**“The Religious Oath” The Present Truth 7, 8, p. 124.**

A SHORT time ago, in noticing the Nine Demands for Liberalism, we made some remarks upon the religious oath; and now comes the *Christian Statesman* and confirms all that we then said on that question. It says:— {PTUK April 9, 1891, p. 124.1}

The efficacy of the oath which is simply an appeal to God, as witness and Judge, depends on the fear of God in the hearts of men. {PTUK April 9, 1891, p. 124.2}

This is true. What is the worth, therefore, of such an oath taken by men who have no fear of God in their hearts? To oblige a man who has no fear of God in his heart, to take an oath, the sole efficacy of which depends on the fear of God in his heart, in order that he may be a competent witness, is to destroy all the value of his testimony. Because when such a man takes such an oath, he publicly professes that he has the fear of God in his heart, when he and all who are acquainted with him know full well that it is not so. He therefore publicly professes a lie as a pledge to society that he is going to tell the truth! And any State which compels men to take such an oath in order to be competent witnesses, adopts the surest means of undermining both public and private integrity, and of destroying the value of judicial testimony. {PTUK April 9, 1891, p. 124.3}

The *Statesman* knows of course that there is not as much of the fear of God in the hearts of men in the United States as there should be to lend the religious oath its necessary efficacy; and therefore it proposes in the regular National Reform way, to put the fear of God in the hearts of all of the people in Pennsylvania by strictly enforcing the Pennsylvanian statute, which declares that {PTUK April 9, 1891, p. 124.4}

If any person shall willfully, premeditatedly and despitefully blaspheme, or speak loosely or profanely of Almighty God, Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or the Scriptures of truth, such person shall be liable to a fine of one hundred dollars, and an imprisonment of three months. {PTUK April 9, 1891, p. 124.5}

The *Statesman* therefore declares that “a crusade against profanity would be an incalculable blessing;” and calls upon the “religious newspapers” to summon “Christian citizens to undertake it.” Now we are not in favour of either blasphemy or profanity; but at the same time we are not in favour of any effort to put the fear of God into the hearts of men by penalties upon their bodies and goods. The fact of the matter is, that State laws on the subject of blasphemy are themselves blasphemous. {PTUK April 9, 1891, p. 124.6}

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