

- Historical background - Westminster/Savor response to Anabaptists absolute forbidding of them
- One great problem is the issue of truth, and telling the truth; imagine a world where, even if we were ignorant, yet we could only tell what we understood to be the truth

I. OATHS

- Oath = a calling on God to witness, and judge if lying, regarding the truth of a statement(s)

8-fold Biblical argument for the legitimacy of an oath (Waldron)

- 1.) The command to not swear falsely in God's Name (Ex20:7; Lev19:12)
- 2.) The command to swear only in God's Name (Deut6:13; 10:20; Jer5:7)
- 3.) The example of God (Heb6:13-19)
- 4.) The example of OT saints (Gen24:3; Gen47:30-31...)
- 5.) The law of Moses required them (Num5:19, 21; 1Kn8:31; Ex22:11)
- 6.) The prophets prediction (Is45:23; Is65:16)
- 7.) Christ's example (Matt26:62-64;)
- 8.) Paul's example (Rom1:9; 2Cor1:23; Act18:18)

23.1 *A lawful oath is an act of worship in which the person swearing in [the light of God's] truth, righteousness and judgement, solemnly calls God to witness what he swears, and to judge him according to the truth or falsity of it.*

23.2 *People should swear by the name of God alone, and his name is to be used with the utmost holy fear and reverence. To swear vainly or rashly by that glorious and awesome name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be abhorred. An oath is sanctioned by the Word of God in weighty and momentous matters to confirm truth and end strife, so a lawful oath imposed by lawful authority ought in such circumstances to be taken.*

23.3 *Whoever takes an oath sanctioned by the Word of God ought to consider the seriousness of so solemn an act, and to affirm nothing but what one knows to be the truth. For by rash, false and empty oaths the Lord is provoked and because of them a nation is brought to misery.*

23.4 *An oath is to be taken in the plain and ordinary sense of the words, without ambiguity or mental reservation.*

- Mat5:34; Jm5:12 the tension of James' and Jesus apparent forbidding of any oaths
- The problem was the abuse of the Pharisees of superficial oaths (James interpreted by Jesus)

Beware of the danger and deception of superficial, literal interpretations of the Bible. How much needless suffering by Quakers and others was caused by this plausible, but superficial understanding of the Scriptures! We must learn from this the necessity of serious Bible study and careful listening to expository and doctrinal teaching from the Bible. We ought also to learn the necessity of studying the whole Bible on every issue. A passage or two divorced from the larger context may completely mislead you. Systematic theology and doctrinal preaching are necessary. Our children need to learn more than isolated Bible verses. They need to learn biblical doctrine as summarized in biblical catechisms. (Waldron)

- the Westminster adds the statement "Nor is it to be violated, although made to heretics, or infidels"
- it is the truth before God, and so our responsibility is not negated by the one we make it before (Mormon example)

II. VOWS

- Vow = a solemn commitment to do something
- Num30:2-3; Ps76:11; Ps61:8; 66:13-14; Ecc5:4-6

23.5 *A vow is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, and it is to be performed with the utmost care and faithfulness. But monastic vows of a perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are far from representing degrees of higher perfection, rather, they are superstitious and sinful snares in which no Christian ought to entangle himself.*