

B2763  
N406

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

# THE TRUTH OF HISTORY.

BY

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

THOUSANDS of Christians have asked: How was it possible for Christ and his apostles to deceive the people of Jerusalem? How came the miracles to be believed? Who had the impudence to say that lepers had been cleansed, and that the dead had been raised? How could such impostors have escaped exposure?

I ask: How did Mohammed deceive the people of Mecca? How has the Catholic Church imposed upon millions of people? Who can account for the success of falsehood?

Millions of people are directly interested in the false. They live by lying. To deceive is the business of their lives. Truth is a cripple; lies have wings. It is almost impossible to overtake, and kill, and bury a lie. If you do, some one will erect a monument over the grave, and the lie is born again as an epitaph. Let me give you a case in point.

A few days ago the *Matlock Register*, a paper published in England, printed the following:

## “CONVERSION OF THE ARCH ATHEIST.

“Mr. Isaac Loveland, of Shoreham, desires us to insert the following:

“1 Grove Road, St. John's Wood, London, Nov. 27, 1886.

“DEAR MR. LOVELAND,—A day or two since I received from Mr Hine the exhilarating intelligence that through his lectures on the “Identity of the British Nation with Lost Israel,” in Canada and the United States, that Col. Bob Ingersoll, the arch Atheist, has been converted to Christianity, and has joined the Episcopalian church. *Praise the Lord!!!* Five thousand of his followers *have been won for Christ* through Mr. Hine's grand mission work, the other side of the Atlantic. The colonel's cousin, the Rev. Mr. Ingersoll, wrote to Mr. Hine soon after he began lecturing in America, informing him that his lectures had made a great impression on the colonel and other Atheists. I noted it at the time in the *Messenger*. Bradlaugh will yet be converted; his brother has been, and has joined a British Israel Identity Association. This is progress, and shows what an energetic, determined man (like Mr. Hine) who is earnest in his faith can do.

“Very faithfully yours, H. HODSON RUGG.”

How can we account for an article like that? Who made up this story? Who had the impudence to publish it?

As a matter of fact, I never saw Mr. Hine, never heard of him until this extract was received by me in the month of December. I never read a word about the “Identity of Lost Israel with the British Nation.” It is a question in which I never had, and never expect to have, the slightest possible interest.

Nothing can be more preposterous than that the Englishman, in whose veins can be found the blood of the Saxon, the Dane, the Norman, the Pict, the Scot, and the Celt, is the descendant of "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The English language does not bear the remotest resemblance to the Hebrew, and yet it is claimed by the Reverend Hodson Rugg that not only myself, but five thousand other Atheists, were converted by the Rev. Mr. Hine, because of his theory that Englishmen and Americans are simply Jews in disguise.

This letter, in my judgment, was published to be used by missionaries in China, Japan, India, and Africa.

If stories like this can be circulated about a living man, what may we not expect concerning the dead who have opposed the Church?

Countless falsehoods have been circulated about all the opponents of superstition. Whoever attacks the popular falsehoods of his time will find that a lie defends itself by telling other lies. Nothing is so prolific, nothing can so multiply itself, nothing can lay and hatch as many eggs, as a good, healthy, religious lie.

And nothing is more wonderful than the credulity of the believers in the supernatural. They feel under a kind of obligation to believe everything in favor of their religion, or against any form of what they are pleased to call "Infidelity."

The old falsehoods about Voltaire, Paine, Hume, Julian, Diderot, and hundreds of others grow green every spring. They are answered; they are demonstrated to be without the slightest foundation; but they rarely die. And when one does die there seems to be a kind of Cæsarian operation, so that in each instance, although the mother dies, the child lives to undergo, if necessary, a like operation, leaving another child, and sometimes two.

There are thousands and thousands of tongues ready to repeat what the owners know to be false, and these lies are a part of the stock in trade, the valuable assets, of superstition. No Church can afford to throw its property away. To admit that these stories are false now, is to admit that the Church has been busy lying for hundreds of years, and it is also to admit that the word of the Church is not, and cannot be taken as evidence of any fact.

A few years ago I had a little controversy with the editor of the *New York Observer*, the Rev. Ireneus Prime (who is now supposed to be in heaven enjoying the bliss of seeing Infidels in hell), as to whether Thomas Paine recanted his religious opinions. I offered to deposit a thousand dollars for the benefit of a charity, if the reverend doctor would substantiate the charge that Paine recanted. I forced the *New York Observer* to admit that Paine did not recant, and compelled that paper to say that "Thomas Paine died a blaspheming Infidel."

A few months afterward an English paper was sent to me—a religious paper—and in that paper was a statement to the effect that the editor of the *New York Observer* had claimed that Paine recanted; that I had offered to give a thousand dollars to any charity that Mr. Prime might select, if he would establish the fact that Paine did recant; and that so overwhelming was the testimony brought forward by Mr. Prime that I admitted that Paine did recant, and paid the thousand dollars.

This is another instance of what might be called the truth of history.

I wrote to the editor of that paper, telling the exact facts, and offering him advertising rates to publish the denial, and in addition stated that if he would send me a copy of his paper with the denial, I would send him twenty-five dollars for his trouble. I received no reply, and the lie is in all probability still on its travels, going from Sunday-school to Sunday-school, from pulpit to pulpit, from hypocrite to savage—that is to say, from missionary to Hottentot—without the slightest evidence of fatigue—fresh and strong, and in its cheeks the roses and lilies of perfect health.

Some person, expecting to add another gem to his crown of glory, put in circulation the story that one of my daughters had joined the Presbyterian church—a story without the slightest foundation—and although denied a hundred times, it is still being printed and circulated for the edification of the faithful. Every few days I receive some letter of inquiry as to this charge, and I have industriously denied it for years, but up to the present time it shows no signs of death—not even of weakness.

Another religious gentleman put in print the charge that my son, having been raised in the atmosphere of Infidelity, had become insane and died in an asylum. Notwithstanding the fact that I never had a son, the story still goes right on, and is repeated day after day without the semblance of a blush.

Now, if all this is done while I am alive and well, and while I have all the facilities of our century for spreading the denials, what will be done after my lips are closed?

The mendacity of superstition is almost enough to make a man believe in the supernatural.

And so I might go on for a hundred columns. Billions of falsehoods have been told, and there are trillions yet to come. The doctrines of Malthus have nothing to do with this particular kind of reproduction.

And there are also many other falsehoods which the Church has told, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

THIS Tract can be obtained for  
gratuitous distribution from :

R. FORDER,  
28 Stonecutter St,  
Farringdon Rd, E.C.

PRICE 1/- PER 100, POST FREE 1/3.

~~~~~  
ALL COL. INGERSOLL'S™ LECTURES KEPT  
IN STOCK.

*CATALOUGE ONE PENNY STAMP.*

THE

'**NATIONAL REFORMER**'  
WEEKLY 2D.

~~~~~  
The **FREETHINKER**  
WEEKLY 1D.

~~~~~  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY R, FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.