

Suppressing Blasphemy and Swearing.

N^o 22.

Laws of Maryland, p 96.

An Act for the Punishment of Blasphemy, prophan Swearing, Cursing and Drunkenness.

I. **B**E it Enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of his Majesty's Governour, Council and Assembly of this Province, and the Authority of the same, That from and after the End of this present Sessions of Assembly, if any Person or Persons whatsoever within this Province, shall blaspheme GOD, (that is to say,) curse him, or deny our Saviour JESUS CHRIST to be the Son of GOD, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, or the Godhead of any the Three Persons, or the Unity of the Godhead, or shall utter any prophan Words concerning the Holy Trinity, or any the Persons thereof, for his, her or their first Offence, shall be bored thro' his, her or their Tongue, and fined the Sum of Twenty Pounds Sterling, to his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, to be applied to the Use of the Parish Church where such Offence shall be committed, to be levied upon his, her or their Bodies, Goods or Chattels, Lands or Tenements. And if such Offender or Offenders shall not redeem his, her or their Body by the Payment of such Fine, with his, her or their Goods or Chattels, Lands or Tenements, then such Offender or Offenders shall, by vertue of a Commitment, or *Levati Facias*, on such Judgment of Conviction, be immediately detained in Prison, and shall, in lieu of the said Fine, suffer Six Months Imprisonment of his, her or their Bodies, without Bail or Mainprize, to be accounted from the Day of such Offender's first Commitment, after such Judgment rendered against him: And for every second Offence, whereof such Offender or Offenders shall be legally convicted, he, she or they shall be stigmatized by burning in the Forehead with the Letter [B], and be fined, by the Court where he, she or they shall be convicted, Forty Pounds Sterling, to the King's Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, to be applied to the Uses aforesaid, to be levied as aforesaid; and in default of Satisfaction thereof, as aforesaid, to suffer Twelve Months Imprisonment, as aforesaid, on such Execution or Commitment, as aforesaid, in lieu thereof: And for every third Offence, whereof such Offender or Offenders shall be legally convicted, he, she or they so offending, shall be adjudged Felons, and shall suffer Pains of Death without any Benefit of Clergy.

Blasphemies enumerated.

Punishment for the first Offence.

For the second.

Beware of the third.

II. And forasmuch as it hath been too plainly found, by long Experience, that there are some such bold Offenders, as, to the Scandal of a Christian People and Civil Government, at once dare sportingly contemn the Laws of God, and of their King and Country, by prophan Cursing and Swearing, notwithstanding the Provisions that have been heretofore made against them;

The Impudence of Swearers.