

religion before they became free.

More science and less bible, will teach them their error in believing it an unpardonable sin to fiddle and dance, but everlasting happiness depends on their joining the church, singing hymns and praying. Christians who are so very particular that nothing be done on the Sabbath, would be more consistent if they were equally particular to fulfill the other part of the commandment, "Six days shalt thou labor," for the most pious are very apt to neglect work, and rest all the week to pray and sing and preach. Many church people who frown when they hear an oath, do not hesitate to utter an untruth themselves. There is no denying the fact that swearing is an ugly habit; but will a thousand oaths do the amount of harm that one deliberate falsehood does? An old lady was trying to drive a nail and mashed her finger, whereupon she exclaimed, "bless the hammer!" She did not mean that, so it was a lie, and the feeling that prompted it was the same as would prompt a man to curse the hammer. The feeling one displays in the use of profane language is the harmful part, but Christians lay no stress on that; their objection to profanity is based wholly on their superstitious fear of God, because one commandment had been broken.

E. M. B.

**Compelling the Youthful Conscience.**

There has been introduced into the school exercises of the public schools of Boulder, Col., by the school board, a feature which is very significant when considered in its relation to the fundamental principles of American government. It is called the "American Patriotic Salute". The words of the salute are, "We give our heads, and our hearts, to God, and our country! One country! one language! one flag!"

This salute is given by the pupils in a body, standing, and with appropriate gestures. It is delivered facing an American flag, which is held before the school during the giving of the salute by some one chosen as standard bearer. At given signals the pupils rise in their seats, extend the right arm toward the flag, then bend it back so as to touch the forehead with the tips of the fingers, and at this point exclaim, "We give our heads"; then as the hand is carried to the breast and laid over the heart, come the words, "and our hearts". Next the head is thrown slightly back and the arm outstretched, pointing upward; and with the countenance assuming an expression of reverence, the words are uttered slowly and in reverential tones, "to God and our country!" The arm is then dropped to the side, and after

a brief pause the pupil exclaims with emphasis, "One country! one language! one flag!" at the last word extending the arm so as to point directly at the flag; after which the pupil resumes his seat. This salute is made obligatory upon all the pupils. Those who refuse to give it are suspended from the school; and this action has already been taken in a number of instances.

A noticeable feature of the situation which has arisen in connection with the enforcement of the "patriotic salute" is the refusal of some of the children to participate in the exercise because contrary to the dictates of conscience. At least five children have been suspended from the Boulder schools as a result of this effort to inculcate "patriotism." In two instances, we are informed, conscience asserted itself in the tender minds of the children in opposition to the commands of both teachers and parents. The innate iniquity of the thing is apparent even to the conscience of childhood. In one case, upon refusal to participate in the salute, the teacher exclaimed, sharply, "Why do you not salute the flag? are you a traitor?" To which the youth replied, "No; I am not a traitor, but I understand the flag is an emblem of liberty. Now if you use it to compel a person to do a thing he does not consider to be right, it is no longer an emblem of liberty." Another, in reply to a like question from his teacher, said, "I am willing to salute the flag twenty times a day; but as to repeating the words of that salute, there is no power on earth that has any right to compel me to take that oath." These were good answers, and their force could not but be felt.

A clipping from the "Daily Camera" (Boulder) of November 9, gives the views of an apologist for this new feature of the school exercises, and among them we note the following:

"No; a pagan or an Infidel in this enlightened age, and in this country, should not and does not get the same consideration as a Christian."

This is certainly a frank expression, but it is not the sentiment which has been supposed to pervade the American system of government. Such expressions may be only straws, but they show which way the wind is beginning to blow.—[Ex.]

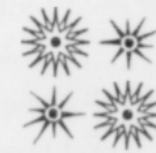
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