

not be better to abolish it altogether in favour of the more cleanly, and far more solemn, form of the Scotch oath?

Mr. Justice Hawkins at Cambridge Assizes recently passed a strong condemnation on the ordinary form of oath. He thought it lacked clearness and definiteness. He said that, in his opinion, it was surprising that the legislature had not turned its attention to the subject, and he suggested that every witness should swear before giving evidence by simply saying the words, "I swear to God that I will speak the truth." This is, in fact, the Scotch form of oath.

I cannot but hope that Parliament will adopt Mr. Justice Hawkins' suggestion. The whole law of oaths would be enormously simplified thereby. Such an oath as that suggested could be taken without alteration by Christians of all denominations, by Jews, Mahomedans, and Buddhists, and, indeed, by everyone except those who have the right by law to affirm in lieu of swearing.

In the meantime it would be well if the authorities would take notice of every attempt on the part of magistrates, judges, or officials to ignore or resist the provisions of section 5 of the Oaths Act, 1888.

GENERAL NOTES.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH IN COURTS OF LAW.—In view of the danger of contagious disease being spread through the handling and the kissing of the New Testament by persons of all sorts and conditions, in the ordinary form of the administration of the oath to a witness, Judge Emden has had notices conspicuously posted in the Lambeth County Court calling attention to the provisions of the Oaths Act, 1888, by which the kissing of the book may be dispensed with. He has also instructed the officers of the Court, when administering the oath, to draw the attention of witnesses to the fact that they need not kiss the book unless they think fit. In making this announcement in Lambeth County Court, Judge Emden said the Oaths Act permitted any person so desiring to be sworn with uplifted hand, which was known as the Scotch form, and any witness appearing at the Courts over which he presided was at full liberty to be sworn in this manner. It was noticed that in the cases which were heard after his Honour's announcement the witnesses all availed themselves of the Act referred to by Judge Emden.