

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 22.-Of lawfull Oathes and Vowes.

VII. No man may Vow, to do any thing forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded; or which is not in his own power, and, for the performance whereof, he hath no promise of ability from God¹. In which respects, Popish Monastical Vows, of perpetual single life, professed Poverty, and Regular Obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher Perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which, no Christian may intangle himself².

Question 1.—*May any man vow, to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded; or which is not in his own power, and, for the performance whereof, he hath no promise of ability from God?*

Answer.—No. Acts 23:12,14; Mark 6:26. A vow cannot bind to do that which is unlawful or impossible, for reasons before explained in relation to an oath, *cf.* Acts 23:12-14; nor may a vow be taken to do anything that is not in the power of the person vowing, *cf.* Acts 5:4; 1 Chron. 29:5; particularly when there exists no promise of ability from God, *cf.* Isa. 1:12-15; nor when made by a child or other person under authority and destitute of the right to bind themselves of their own will, *cf.* Num. 30:5, 8, 12, 13.

Question 2.—*Are Popish monastical vows of a perpetual single life, so far from being a degree of higher perfection, that it is a superstitious and sinful snare, in which no Christian may entangle himself?*

Answer.—Yes. Matt. 19:11,12; 1 Cor. 7:2,9. Thus do the Papists err, maintaining monastical vows of a perpetual single life to be a degree of higher perfection. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because a vow of perpetual single life is unlawful, Prov. 18:22. No man ought to vow the performance of that which he has not a promise of strength to perform, 1 Cor. 7:7. Although every man ought to exercise continence, yet, as no man has a promise of *perpetual* continency, which is necessarily required to a perpetual single life, no man ought to pledge himself to such, 1 Cor. 7:9. Christ says expressly, that the gift of continency is not given to all men, Matt. 19:11. 2.) Because marriage is honourable among all men, and the bed undefiled, Heb. 13:4. 3.) Because the apostle bids every man take his own wife, for shunning of fornication, 1 Cor. 7:1,2,9. 4.) Because the forbidding of marriage is a doctrine of devils, 1 Tim. 4:1,3.

Question 3.—*Are Popish monastical vows of a professed poverty, so far from being a degree of higher perfection, that it is a superstitious and sinful snare, in which no Christian may entangle himself?*

Answer.—Yes. Eph. 4:28. Thus do the Papists err, maintaining monastical vows of a professed poverty to be a degree of higher perfection. It is shown to be unlawful: 1.) Because the Lord did not allow beggars to be among his people of old, Deut. 15:7. 2.) Because Agur wished the Lord might not give him poverty, lest he should steal, and take the name of God in vain, Prov. 30:8,9. 3.) Because the Lord will have every man eat his

¹Acts 23:12,14; Mark 6:26; Num. 30:5,8,12,13.

²Matt. 19:11,12; 1 Cor. 7:2,9; Eph. 4:28; 1 Pet. 4:2; 1 Cor. 7:23.

bread in the sweat of his face, Gen. 3:19. 4.) Because the apostle commands the Thessalonians to work with their own hands, 1 Thess. 4:11. 5.) Because professed poverty hinders a greater good—our charity, and benevolence towards the poor and indigent members of Christ, which is contrary to the apostle's rule, Eph. 4:28.

Question 4.—*Are Popish monastical vows of a regular obedience, so far from being a degree of higher perfection, that it is a superstitious and sinful snare, in which no Christian may entangle himself?*

Answer.—Yes. 1 Pet. 4:2. Thus do the Papists err, maintaining monastical vows of a regular obedience to be a degree of higher perfection. This is likewise shown to be unlawful because it makes us the servants of men, which is contrary to the apostle, 1 Cor. 7:23. Which passages denotes a doing anything for the service or obedience of men (superiors) which should be repugnant to the commands of the service of God, Acts 5:29. You should not suffer yourselves to be brought into bondage by any man, that you should not freely use that which the Lord has made free to us, 2 Pet. 2:19; John 8:36.