

From the Book of Oaths 1649 Anon
"Oath that is to be ministered to a
Mid-wife by the Bishop or his Chancellor"

- You shall sweare, First, that you shall be diligent and faithfull, and readie to helpe every Woman labouring of Childe, as well the poore as the riche; and that in time of nessesite [sic], you shall not forsake or leave the poore woman, to go to the Rich.
2. Item, Yee shall neither cause nor suffer any woman to name, or put any other Father to the Childe, but onely him which is the very true Father thereof indeed.
 3. Item, you shall not suffer any woman to pretend, faine, or surmize herselfe to be delivered of a Childe, who is not indeed; neither to claime any other womans Childe for her owne.
 4. Item, you shall not suffer any Womans Childe to be murdered, maymed, or otherwise hurt, as much as you may; and so often as you shall perceive any perill or jeopardie, either in the Woman, or in the Childe, in any such wise, as you shall see in doubt what shall chance thereof, you shall thenceforth in due time send for other Midwives and expert women in that facultie, and use their advice and counsell in that behalfe.
 5. Item, that you shall not in any wise use or exercise any manner of Witchcraft, Charme; or Sorcery, Invocation, or other Prayers than may stand with Gods Laws and the Kings.
 6. Item, you shall not give any counsell, or minister any Herbe, Medicine, or Potion, or any other thing, to any Woman being with Childe wherby she should destroy or cast out that she goeth withal before her time.
 7. Item, You shall not enforce any Woman being with childe by any paine, or by any ungodly wayes or meanes, to give you any more for your paines or labour in bringing her a [i.e. to] bed, then they would otherwise do.
 8. Item, you shall not consent, agree, give, or keepe counsell, that any woman be delivered secretly of that which she goeth with, but in the presence of two or three lights readie.
 9. Item, you shall be secret, and not open any matter appertaining to your Office in the presence of any man, unlesse necessity or great urgent cause do constraine you so to do.
 10. Item, if any childe be dead borne, you your selfe shall see it

buried in such secret place as neither Hogg nor Dogg, nor any other Beast may come unto it, and in such sort done, as it may not be found or perceived, as much as you may; And that you shall not suffer any such childe to be cast into the Jaques or any other inconvenient place.

11. Item, If you shall know any Midwife using or doing any thing contrary to any of the premisses, or in any other wise than shall be seemely or convenient, you shall forthwith detect open to shew the same to me,⁵ or my Chancellor for the time being.

12. Item, you shall use your selfe in honest behaviour unto the woman being lawfully admitted to the roome [station, rank] and Office of a Midwife in all things accordingly.

13. Item, That you shall truly present to my selfe, or my Chancellor, all such women as you shall know from time to time to occupie and exercise the roome of a Midwife within my foresaid Diocesse and jurisdiction of A.⁶ without my License and admission.

14. Item, you shall not make or assigne any Deputie or Deputies to exercise or occupie under you in your absence the Office or roome of a Midwife, but such as you shall perfectly know to be of right honest and discreet behaviour, as also apt, able, & having sufficient knowledge and experience to exercise the said roome and Office.

15. Item, you shall not be Privie, or consent, that any Priest, or other partie, shall in your absence, or in your companie, or of your knowledge or sufferance, Baptise any child, by any Masse, Latine Service, or Prayers, then such as are appointed by the Lawes of the Church of *Englande*; neither shall you consent, that any child, born by any woman, who shall be delivered by you, shall be carried away without being Baptised in the Parish by the Ordinarie Minister, where the said child is borne, unless it be in the case of nessesite, Baptised privately, according to the Booke of Common Prayer: but you shall forthwith upon understanding thereof, either give knowledge to me the said Bishop, or my Chancellor for the time being. All of which Articles and Charge you shall faithfully observe and keepe, so help you God and by the contents of this Booke.⁷

It was the custom for a bishop to make periodic visits for inspection

⁵ The bishop.

⁶ This probably means that the name of the appropriate diocese should be inserted here.

⁷ Presumably this was the Bible upon which the oath was taken.