

TORCH OF REASON.



"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius.*

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ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE,*

Sixty-one Reasons for Doubting.

BY ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Divided into Sunday Bible Lessons for study and reflection.

NINTH SUNDAY.

FIFTY-FIRST. Can we blame the Hebrews for getting tired of their God? Never was a people so murdered, starved, stoned, burned, deceived, humiliated, robbed and outraged. Never was there so little liberty among men. Never did the meanest king so meddle, eavesdrop, spy out, harass, torment and persecute his people. Never was ruler so jealous, unreasonable, contemptible, exacting and ignorant as this God of the Jews. Never was such ceremony, such mummery, such stuff about bullocks, goats, doves, red heifers, lambs, and unleavened dough—never was such directions about kidneys and blood, ashes and fat, about curtains, tongs, fringes, ribands and brass pins—never such details for killing of animals and men and the sprinkling of blood and the cutting of clothes. Never were such unjust laws, such punishments, such damned ignorance and infamy!

FIFTY-SECOND. Is it not wonderful that the creator of all worlds, infinite in power and wisdom, could not hold his own against the gods of wood and stone? Is it not strange that after he had appeared to his chosen people, delivered them from slavery, fed them by miracles, opened the sea for a path, led them by cloud and fire, and overthrown their pursuers, they still preferred a calf of their own making? Is it not beyond belief that this God, by statutes and commandments, by punishments and penalties, by rewards and promises, by wonders and plagues, by earthquakes and pestilence, could not in the least civilize the Jews—could not get them beyond a point where they deserved killing? What shall we think of a God who gave his entire time for forty years to the work of converting three millions of people, and succeeded in getting only two men, and not a single woman, decent enough to enter the promised land? Was there ever in the history of man so detestible an administration of public affairs? Is it possible that God sold his children to the king of Mesopotamia; that he

*These 61 reasons from Ingersoll are now to be had of the N. Y. Truth Seeker and in Volume 11 of the Dresden Edition. They were written in the 80s, but not published till after his death. We will print them in parts—each part reads as a whole. We do this because until the people are emancipated from the Catholic Church, the Protestant Bible, and the belief in "the supernatural," there is no hope for this world.—ED. TORCH.

SECULARISM.

BY ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

SECULARISM is the religion of humanity; it embraces the affairs of this world; it is interested in everything that touches the welfare of a sentient being; it advocates attention to the particular planet on which we happen to live; it means that each individual counts for something; it is a declaration of intellectual independence; it means that the pew is superior to the pulpit, that those who bear the burdens shall have the profits, and that those who fill the purse shall hold the strings. It is a protest against theological oppression, against ecclesiastical tyranny, against being the serf, subject, or slave of any phantom, or of the priest of any phantom. It is a protest against wasting this life for the sake of one that we know not of. It proposes to let the gods take care of themselves. It is another name for common sense; that is to say, the adaptation of means to such ends as are desired and understood. Secularism believes in building a home here, in this world. It trusts to individual effort, to energy, to intelligence, to observation and experience, rather than to the unknown and supernatural. It desires to be happy on this side the grave.

Secularism means food and fireside, roof and raiment, reasonable work and reasonable leisure, the cultivation of the tastes, the acquisition of knowledge, the enjoyment of the arts, and it promises for the human race comfort, independence, intelligence, and above all, liberty. It means the abolition of sectarian feuds, of theological hatreds. It means the cultivation of friendship and intellectual hospitality. It means living for ourselves and each other; for the present instead of the past; for this world rather than for another. It means the right to express your thought in spite of popes, and priests and gods. It means that impudent idleness shall no longer live upon the labor of honest men. It means the destruction of the business of those who trade in fear.

It proposes to give serenity and content to the human soul. It will put out the fires of eternal pain. It is striving to do away with violence and vice, with ignorance, poverty and disease. It lives for the ever-present TO-DAY, and the ever-changing TO-MORROW. It does not believe in praying and receiving, but in earning and deserving. It regards work as worship, labor as prayer, and wisdom as the savior of mankind. It says to every human being: "Take care of yourself, so that you may be able to help others; adorn your life with the gems called good deeds; illumine your path with the sunlight called friendship and love."

Secularism is a religion—a religion that is understood. It has no mysteries, no mummeries, no priests, no ceremonies, no falsehoods, no miracles, and no persecutions. It considers the lilies of the field, and takes thought for the morrow. It says to the whole world: "Work, that you may eat, drink and be clothed; work, that you may enjoy; work, that you may not want; work, that you may give, and never need."

sold them to Jabin, king of Canaan, to the Philistines, and to the children of Ammon? Is it possible that an angel of the Lord devoured unleavened cakes and broth with fire that came out of the end of a stick as he sat under an oak tree? (Judges vi, 21). Can it be true that God made known his will by making dew fall on wool without wetting the ground around it? (Judges vi, 37). Do you really believe that men who lap water like a dog make the best soldiers? (Judges vii, 5). Do you think a man could hold a lamp in his left hand, a trumpet in his right hand, blow his trumpet, shout "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and break pitchers at the same time? (Judges vi, 20).

FIFTY-THIRD. Read the story of Jephthah and his daughter, and then tell me what you think of a father who would sacrifice his

daughter to God, and what you think of a God who would receive such a sacrifice. This one story should be enough to make every tender and loving father hold this book in utter abhorrence. Is it necessary, in order to be saved, that one must believe that an angel of God appeared unto Manoah in the absence of her husband; that this angel afterward went up in a flame of fire; that as a result of this visit a child was born whose strength was in his hair? a child that made beehives of lions, incendiaries of foxes, and had a wife that wept seven days to get the answer to his riddle? Will the wrath of God abide forever upon a man for doubting the story that Samson killed a thousand men with a new jawbone? Is there enough in the Bible to save a soul with this story left out?

(To be Continued.)

SOCIOLOGY—

Tribal Society—Endogamous Metronymic Hordes.

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(From "Elements of Sociology.")

WE have no means of knowing how long ago bands of human beings first developed into true tribal organizations. Yet, while the actual time that has elapsed since the forms of social organization began to appear among mankind will probably never be measured, we can determine with a close approach to accuracy the successive stages through which organization has passed in its evolution. In this respect the study of the history of society is not unlike the study of geology, in which the measurement of time periods is all but impossible, while the order in which the successive rock formations and the successive living species appeared, is known with practical certainty.

This knowledge is obtained from two sources. One is a study of words and usages which, in existing social organization, are evidently survivals from an earlier time. The other is a study of the relations of existing social forms to one another. It enables us to discover which are the earlier and which the later modes of social co-operation. To pursue the details of such studies, the student must acquaint himself with the researches of folk-lore, philology, archæology and ethnology. Without attempting here to enumerate the detailed evidences upon which they rest, we will, in this chapter, merely summarize the more important conclusions that have been drawn by competent investigators from materials of various kinds in regard to the order in which the chief steps in the evolution of tribal society probably occurred.

THE EARLIEST HORDES.—Long before there where any true clans or tribes in human populations, the prevailing social organization was probably a mere horde in which family relations were irregular and unstable, in which descent was traced through mothers only, and in which the mating of men and women, seldom the result of any intermingling of the members of one group with those of another, was practically wholly within the group itself, which could therefore be described as endogamous. It must be remembered, however, that strictly