

# Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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### Notice!

A hand pointing to this notice denotes that your subscription has expired. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss and we will know just where we stand.

We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

If you are not a subscriber of the Torch and receive a sample copy, it is a respectful invitation to become a subscriber.

THURSDAY, JAN. 17, E. M. 301.

N. B.—This Torch is our promised "Immortality Number." Preserve it; there will not be such a flood of "immortality" again in your day.—Ed.

### Support the American Secular Union.

Dr. J. B. Wilson (206 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.) the new President of the American Secular Union sends out a grand letter which is too long for the Torch. As a true watchman he points out that the Theocracy is closing on the Republic, and using it as an instrument to extend its religious and missionary curse in China and every island of the sea, that we have anything to do with. That at home the religious sects dominate in our legislative halls and dictate Bible, Sunday, blasphemy, and similar laws, just as fast as they think they can hold them. They have exempted ALL their churches and church property from taxation in every state. They are careful to appoint only religious fanatics as teachers in our public schools, and have cast a lurid shadow of the eclipse of Liberty by Superstition over the whole land.

The President asks for members and means to check this advance of Theocracy by proper committees, advocates, and literature. Last year only \$1800 was raised, leaving a debt of \$142. Now he wants 70,000 and more active members

and \$5,000 in money to meet the opposing millions opposed.

His demands are moderate. There are millions of Freethinkers and Secularists in this country. Wherever there are five of you in any neighborhood GET TOGETHER! Hunt up books and literature to read and circulate, sign some certificate of organization, and send it with some contribution of money to the Secretary E. C. Reichwald, No. 141 South Water Street, Chicago. If you write he will send you a form of certificate, and literature with which to begin. It is of the utmost importance to you, our children, and our country—the liberty and welfare of us all, that you take this matter in hand. Do not keep putting your liberties at hazard. Do not keep putting this matter off, but now while the winter gives you leisure, use it for the best and highest interests we can have at heart.

### The Apocrypha Not in The Schools.

In the last Torch we presented reasons to show that the Old Testament was wholly unintelligible, and out of place and injurious in our public schools. We now take up the remainder of the Bible; and the Protestants say that next comes the New Testament; but the Roman Catholics and all others say it is the Apocrypha; and the Liberals say that the Bible is utterly unintelligible without that. The Bible comes down to us from the Greek and Latin Christians and Churches with these Books as the explaining part of it, and thus a complete whole,—a mosaic Poem. It has a beginning in the Jahveh Theocracy of the Old Testament: The Macabean Revival and Government of the Apocrypha; and the final denouement, solution and triumph in the "The Judgment day" and "Kingdom of Heaven" to come, in the New Testament. Thus the Law of Aristotle, that every Drama and Great Poem should have a beginning, a middle and an end, was beautifully but unconsciously complied with, and the Bible as a whole was the Grand Drama, of the origin and evolution of the Hebrew Tribes, their change into a Polity, its loss, or rather its transformation into the celestial "Kingdom of Heaven to come."

The Bible with either of these grand Acts taken from it, is a mutilated document and a fraud. A forgery can be committed by omission as well as by addition; and the Evangelical Protestants who, in 1819-29 refused to print the Bible with the part that contained the only Hebrew polity and literature that connected the Old and New Testament together.—were they not guilty of what in criminal law would be called a crime? These three Acts are not separable.

Now mark the sectarian posi-

tions which make their Bible a "sectarian" book. The Jews claim the Old Testament only as their Bible. Protestants insist upon the New Testament too. The Romanists insist upon the Apocrypha between the two, and all subject to Church explanations and control—which makes, for them, the Bible wholly improper in the public schools until the priest is there to give their church interpretation. The Liberals regard the Bible as "literature," a part of the ancient sacred literatures of the world, utterly out of place, except where they can be understood, disclosed and appreciated as such; and that cannot possibly be in our common and public schools. The children in the common schools must have the rudimentary education there provided, before they can possibly understand these ancient and remote literatures; and to present them or any part of them by state authority, as controlling the heart, mind or action of people now living in a republic, and under modern conditions, which are a new world, is gross imposition. Never should it be done in any case, and especially not when the heart of the Bible, the said Apocrypha, is omitted. Never should it be done when others, the Jews, Catholics, Liberals and business people object. Never should it be done, when the Liberals, that is the scientific and progressive people of today, point out that not a single one of the three great parts of the Bible, nor any considerable part of them, can be read by, or before young people without a total misunderstanding of the world that was, and of the present world, for which they are being educated—the Lord's Prayer for instance, being particularly treasonable and objectionable in every way.

The Evangelical Protestants can make no pretensions to religious, literary or common honesty, until they put the whole of the Apocryphal writings back, and give their people the whole uncut Bible. As it stands it is no Bible at all. With the 400 years between Malachi, or 250 years between Daniel and the last of the Old Testament writings and the first writings of the New Testament, there is a vital history and a stage of religious evolution, which makes the whole Bible appear absurd or supernatural simply because it is thus disconnected from this world. This mutilation is simply a religious fakir trick of the most despicable kind. The early Christians did not know what literary forgery meant, and so indulged in it freely. The Catholic Christians make the Bible a part of the church tradition to be used or suppressed freely. But only the Evangelical Protestants in an age of comparative honesty and enlightenment have emasculated their Bible, and now try by

law, to force their mutilated fraud upon the ignorant and innocent. When was effrontery ever carried further?

Of course these Apocrypha books are not fit to be read in our schools, and certainly not the other Bible books without them—for then they make no true, or historical sense. The true, fair, honest and literary course to take is to introduce all of these books into the literary course of the universities, as is done at the Liberal University; or to leave them to the people of literary inclination after they have acquired at common schools the rudiments of learning without which nothing good or true can be got out of them.

For the aid of such and all people, instead of forcing the Bible upon children in the interest of a dishonest Protestant propaganda, the time or means should be taken to have the Bible books edited in the interest of scientific criticism. With the books placed in the order of their date, and historically and evolutionally introduced and annotated so as to be understood, what then would happen? The Bible would then cease to be an unintelligible fetish ignorantly and fraudulently used for untrue, unfair and dishonest religious purposes: It would become a most interesting and beautiful world Poem of the Past, with its three great Acts, the Old, Middle and New Testaments illustrating three thousand years of the religious evolution of our race, and leading up to the illusory Ideal Heaven in the sky; which it is to be the supreme problem of our race to more than realize in the "Earthly Paradise"—in our indestructable Future on Earth!

In that world Poem, the diversified books of the Apocrypha will become a most interesting and instructive part. How the Old Testament was formed we can learn from its Esdras. How the Hebrew State was formed The Macabees will tell us, backed by their only Hebrew coins. How the "Son of Man" came to be, and to become the "Son of God", Daniel and Baruch shall tell us. We shall then know how the hard commandments of Yahveh melted into the metaphysical "Wisdom of Solomon", into his Psalms, and prepared the mind for the "Father" and "The Christ" which became the "Divine Word." Then we shall have in our cheery households once more those esteemed tales, never excelled, of Tobit, Esther, "Bell and the Dragon," Three Holy Children, Susannah, Judith, and also the Prayer of Manasseh. Never was "Divine fiction" more attractive!

The charge that the Liberals and Infidels wish to destroy the Bible is totally false. We charge that the Protestants have done this very thing. Our cry to them is: Give back the Bible, the whole Bible; place it under the light of modern