The Solemn League and Covenant

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT FOR REFORMATION AND DEFENCE OF RELIGION, THE HONOUR AND HAPPINESS OF THE KING, AND THE PEACE AND SAFETY OF THE THREE KINGDOMS OF SCOTLAND, ENGLAND, AND IRELAND.

Taken and Subscribed several times by King Charles II, and by all ranks in the said three kingdoms.

WITH
AN ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1643 AND AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT 1644, RATIFYING AND APPROVING THE SAID LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

Jer. 50:5 *Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.*

Prov. 25:5 *Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.*

2 Chron. 15:15 *And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart.*

Gal. 3:15 *Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed by an oath, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.*

Assembly at EDINBURGH, August 17, 1643. Session 14. The General Assembly's Approbation of the SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

THE Assembly having recommended unto a Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of the Honourable Convention of Estates, and the Commissioners of the Honourable Houses of the Parliament of England, for bringing the kingdoms to a more near conjunction and union, received from the foresaid Committees the Covenant after mentioned, as the result of their consultations: and having taken the same, as a matter of so publick concernment and so deep importance doth require, unto their gravest consideration, did, with all their hearts, and with the beginnings of the feelings of that joy, which they did find in so great measure upon the renovation of the National Covenant of this kirk and kingdom, All with one voice approve and embrace the same, as the most powerful mean, by the blessing of GOD, for settling and preserving the true Protestant religion with perfect

peace in his Majesty's dominions, and propagating the same to other nations, and for establishing his majesty's throne to all ages and generations. And therefore, with their best affections, recommend the same to the Honourable Convention of Estates, that, being examined and approved by them, it may be sent with all diligence to the kingdom of England, that, being received and approven there the same may be, with publick humiliation, and all religious and answerable solemnity, sworn and subscribed by all true professors of the reformed religion, and all his Majesty's good subjects in both kingdoms.

A. JOHNSTOUN.

CHARLES I. Parl. 3. Sess. 1. Act 5. Act anent the Ratification of the calling of the Convention, Ratification of the League and Covenant, Articles of Treaty betwixt the Kingdoms of Scotland and England, and remanent Acts of the Convention of Estates, and Committee thereof.

AT EDINBURGH, July 15, 1644.

THE Estates of Parliament, presently convened by virtue of the last act of the last Parliament, holden by his Majesty, and the three Estates, in anno 1641, considering, that the Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council, and Commissioners for conserving the articles of the treaty, having, according to their interests and trust committed to them by his Majesty and Estates of Parliament, used all means, by supplications, remonstrances, and sending of Commissioners, for securing the peace of this kingdom, and removing the unhappy distractions betwixt his Majesty and his subjects in England, in such a way as might serve most for his Majesty's honour, and good of both kingdoms; and their humble and dutiful endeavours for so good ends having proven ineffectual, and their offer of mediation and intercession being refused by his Majesty; and thereby finding the weight and difficulty of affairs, and the charge lying on them to be greater than they could bear; did therefore, in the month of May 1643, meet together with the Commissioners for the common burdens, that, by joint advice, some resolution might be taken therein; and in respect of the danger imminent to the true Protestant religion, his Majesty's honour, and peace of thir kingdoms, by the multitude of Papists and their adherents in arms in England and Ireland, and of many other publick and important affairs, which could not admit delay, and did require the advice of the representative body of the kingdom; appointed and caused indict a meeting of the Convention of Estates (his Majesty having formerly refused their humble desires for a Parliament) to be on the 22d of June following; which diet being frequently kept by the Noblemen, commissioners of shires and burghs, and they finding these dangers against this kirk and state still increasing, resolved, after serious deliberation and advice of the General Assembly, and joint concurrence of the Commissioners authorized by the Parliament of England, that one of the chiefest remedies for preventing of these and the like dangers, for preservation of religion, and both kingdoms, from ruin and destruction, and for procuring of peace, that both kingdoms should, for these ends, enter into Covenant; which was accordingly drawn up, and cheerfully embraced and allowed.

And at last a treaty was agreed unto by both kingdoms, concerning the said Covenant, and assistance craved from this kingdom by the kingdom of England, in pursuance of the ends expressed therein:???And the Estates being still desirous to use all good means, that, without the effusion of more blood, there may be such a blessed pacification betwixt his Majesty and his subjects, as may tend to the good of religion, his Majesty's true honour and safety, and happiness of his people, did therefore give commission to John Earl of Loudoun, Lord Chancellor, Lord Maitland, Lord Waristoun, and Mr. Robert Barclay, to repair to England, and endeavour the effectuating of these ends contained in the covenant of treaties, conform to their instructions.

And the said Estates having taken the proceedings above written to their consideration, do find and declare, That the Lords of council, and conservers of peace, did behave themselves as faithful counsellors, loyal subjects, and good patriots, in tendering their humble endeavours for removing the distractions betwixt his Majesty and his subjects, and in calling the Commissioners for the common burdens, and, by joint advice, appointing the late meeting of Convention, wherein they have approven themselves answerable to the duty of their places, and that trust committed to them; and therefore ratifies and approves their whole proceedings therein, and declares the said Convention was lawfully called, and also full and free in itself, consisting of all the members thereof, as any Convention hath been at any time bygone; and ratifies and approves the several acts made by them, or their committee, for enjoining the Covenant. And also, the said estates of Parliament (but prejudice of the premises, and of the general ratification above mentioned) ratify, approve, and confirm the foresaid mutual League and Covenant, concerning the reformation and defence of religion, the honour and happiness of the King, and the peace and safety of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland; together with the acts of the Kirk and Estate authorizing the same League and Covenant; together also with the foresaid articles of treaty agreed upon betwixt the said Commissioners of the Convention of Estates of Scotland and the Commissioners of both the Houses of Parliament of England, concerning the said Solemn League and Covenant. And the said Estates ordain the same acts, with the League and Covenant above specified, acts authorizing the same, and the articles of treaty foresaid, to have the full force and strength of perfect laws and acts of Parliament, and to be observed by all his Majesty's lieges, conform to the tenors thereof respective. Of the which League and Covenant, the tenor follows:

Preface

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT,

for reformation and defence of religion, the honour and happiness of the King, and the peace and safety of the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland; agreed upon by Commissioners from the Parliament and Assembly of Divines in England, with Commissioners of the Convention of Estates and General Assembly of the

Church of Scotland; approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and by both Houses of Parliament, and the Assembly of Divines in England, and taken and subscribed by them Anno 1643; and thereafter, by the said authority, taken and subscribed by all ranks in Scotland and England the same year; and ratified by act of the Parliament of Scotland Anno 1644 (and again renewed in Scotland, with an acknowledgement of sins and engagements to duties, by all ranks, Anno 1648, and by Parliament, 1649; and taken and subscribed by King Charles II, at Spey, June 23, 1650; and at Scoon, January 1, 1651).

We noblemen, barons, knights, gentlemen, citizens, burgesses, ministers of the Gospel, and commons of all sorts, in the kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, by the providence of GOD living under one king, and being of one reformed religion, having before our eyes the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, the honour and happiness of the king's majesty and his posterity, and the true public liberty, safety, and peace of the kingdom, wherein every one's private condition is included: and calling to mind the treacherous and bloody plots, conspiracies, attempts, and practices of the enemies of GOD, against the true religion and professors thereof in all places, especially in these three kingdoms, ever since the reformation of religion; and how much their rage, power, and presumption, are of late, and at this time, increased and exercised, whereof the deplorable state of the Church and kingdom of Ireland, the distressed state of the Church and kingdom of England, and the dangerous state of the Church and kingdom of Scotland, are present and public testimonies: we have now at last (after other means of supplication, remonstrance, protestation, and sufferings), for the preservation of ourselves and our religion from utter ruin and destruction, according to the commendable practice of these kingdoms in former times, and the example of GOD'S people in other nations, after mature deliberation, resolved and determined to enter into a Mutual and Solemn League and Covenant, wherein we all subscribe, and each one of us for himself, with our hands lifted up to the Most High GOD, do swear,

I - Of the defence of the true religion

That we shall sincerely, really, and constantly, through the grace of GOD, endeavour, 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 the example of the best reformed Churches; and shall endeavour 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 Catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.

II - Of the extirpation of error

That we shall, in like manner, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is, Church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissioners, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy), superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of Godliness; lest we partake in other men's sins, and thereby be in danger to receive of their plagues; and that the Lord may be one, and his name one, in the three kingdoms.

III - Of loyalty to the civil authorities

We shall, with the same sincerity, reality, and constancy, in our several vocations, endeavour, with our estates and lives, mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms; and to preserve and defend the king's majesty's person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms; that the world may bear witness with our consciences of our loyalty, and that we have no thoughts or intentions to diminish his majesty's just power and greatness.

IV - Of the pursuit of the rebels

We shall also, with all faithfulness, endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be incendiaries, malignants, or evil instruments, by hindering the reformation of religion, dividing the king from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties among the people, contrary to this League and Covenant; that they may be brought to public trial, and receive condign punishment, as the degree of their offences shall require or deserve, or the supreme judicatories of both kingdoms respectively, or others having power from them for that effect, shall judge convenient.

V - Of the preservation of peace and unity

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

VI - Of the sincere desire of a reformation

We shall also, according to our places and callings, in this common cause of religion, liberty, and peace of the kingdoms, assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, persuasion, or terror, to be divided or withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or to give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause, which so much concerneth the glory of God, the good of the kingdom, and honour of the king; but shall, all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein against all opposition, and promote the same, according to our power, against all lets and impediments whatsoever; and what we are not able ourselves to suppress or overcome, we shall reveal and make known, that it may be timely prevented or removed: all which we shall do as in the sight of God.

And, because these kingdoms are guilty of many sins and provocations against GOD, and his Son JESUS CHRIST, as is too manifest by our present distresses and dangers, the fruits thereof; we profess and declare, before GOD and the world, our unfeigned desire to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of these kingdoms; especially that we have not, as we ought, valued the inestimable benefit of the Gospel; that we have not laboured for the purity and power thereof; and that we have not endeavoured to receive Christ in our hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in our lives; which are the causes of other sins and transgressions so much abounding amongst us: and our true and unfeigned purpose, desire, and endeavour, for ourselves, and all others under our power and charge, both in public and in private, in all duties we owe to GOD and man, to amend our lives, and each one to go before another in the example of a real reformation; that the Lord may turn away his wrath and heavy indignation, and establish these Churches and kingdoms in truth and peace. And this Covenant we make in the presence of ALMIGHTY GOD, the Searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same, as we shall answer at that great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; most humbly beseeching the LORD to strengthen us by his HOLY SPIRIT for this end, and to bless our desires and proceedings with such success, as may be deliverance and safety to his people, and encouragement to other Christian Churches, groaning under, or in danger of the yoke of antichristian tyranny, to join in the same or like association and covenant, to the glory of GOD, the enlargement of the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, and the peace and tranquillity of Christian kingdoms and commonwealths.

An Exhortation to the taking of the Covenant (1644)

IF the power of Religion, or solid Reason, if Loyalty to the King, and piety to their Native Country, or love to themselves, and naturall affection to their posterity, if the Example of men touched with a deep sense of all these, or extraordinary successe from God thereupon, can awaken an embroyled bleeding remnant to imbrace the soveraigne, and onely meanes of their recovery, there can be no doubt but this

Solemne League and Covenant will find wheresoever it shall bee tendered, a people ready to entertaine it with all cheerefulnesse and duty.

And were it not commended to the Kingdom by the concurrent encouragement of the Honourable Houses of Parliament, the Assembly of Divines, the renowned City of London, multitudes of other persons of eminent rank and quality in this Nation, and the whole Body of Scotland, who have all willingly sworn and subscribed it, with rejoycing at the Oath, so graciously seconded from Heaven already, by blasting the Counsels, and breaking the power of the Enemy more than ever; yet it goeth forth in its own strength, with such convincing evidence of equity, Truth and Righteousnesse, as may raise in all (not wilfully ignorant, or miserably seduced) inflamed affections to joyne with their Brethren in this happy Bond, for putting an end to the present miseries, and for saving both of King and Kingdom from utter ruine now so strongly and openly laboured by the Popish faction, and such as have been bewitched and besotted by that viperous and bloudy generation.

For what is there almost in this Covenant, which was not for substance either expressed or manifestly included in that solemne Protestation of May 5. 1641. wherein the whole Kingdome stands ingaged untill this day? The sinfull neglect whereof, doth (as we may justly feare) open one floodgate the more to let in all these calamities upon the Kingdome, and cast upon it a necessity of renewing Covenant, and of entring into this.

If it be said, the extirpation of Prelacy, to wit, the whole Hierarchicall Government (standing, as yet, by the knowne Lawes of the Kingdome) is new, and unwarrantable: This will appear to all impartiall understandings, (though new) to be not onely warrantable, but necessary; if they consider (to omit what some say, that this Government was never formally established by any Lawes of this Kingdome at all) that the very life and soule thereof is already taken from it by an Act passed this present Parliament, so as (like Jezabels Carcasse, of which no more was left but the skull, the feete, and the palmes of her hands) nothing of jurisdiction remaines but what is precarious in them, and voluntary in those who submit unto them: that their whole Government is at best but a humane constitution, and such as is found and adjudged by both Houses of Parliament, (in which, the judgement of the whole Kingdom is involved and Declared) not onely very prejudiciall to the Civill State, but a great hinderance also to the perfect Reformation of Religion; Yea, who knoweth it not to bee too much an enemy there unto, and destructive to the power of godlinesse, and pure administration of the Ordinances of Christ: which moved the well-affected, almost throughout this Kingdom, long since to Petition this Parliament (as hath been desired before, even in the Reigne of Queen Elizabeth, and of King James) for a totall abolition of the same. Nor is any man hereby bound to offer any violence to their persons, but only, in his place and calling, to indevour their extirpation in a lawful way.

And as for those Clergy-men, who pretend that they (above all others) cannot Covenant to extirpate that Government, because they have (as they say) taken a solemne Oath to obey the Bishops, in licitis et honestis: they can tell, if they please,

that they that have sworn obedience to the Laws of the Land, are not thereby prohibited from indevouring by all lawfull meanes the abolition of those Lawes, when they prove inconvenient or mischievous. And if yet there should any Oath be found into which any Ministers or others have entred, not warranted by the Laws of God and the Land, in this case, they must teach themselves and others, that such Oathes call for repentance, not pertinacy in them.

If it be pleaded that this Covenant crosseth the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance; there can be nothing farther from truth: for, this Covenant binds all, and more strongly engageth them to preserve and defend the Kings Majesties Person, and authority in the preservation and defence of the true Religion and Liberties of the Kingdomes.

That scruple, that this is done without the Kings consent, will soone be removed, if it be remembred that the Protestation of the fifth of May before mentioned, was in the same manner voted and executed by both Houses, and after (by order of one House alone) sent abroad to all the Kingdome, his Majesty not excepting against it, or giving any stop to the taking of it, albeit he was then resident in Person at Whitehall.

Ezra 10. Neh. 9.Thus Ezra and Nehemiah drew all the people into a Covenant, without any speciall Commission from the Persian Monarchs (then their Sovereigns) so to doe, albeit they were not free Subjects, but Vassals, and one of them the meniall Servant of Artaxerxes, Neh. 1. then by Conquest King of Judah also.

Nor hath this doctrine or practise beene deemed seditious or unwarrantable by the Princes that have sate upon the English Throne, but justified and defended by Queene Elizabeth of blessed memory, with the expence of much Treasure and Noble blood, in the united Provinces of the Netherlands combined not only without, but against the unjust violence of Philip of Spaine; King James followed her steps, so farre as to approve their union, and to enter into league with them as free States; which is continued by his Majestie now reigning, unto this day; who both by his expedition for reliefe of Rochel in France, and his strict confederacy with the Prince of Orange, and the States Generall, notwithstanding all the importunitie of Spaine to the contrary, hath set to his Seale that all that had beene done by his Royall Ancestors; in maintenance of those who had so engaged and combined themselves, was just and warrantable.

And what had become of the Religion, Lawes, and Liberties of our sister Nation of Scotland, had they not entred into such a solemne League and Covenant at the beginning of the late troubles there? which course, however it was at first, by the Popish and Prelatick Projectors, represented to his Majestie as an offence of the highest nature, justly deserving chastisement by the fury of a puissant Army; yet when the matter came afterwards in coole blood to bee debated, first by Commissioners of both kingdomes, and then in open Parliament here, (when all those of either House, who are now engaged at Oxford, were present in Parliament, and gave their Votes, therein) it was found, adjudged and declared by the King in Parliament, that our deare Brethren of Scotland had done nothing, but what became

loyall and obedient Subjects, and were thereupon by Act of Parliament publikely righted in all the Churches of this Kingdome, where they had beene defamed.

Therefore however some men, hoodwinkt and blinded by the artifices of those Jesuiticall Engineers, who have long conspired to sacrifice our Religion to the Idolatry of Rome, our Lawes, Liberties and persons to arbitrary slavery, and our estates to their insatiable avarice, may possibly bee deterred and amused with high threats and Declarations, flying up and downe on the wings of the Royall Name and Countenance (now captivated and prostituted to serve all their lusts) to proclaime all Rebells and Traytors who take this Covenant; yet let no faithfull English heart bee afraid to joyne with our Brethren of all the three Kingdomes in this solemne League, as sometimes the men of Israel (although under another King) did with the men of Judah, 2 Chron. 30. at the invitation of Hezekiah.

What though those tongues set on fire by Hell doe raile and threaten? That God who was pleased to cleare up the innocency of Mordecai and the Jewes against all the malitious aspersions of wicked Haman to his and their Soveraigne, so as all his plotting produced but this effect, Esth. 9. that when the Kings commandement and decree drew neare to bee put in execution, and the enemies of the Jewes hoped to have power over them, it was turned to the contrary; and the Jewes had rule over them that hated them, and laid hands on such as sought their hurt, so as no man could withstand them; and that same God, who but even as yesterday, vouchsafed to disperse and scatter those dark clouds & fogs which overshadowed that Loyall and Religious Kingdome of Scotland, and to make their righteousnesse to shine as cleare as the Sunne at noone day in the very eyes of their greatest enemies, will doubtlessely stand by all those who with singlenesse of heart, and a due sense of their owne sinnes, and a necessitie of reformation, shall now enter into an everlasting Covenant with the Lord, never to bee forgotten, to put an end to all those unhappy and unnaturall breaches betweene the King and such as are faithfull in the Land; causing their righteousnesse and praise to spring forth before all the Nations, to the terror and confusion of those men of blood, the confederate enemies of God and the King, who have long combined, and have now raked together the dregs and scumme of many Kingdomes, to bury all the glory, honour and libertie of this Nation in the eternall grave of dishonour and destruction.

Die Veneris 9. Februar. 1643.

AN Exhortation touching the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant, and for satisfying of such Scruples, as may arise in the taking of it, was this day read the first and second time; And by Vote upon the Question assented unto, and Ordered to bee forthwith Printed.

H. Elsynge Cler. Parl. D. Com.

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