

Deuteronomy 6; Lord's Day 37

THE CHRISTIAN'S USE OF THE OATH

- I. What it is.
 - A. The setting for oaths is God's gift of communication.
 1. Sin drastically changed this wonderful gift, making man a natural liar with the instinct to lie.
 2. Grace gives the ability to know truth and to love it.
 - B. Oaths are promises which appeal to God to witness what we said/promised and to judge us if we fail.
 1. An oath puts God before the consciousness of man in three ways.
 2. A vow is a promise to do or not do something (as Nazarites, Num. 30:3).
- II. Oaths have a rightful place in the life of believers.
 - A. Scripture commands us to swear by the name of God on certain occasions (Deut. 6:13).
 - B. Scripture gives many examples of those who swore – examples we are commanded to follow.
 - C. Jesus condemned the mis-use of oaths introduced by the Pharisees (Matt. 5:33-37).
 - D. Oaths and vows do have a lawful place in the believer's life.
 1. Should you take an oath?
 2. What should be the content of our oaths?
 3. A vow must be kept even when sad reward, except for sinful ones (I Sam. 25:22,32-34).
 4. Four normal occasions for oaths: marriage, baptism, confession of faith, ordination into office.
- III. The proper use of oaths.
 - A. They may be needed as affirmations, but they ought not be a normal part of our life.
 1. First, God's people should so speak the truth that vows are not often necessary (Matt. 5:37).
 2. As disciples of the Truth, let our whole life be lived in the consciousness that He is present as our witness.
 - B. Sometimes they are necessary to settle controversies and put an end to strife (I Kings 8:31,32; Heb. 6:16).
 - C. Let us live honestly in all our dealings in life and work.