verses 6 and 7. That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been, and God requireth that which is past. Ecclesiastes 3.15. How did the General Assembly of Scotland view their own history? 2. What does the General Assembly of Scotland say about all the General Assemblies that preceded them? How do they view their own history? Do they make compliance with former acts of General Assembly a term of communion? Quote, The Assembly constitutes and ordains that from henceforth no sort of persons of whatsoever quality or degree be permitted to speak or write against the said confession, this assembly, or any act of this assembly, and that under the pain of incurring the censures of this kirk. That's from the Acts of the Assemblies, page 51.

And likewise, in case they acknowledge not this assembly, reverence not the constitutions thereof, and obey not the sentence, and make not their repentance conform to the order prescribed in this assembly, ordains them to be excommunicated and declared to be of these whom Christ commanded to be holden

by all and every one of the faithful as ethnics and publicans. Again, the Acts of Assembly, page 22. Who would believe that a faithful General Assembly would not expect their rulings to be implemented year after year? As soon as these acts are determined, they become historical judicial testimony which bind the church insofar as the human constitution itself agrees with the Word of God.

As is standard Presbyterian practice, those who willfully and obstinately refuse to abide by the faithful rulings of General Assembly are excommunicated. This makes their historical testimony, the application of their principles in history, binding upon subsequent generations and a term of communion. Dear reader, consider the Presbyterian position of the Scottish General Assembly and ask yourself, are they using historical testimony as a term of communion? A. The General Assembly censures, that is, bars people from the Lord's table, people for ignorance and scandal year after year.

B. Each censure that sets a new precedent becomes a historic testimony for truth and against error. C. Over the years the record of church censures grows into a body of judicial testimony. D. These provide subsequent generations with a record of judgment that bind posterity inasmuch as these judgments are agreeable to God's Word.

E. This record of censures becomes a basis for terms of communion since they are an historical and judicial record of scandalous sins and errors for which professing Christians have been barred from the Lord's Supper by a faithful General Assembly from the past. Therefore historical and judicial testimony in the form of historical church censure is a direct statement of their terms of communion. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also, 2 Timothy 2.2. Does Mr. Bacon object to this kind of historical testimony? Will he also fight against the censures of our faithful forefathers? Are the faithful acts of General Assembly too much for him to read? Perhaps our forefathers held their principles too strictly and needed Mr. Bacon to temper their harsh judgment.

I speak this to his shame. Next, let us proceed to some concrete examples of the use of historical testimony. 1. Pretended assemblies and their pretended policies were censured.

First, I contend that a clear example of the use of historical testimony as a term of communion is exemplified by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1638, where they declared the prolatinal General Assemblies to be pretended assemblies, pronouncing all their acts null and void in the years 1606, 1608, 1610, 1616, and 1618. Quote, December 4, 1638, Session 12. The Assembly with universal consent of all, after the serious examination of the reasons against every one of these six pretended assemblies apart, being often urged by the moderator to inform themselves thoroughly that without doubting they might give their voices, declared all these six assemblies of Linlithgow 1606 and 1608, Glasgow 1610, Aberdeen 1616, St. Andrews 1617, Perth 1618, and every one of them to have been from the beginning unfree, unlawful, and null assemblies, and never to have had, nor hereafter to have, any ecclesiastical authority, and their conclusions to have been and to be of no force, vigor, nor efficacy, prohibited all defense and observance of them, and ordained the reasons of their nullity to be inserted in the books of the Assembly.

That's from the Acts of the General Assemblies, page 9. The General Assembly realized that historical testimony of all faithful preceding Scottish General Assemblies set precedent for them to follow. Upon retaking power from the prelates, they immediately declared the prolatinal assemblies and all their acts null and void to distinguish between those historical testimonies that were unscriptural, pretended, and of

no authority from those historical testimonies that were scriptural, faithful, and authoritative. Thus they dissociated themselves from these pretended assemblies and judged them and all their pretended acts to be null and void.

In effect, they declared themselves to have no agreement or communion with those who countenanced, obeyed, or defended the authority of those assemblies. The entire policy of the prelates and all their pretended authority was wiped away with one act, and from henceforth this act became a term of communion in the Church of Scotland. This is nothing less than a judicial testimony against an historical body being used as a term of communion.

2. False principle and practice is censured. On December 10, 1638, Session 17, the General Assembly of Scotland declared the five Articles of Perth to be abjured and removed. Quote, The matter was put to voicing in these words, whether the five Articles of Perth, by the Confession of Faith, as it was meant and professed in the year 1580, 1581, 1590, 1591, ought to be removed out of this Kirk.

The whole Assembly, all in one consent, one only accepted, did voice that the five Articles above specified were abjured by this Kirk in that Confession, and so ought to be removed out of it, and therefore prohibits and discharges all disputing for them, or observing of them, or any of them, in all time coming, and ordains presbyteries to proceed with the censures of the Kirk against all transgressors. 3. Can you find the five Articles of Perth listed in your Bible, or must you look to uninspired history alone to know for what cause the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland would censure the people of Scotland? The Assembly plainly tells us that they would censure anyone who would dispute for or observe these five Articles of Perth. The General Assembly applied their scriptural principles to the historic circumstances of their time, and set precedents agreeable to God's Word that bind us, their ecclesiastical descendants, even today, to the same moral principles.

Should we observe and promote the five Articles of Perth in 1997? Of course not, and if anyone does so obstinately, they should be censured and barred from the communion table. History alone records these five Articles of Perth, and we acknowledge them as heresy in our testimony, and include them among our terms of communion. As we rehearse to our posterity God's mighty works of overthrowing the wicked, we must teach them that these five Articles of Perth are heresy, and that those who love and defend them must be considered scandalous.

This was clearly the practice of the Church of Scotland in the Second Reformation, is identical to the practice of the faithful Covenanters of Scotland and America in later years, and continues as the practice of the PRCE today. Three, schisms from the past were censured, and association or agreement with them were made terms of communion in all time coming. Not only was promoting and defending the pretended authority, the unbiblical principles and practices of the prelates censurable, and thus a faithful term of communion, but even presently associating with and promoting these historically censured groups is a faithful term of communion.

While the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1638 to 1649, would maintain that the Episcopal Church was a true church as to its being or essence, they would not recognize the authority of the prelates' pretended adjudicatories, and they sternly warned all professors of the true religion in Scotland that censure would certainly follow anyone who accepted, defended, or obeyed their pretended authority. ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT GLASGOW, SESSION 16, DECEMBER 8, 1638. It was also cleared that Episcopacy was condemned in these words of the Confession, His wicked hierarchy.

We have in the Book of Policy, or Second Book of Discipline, in the end of the second chapter this conclusion agreed upon. Therefore all the ambitious titles invented in the kingdom of Antichrist, and his usurped hierarchy which are not one of these four sorts, to wit, pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons, together with offices depending thereupon, in one word ought to be rejected. The whole assembly, most unanimously, without contradiction of any one, and with the hesitation of one alone, professing full persuasion of mind, did voice that all Episcopacy, different from that of a pastor over a particular flock, was abjured in this kirk, and to be removed out of it, and therefore prohibits, under ecclesiastical censure, any to usurp, accept, defend, or obey the pretended authority thereof in time coming.

Do you think that these men intended their posterity to continue to censure those who obeyed the Episcopalian daughter of Antichrist? Their historical testimony was, and is, to be upheld, published, and promoted in time coming, and all who fail to recognize that it is agreeable to God's word are to be kept from the Lord's table. Again we see in the acts of the General Assembly a judicial testimony binding subsequent generations to obedience, and censuring all who will not comply for all time coming. Each of these attainments are not to be receded from.

We must gratefully receive the faithful judgment of past General Assemblies, and compare their rulings with the word of God. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing Philippians 3.16. Once we confirm that their ruling was agreeable to Holy Scripture, we may continue to apply their judgment to the present day. Not only are we to adhere to faithful attainments of the past, but we are duty-bound to testify against the prevalent sins of our times.

Again, the General Assembly recognized the need for constant vigilance in this regard, and they protected the Church from the contagion of backsliding ministers by framing yet another needful term of communion. Act for censuring ministers for their silence and not speaking to the corruption of the time. August 3, 1648, Ante Meridiem, Session 26.

The General Assembly, taking to their serious consideration the great scandals which have lately increased, partly through some ministers their reserving and not declaring of themselves against the prevalent sins of the times, partly through the spite, malignity, and insolency of others against such ministers as have faithfully and freely reprov'd the sins of the times without respect of persons, do therefore, for preventing and removing such scandals hereafter, appoint and ordain that every minister do by the word of wisdom apply his doctrine faithfully against the public sins and corruptions of these times, and particularly against the sins and scandals in the congregation wherein he lives, according to the Act of the General Assembly, 1596, revived by the Assembly at Glasgow, 1638, appointing that such as shall be found not applying their doctrine to corruptions, which is the pastoral gift, cold and wanting of spiritual zeal, flatterers and dissembling of public sins, and especially of great personages in their congregations, that all such persons be censured according to the degree of their faults, and, continuing therein, be deprived, and according to the Act of General Assembly, 1646, Session 10, that beside all other scandals, silence or ambiguous speaking in the public cause, much more detracting and disaffected speeches, be seasonably censured. And that's from the records of the Church of Scotland, page 509. These Acts of General Assembly contain hundreds of pages of judicial testimony which declare the things censured and why they were censured.

Every precedent setting censure adds to their list of terms of communion. Every new heresy and every new enemy testified against is added to a growing list of those things that will bar someone from the Lord's supper. Every time an authoritative judicatory rules correctly, that is, in accordance with Scripture, and

precedentially, they make a new judicial testimony for the truth and against error.

Is Mr. Bacon also against the authority of General Assemblies? As a professed Presbyterian, he should recognize that historical testimony and judicial testimony are terms of communion in every church court that has a history. What does Mr. Bacon call judicial precedent? Is this not binding historical testimony? Why does he rail at us for doing what is unavoidable? The Acts of Faithful General Assemblies provide us with a record of historical terms of communion and are the single most important source we have in determining the footsteps of the flock at that period of time. Though these documents are fallible, they nevertheless, once confirmed to be agreeable to God's word, may be considered faithful until proved otherwise.

Though they are subordinate, they may be considered authoritative until proved otherwise and adjusted. Because mere men have pronounced judgment upon the events of history does not necessarily mean they have done so incorrectly. These testimonies serve their intended purpose in promoting peace and uniformity in the church.

David Steele comments, quote, Whether in the light of God's word, history and argument are to be inseparably joined with doctrine in the testimony of the church, is the question. The affirmative we maintain, the negative is asserted in the preface to Reformation principles exhibited, which is formerly the testimony of the RPCNA, and urged by the Covenanter, that is, the magazine. What sayeth scripture? The case of Stephen, the proto-martyr, under the Christian dispensation will serve for both proof and illustration, Acts 7.1 and so forth.

This witness begins his testimony with history, commencing with the call of Abraham, and ending at his own time. From the 51st to the 53rd verse he applies the facts of history and doctrines declared to the case at hand, and this he does in argumentative form. Take the case of the blind man restored to sight, John 9.13-34. The former of these witnesses was stoned to death, that is, Stephen, the latter excommunicated, that is, the blind man who was restored, for stating facts and arguing from them.

These two examples are deemed sufficient at present for proof and illustration, but it may be said these are inspired records, scriptural examples. True, and just because they are inspired instances of testimony-bearing, we adduce them to establish and illustrate our position, which they irrefragably do. But what has this to do with uninspired mere human history as a part of the testimony? Much every way, chiefly with reference to covenanting.

Their very designation, covenanters, one would suppose sufficient, if received in its historical import, to establish the truth of our position. But we waive that for the present. There are two kinds of faith, distinct but inseparable, and as already stated the kind of faith is determined by the kind of testimony, while both are required by God's word and by the condition of human society.

The one, for the sake of a distinction, is called divine faith, the other, human. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. 1 John 5.9. Christ said to the Pharisees, It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

John 8.17. See also Matthew 18.16. Now it is obvious that facts rather than principles constitute testimony, and it is undeniable that the holy scriptures sustain the credibility of human testimony, though uninspired. Still, the witness or testimony of God is greater. Hence I reason thus, the Lord Jesus, whose name is the word of God, the faithful and true witness, having it in charge to reveal and execute the purposes of God,

and the devil, the father of lies, who sinneth from the beginning, being assiduously engaged in falsifying the revealed will and resisting the execution of the purposes of Jehovah, Revelation 5.9 and 12.7. Both these leaders are accompanied by their respective partisans of the human family.

Protestants generally agree that potpourri is a diabolical organization against Christ and truth. That Christ is a divine person is a doctrine of scripture, John 1.1, but this is questioned by the devil, Matthew 4.6, though admitted by the Church of Rome. Christ being divine is the object of worship.

To this, potpourri assents. But Christ is also mediator between God and man. Well, potpourri admits this also, and resists only the exclusive mediation of Christ.

Which office the Romish Church distributes among Christ, Mary, angels, and so forth? And we know both the errors and idolatries as facts in the history of potpourri. True, we may and ought to try both by God's word. On the other hand, we know that Christ is the Son of God, and that we ought to honor the Son even as we honor the Father.

We know these things, I say, not only as doctrinally declared, but also as exemplified in the faith and practice of the Church of God in all ages. Of the three men who visited Abraham, Genesis 18.12, the patriarch worships only one, verse 22. The unbelieving Jews claim Abraham as their father, but refuse to do the works of Abraham, and so falsify their claim, John 8.33 and 39.

We claim to be the seed of Christ's covenanted witnesses in Britain and Ireland, but unless we walk in the steps of their faith, our professed attachment to that faith will avail us nothing. But it may be said, who denies all this, or what has this to do with the matter of a testimony? Everything. That many of our former brethren are aiming to copy their noble example, including the Covenanter, is a matter of our joy and thanksgiving to God.

But how? As individuals? As congregations? As judicatories? If so, it is all right, so far as they followed Christ. Still Christ enjoins it upon us to go forth by the footsteps of the flock, Psalm 1.8. These footsteps are Christian practices, that is, they are the application of principle, scriptural principle, to individual and social life. Let it be noticed that Christ counsels inquirers to follow the footsteps of the flock, thus making those footsteps at once directive and authoritative.

We can know the footsteps, the Christian and social practice of our covenanted fathers only by history, and through the same medium alone do we come to ascertain the very arguments by which they defended both their faith and practice. My faith may be designated human, or, if you will, even popish. Still I am not ashamed to own that the practice of Cameron, Cargill, Rennick, and those with whom the martyrs were associated, is directive to me and authoritative also.

Indeed I am bound to bring even their principles and arguments to the law and the testimony, but history alone will supply me with these, which, that it may do, I must have it in an authenticated form. In this matter the Lord Jesus will not allow us to walk at random. Go thy way by the footsteps of the flock.

The great outlines of the Mediator's special providence and of the Church's faithful contendings must ever be before her children, sanctioned by her authority in a judicial form that posterity may see how she has walked with God in the wilderness, as also wherein she may have acted perfidiously in view of her solemn covenant engagement. Again, our fifth term of communion reads, An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, especially in Scotland, against paganism, potpourri, prelacy,

malignancy, and sectarianism, immoral civil governments, Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow from them, and of the judicial testimony emitted by the Reformed Presbytery in North Britain, 1761, with supplements from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as containing a noble example to be followed in contending for all divine truth and in testifying against all corruptions embodied in the constitutions of either churches or states. We in the PRCE approbate the faithful contendings of the martyrs and uphold their judicial testimonies as noble examples, which could not be called noble if they were contrary to God's word, to be followed in contending for all divine truth.

This is a testimony for the truth and against error which any Christian who desires to come to the communion table should be more than willing to make. What sin are we committing by requiring that people approbate the faithful contendings of the martyrs? For someone not to approbate their faithful contendings implies either ignorance of or opposition to these. I have already demonstrated that those who come to the communion table must all speak the same thing, having no divisions, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

This is not fulfilled in the case of opposition to noble and faithful contendings. Those who cannot take the time to inquire about the covenants and contendings of our ancestors, or those who are too busy to remember and rehearse the mighty acts of God done through his servants, are simply not yet ready to come to communion. Neither are those who oppose the conscientious approving of such faithful historical deeds.

Failure to attend to these important aspects of our Christian duty is scandalous, and we would have to inquire as to what is so time consuming that these things cannot properly be considered. Additionally, we do not ask for a perfect understanding, nor do we require agreement with every minute sentiment contained in our judicial documents. These are noble examples in contending for all divine truth, and not infallible examples.

We seek an honest effort and professed agreement to our standards. By reasonable examination we determine whether we can walk together and jointly profess our faith before our Savior, each other, and the world as one bread and one body. If someone is not willing to sacrifice enough time and energy to seek an honest estimate of our agreement in the truth, then I fear that they are not redeeming the time, or they have seriously confused their priorities in life.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, but shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 2 Timothy 2.15-16 Are our terms of communion too lengthy? Mr. Bacon says, Let it simply be recorded that the Act, Declaration, and Testimony is itself a book over two hundred pages, and expatiates in stelite terms the Acts of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland from the year 1638 to the year 1649 inclusive. That book contains an additional five hundred-plus pages of historical rulings, acts, and testimonies.

Of course, that material contains references to still other material, and so forth. If that amount of reading seems to our readers like a tremendous overhead to require of Christians before admitting them to the Lord's table, then our readers agree with us. I respond with the words of the Reformed Presbytery, Ministers who sought popularity affected the favor of the unlearned by representing the testimony as too profound for the comprehension of the common people.

It was, moreover, too prolix, so that few could find the time to examine it thoroughly. But the greatest objection was that it was too severe against other churches, and this last objection is, in truth, the only one. Aspiring ministers felt ashamed of sackcloth.

They longed to get out of the wilderness and get nearer to King's palaces. As from the Reformation Advocate, Volume 1, page 260. He that diligently seeketh good procureth favor, but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

Proverbs 11, 27. What is required is not too hard for those who wish to turn off their televisions and use that time for study. Video rental shops may suffer a drop in profits, but the congregation of the Lord will rejoice in agreement.

This objection, I don't have time, is the same used by those who will not pray in secret, worship daily with their families, or honor the Lord's Day. Quote, Oh, hearken to this, all ye that live quietly in the omission of closet or family prayer, of solemn fasting or communion in the blessed supper of the Lord. Hath God evaded you of the price that others must give? Hath he granted a new way of heaven for you? Must others make religion their business, and you neglect it where you please? And that's taken from Richard Steele's A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts in Worship, from 1673, page 225.

The objections that it's too hard and I don't have the time are typically spoken by the same people who can sing along with the television commercials and name every actor and actress in Hollywood. Who is Harrison Ford? No problem, they say. If that was on the communion exam, we could study all day.

What is the doctrine of justification by faith? Come on, they say. Now you're asking too much. Is it asking too much to become acquainted with the standards of truth that our martyred forefathers died to uphold? To those who won't be inconvenienced, and to those who might be convinced by Mr. Bacon's arguments, I plead with you to look forward to the day of judgment and see if you will then say, I didn't have time.

Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, Hosea 11.12. Oh, how often may the Lord say over us, these people compass me about with lies. What a generation of vipers are here, like the viper that is speckled without and poisonous within. Moses took a veil when he spake to Israel, and put it off when he spake to God.

But the hypocrite doth quite the contrary. He shows his best to men, his worst to God, but the Lord sees the veil and the face. And it is hard to say whether he hates more the veil of dissimulation or the face of wickedness.

And again, that's from Richard Steele's Remedy for Wandering Thoughts in Worship, page 153. Do not deceive yourself. You do have time to read what is required for preparation to come to the communion table.

And in most cases, you have already been given more than enough time. Mr. Bacon may want to accommodate his practice to the lax sentiments of the modern man, but God's requirements are still the same. Mr. Bacon may wish to find the lowest common denominator, simple profession, so that everybody who visits his church in Rowlett can participate in communion.

But thankfully, we know that this Romish view will be judged and destroyed forever. Until then, we will continue to pray against this latitudinarian view and pray for the repentance of all who seduce God's people with these lies. The holy Lord of hosts will not allow it.

If you will not sanctify him, he will sanctify himself. If you that worship him will not bear witness of your serious attendance to his holiness, he must bear witness to it by his judgments on you, which indeed are not always visible, but ever certain. Not a man in the congregation, but the holy God is sanctified by him or upon him.

Little do we know what invisible dreadful effects there are of this daily in our congregations. And if our dear Redeemer did not stand as a screen between us and his wrath, the best of us would quickly feel the effects of his displeasure. And that's from Steele's Remedy for Wandering Thoughts in Worship, page 34.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write, These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, for I have not found my works perfect before God.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Revelation 3, 1 through 3. Is the PRCE guilty of imposing the traditions of men upon the conscience by requiring terms of communion that are unscriptural, as Mr. Bacon slanderously misrepresents? We ask no more than Scripture requires.

One, Scripture is our alone infallible foundation. Subordinate standards are used to promote purity and agreement. Two, we subscribe our confession of faith in catechisms, that is, the Westminster Confession of Faith in Catechisms, because they agree with God's word.

Three, our form of government and directory for worship are identical to the Scottish Church in her best and purest times, and we uphold them because they agree with God's word. Four, our perpetually binding covenants are remembered and renewed, again because they agree with God's word. Five, the testimony of the faithful contending of the martyrs is not forgotten, and historical testimony is observed insofar as it agrees with the word of God.

O love the Lord, all ye his saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Psalm 31, 23. Mr. Bacon absurdly condemns our last term of communion.

One, the last major insult that Mr. Bacon has leveled against us regards our last term of communion. I have separated it from the others to draw special attention to the absurdity of this attack. Our sixth term of communion reads, practically adorning the doctrine of God our Savior by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly.

Mr. Bacon says, quote, but this brings us to the sixth term of communion, practically, that is, in practice, adorning the doctrine of God our Savior by walking in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly. We should carefully examine this term of communion. It is not promised, as God gives me grace, or I shall endeavor.

Rather, the promise is simply to do it, and that's from Defense Departed. This ridiculous allegation is really too childish and mean spirited to dignify with a response, but I have been given the task, and I will attempt to carry it faithfully to completion. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor, Exodus 20, 16.

Thou shalt not raise a false report. Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness, Exodus 23, verse 1. Mr. Bacon, in his sinful effort to try to attack and misrepresent every term he can, has

taken this to the ultimate extreme. The Psalm, League, and Covenant states, quote, that we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavor in our several places and callings the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, against our common enemies, the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God and example of the best reformed churches, and shall endeavor to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church government, directory for worship, and catechizing, that we, in our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

How many times does Mr. Bacon want us to say endeavor? Would a hundred be enough? Does he not possess a copy of the Psalm, League, and Covenant? He reminds me of the Calvinist who is ready to call you an Arminian if you do not put by grace at the end of every sentence. It is not hard to see that Mr. Bacon will go to any length to misrepresent our position. When a person is called upon to interpret a document, is it fair to dissociate all the previous articles from the last one? Is that the scholarship of a man of integrity? Two, we now proceed from bad to worse.

Mr. Bacon says, quote, Additionally, we must remember that this promise is coming from one who has not been required anywhere in the terms of communion to confess his own sinfulness, his own inability, his own profession of faith in Christ, or his own dependence upon the mercy of God and his spirit. That is from Defense Departed. A. A solemn acknowledgment of public sins in the breaches of the Covenant is two pages long and is included in our terms of communion under Term No.

4. B. The acknowledgment of sin in the Arkansas Renovation, Term No. 4, is 42 pages long. C. The confession of public sins penned by the Reformed Presbytery of America, October 8, 1880, is five pages long.

These are included in the fifth term of communion by the phrase With Supplements from the Reformed Presbyterian Church. That makes a total of 49 pages of confession of sin in our terms of communion alone, and Mr. Bacon says it is not required anywhere. When we own these confessions of sin, we do so with humility and an understanding that we, too, are guilty of the sins mentioned.

And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers, Nehemiah 9.2. O LORD, according to all thy righteousness I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain, because for our sins and for the iniquity of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all who are about us, Daniel 9.16. Does Mr. Bacon require confession of private and personal sins before he allows his people to communion? Is that what he is asking for? If he is, then he is more Romish than I feared. If 49 pages of confession of sin are not enough for Mr. Bacon, I doubt that 50 pages would make any difference. How can he explain his failure to mention 49 pages of confession of sin? 3. Next, Mr. Bacon says that we do not confess our own inability before God, since it is nowhere mentioned in our terms of communion.

Our own inability is mentioned in our Confession of Faith, Term No. 2. A. Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 9, Section 3 states, Man by his fall into a state of sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation. So as a natural man being altogether averse from that good and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto.

B. Our inability is also mentioned in Larger Catechism No. 149 and Shorter Catechism No. 82, which we own in our second term of communion.

When we own the Westminster Confession of Faith with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, what does Mr. Bacon think we are saying about our own ability before God? Does he think we are saying that we own everybody else's inability, but it doesn't apply to us? I must attribute this accusation to malicious intent, since even the dullest of ministers would not conclude such a thing. I know that Mr. Bacon is smarter than that, and I cannot conceive of an adequate excuse that would justify his slander. 4. Next, Mr. Bacon charges us with failing to include a profession of faith in our terms of communion.

Though it can be easily proved that this is implied in the previous five terms of communion, I would remind the reader that we ask for a profession of faith before baptism. Since it is already accomplished when one becomes a member of the Church, it is inappropriate and unnecessary to ask again at the examination for communion. Again, this clearly reveals Mr. Bacon's confusion as to the nature of terms of communion and the difference between membership in the visible Church and admission to the Lord's table.

5. Next, we are charged with failing to confess our own dependence upon the mercy of God and His Spirit. We own the Directory for Public Worship of God, Term No. 3, which instructs us to pray in the following manner.

To acknowledge and confess that, as we are convinced of our guilt, so out of a deep sense thereof, we judge ourselves unworthy of the smallest benefits, most worthy of God's fiercest wrath, and of all the curses of the law, and heaviest judgments inflicted upon the most rebellious sinners, and that he might most justly take his kingdom and gospel from us, plague us with all sorts of spiritual and temporal judgments in this life, and after cast us into utter darkness in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth forevermore. Notwithstanding all which, to draw near to the throne of grace, encouraging ourselves with hope of a gracious answer of our prayers, enriches in all sufficiency of that only one oblation, the satisfaction and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ at the right hand of his Father and our Father, and in confidence of the exceeding great and precious promises of mercy and grace in the new covenant, through the same mediator thereof, to deprecate the heavy wrath of God, which we are not able to avoid or bear, and humbly and earnestly to supplicate for mercy in a full and free remission of all our sins, and that only for the bitter sufferings and precious merits of that our only Saviour, Jesus Christ. And that's from the directory for public worship of public prayer before the sermon.

Have we then, as Mr. Bacon argues, failed to confess our own dependence upon the mercy of God and his Spirit, and failed to mention such things in our terms of communion? Perhaps, if one wishes to ignore all the documents we own in terms one through five. On the one hand, Mr. Bacon slanders us for having too much in our terms of communion, and now he argues that we have too little. What a mockery of common sense and judgment from one in the office of a minister of Jesus Christ! But the King shall rejoice in God, every one that sweareth by him shall glory, but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

Psalm 63 11. Six. Finally, upon the weight or weightlessness of the rest of his accusations, he leads up to his big conclusion.

Mr. Bacon insinuates that our sixth term of communion takes on sinister proportions, and that the PRCE is really teaching righteousness by works and legalism like the Pharisees. He says, If it be objected that this is not a promise to sinless perfection, I must reply that it would be a simple thing to add in the Lord. Why did the covenanted attainment never attain to so simple a thing as that? But if it is the case that the entire

stelite error can be reduced to the same legalism and self-righteousness found in the Pharisees, then the sixth term of communion takes on sinister proportions.

Mr. Bacon's insinuation and implication is that the PRCE is really attempting to bind people to a doctrine of works righteousness. Does he really believe that we have abandoned the doctrine of justification by faith alone? Does he really believe that we have adopted the doctrine of works righteousness? I could quote a hundred and possibly a thousand places in our doctrinal and historical standards that would deny such an absurd conclusion. Herein we see to what lengths Mr. Bacon will go to attack the PRCE.

He denies to us precisely those things that we explicitly own. He plugs his ears when we speak, and he closes his eyes to obvious and rational proof. Based upon everything that has been said up to this point, I can only respond by saying that there is none so blind as he who will not see.

If he cannot receive our plainest statements in the context they were intended, then I fear he will never hear what we are saying. For him to separate the sixth term of communion from all the others, ignore the testimony of the multiple standards mentioned in the first five terms, and then draw conclusions like he has, is perhaps the single worst display of scholarship and integrity I have ever encountered. He should be embarrassed and ashamed for what he has done, and we will continue to pray that God will grant him repentance.

When pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom. Proverbs 11.2 Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness, and let them not rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it.

Let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt. Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify themselves against me.

Let them shop for joy and be glad that favor my righteous cause. Yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

Psalm 35, 24-28 This concludes tape 4 of the Protestant Antidote to Modern Schismatical Disunity, being chapter 4 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's also available in hardcover from Stillwaters, along with the 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 note, these tapes are not copyrighted, and we therefore encourage you to copy and distribute them to any and all you believe would be benefited.

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