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(AN EPITOME)

**LIFE AND CHARACTER**  
OF THE  
**EMINENT REVOLUTIONARY PATRIOT**  
AND APOSTLE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY



**THOMAS PAINE**

FROM THE BUST BY SIDNEY MORSE, IN INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA

1737 = 1809





A PAPER  
ON THE  
LIFE AND CHARACTER  
OF  
MR. THOMAS PAINE

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PREPARED AND READ BY THE SCRIBE

(HON. JAMES A. RANDALL)

Before the Society of the

PSYCHIC BAND OF RESEARCH  
DETROIT, MICH.

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## Introductory Note By the President of the P. B. of Research.

*Not the least remarkable thing about the following pages is that at this late day, so long after the living Paine played so conspicuous a part in the world's most glorious epoch as bearing upon the destiny of this nation, so much new light and such cogent chastening of previous harsh judgments should be supplied by the author.*

*Paine was one of the best and truest of men, and in religion was an iconoclastic thinker and lived a century or more ahead of his time. It was a sublime courage which in the 18th century—a time of great religious intolerance and superstition compared with the present 20th—prompted Paine to write and give to the world his masterful 'Age of Reason,' a work which breathed the loftiest sentiments of pure natural religion than were ever penned by man.*

*"I believe in one God, and the word of God is the creation we behold, and it is in this word which no human invention can counterfeit or alter that God speaketh universally to man" was Paine's declaration of faith. He believed in the equality of man and that religious duties consisted in doing justice, loving mercy and endeavoring to make his fellow creatures happy.*

*For having thus declared himself, Paine, whose active mind and brilliant, forceful pen had played so important a part in rearing a great Republic in America, was practically dropped from its history.*

*Had Paine never written the 'Age of Reason' his memory would have been lauded for his great work during the revolutionary struggle, but unfortunately he is known mainly as a free thinker, and by the ignorant as well as those who never read his writings, as a scoffer against religion. This grand work turned*

public opinion in the United States, as well as in England, against Paine.

*The world has moved. Human intelligence has advanced. Man is beginning to do his own thinking, and Paine is taking his place among the few great men, so-called, of the revolution.*

*In his second 'Crisis' on January 13, 1777, Paine suggested the United States of America as a proper name for the new republic on gaining its independence.*

*It was some months previous to January 9, 1776, when Paine's 'Common Sense' burst upon the people and brought about the declaration of July 4 of that year, that Paine first sent out a feeler in an essay published by him October 18, 1775, entitled 'A Serious Thought', in which he intimated that the colonies ought to cut loose from the mother country.*

*The distinguishing feature of this succinct, brilliant and comprehensive work of Mr. Randall is its bold comparisons and fearless deductions in logic. It is a startling innovation and a rude assault upon cherished traditions to place the name of Paine above those of Washington, Franklin, and other of the fathers in bringing about the establishment of this mighty republic, but he presents the facts and the genius of truth seems to be in the conclusions.*

*There are touches of sentiment that carry the breath of poetry, if not the spiritual essence, which so many reject as yet, and there are the hard, resounding blows of truth wielded by one who is unafraid, and who has his whole heart in the work.*

*The author does not hold a brief for Mr. Paine, but clearly aims to picture him as he was, to relieve him of the odium of false testimony and grant the world a chance for fair, enlightened judgment of the wonderful man.*

*When the intellectual Paine had passed in the flesh from the haunts of men, when his hand could no longer hold his brilliant pen, and when human ghouls could empty the vials of wrath and vituperation with impunity, one James Cheatham, of New York,*

then editor and publisher of the 'American Citizen,' whom Paine had unmercifully flailed through the public press, in 1809 undertook to write, what he was pleased to call, the life of Paine. Cheatham was a foresworn witness, a subtle poisoner of his own sentiments and the eager assassin of character where his own suffered by comparison. He was the ass kicking the dead lion from which he would have fled in terror had he been alive, and then it was that Cheatham, the despicable, did his work.

How much better the grand patriot, statesman, soldier, writer and unselfish lover of his fellow men, appears in the writings of Rev. Moncure D. Conway, broad, fair and liberal. He conscientiously investigated and put down his conception of the truth without fear or favor. He routs Cheatham and places Paine much nearer the higher position which will eventually be his in the eyes of the world.\*

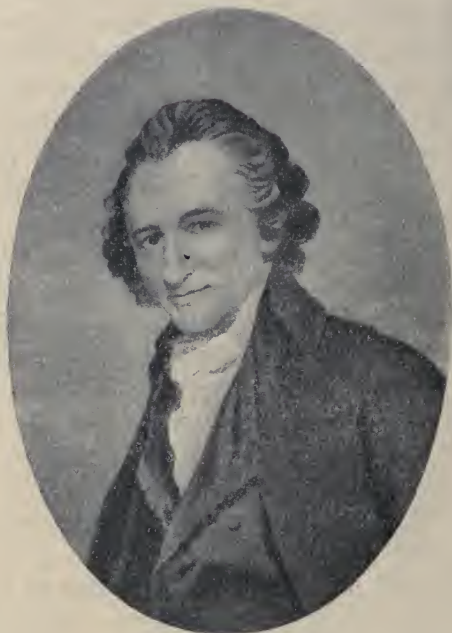
Paine was the writer of immortal literature. He was the irresistible champion of human liberty. He was conspicuously a good man in all his acts and thoughts, clean and unselfish to the uttermost degree. His courage was invincible, and no allurements of earthly wealth or honors, not the menace of death itself could swerve him from his high purpose. Some one has said of Paine, "If he lived today his severest critics would be the followers of Bob Ingersoll, who would criticize him for not going further, and the Chautauqua assemblies would swing wide their gates that he might enter."

No one should have the slightest hesitation in commending this little work of the Scribe to every person who can spare the time to read it, for Mr. Randall has written to the end that the memory of Paine, who was one of the great men of his time, might come into its own, and those who read will, at least, admire the diction, the beauty, the earnestness and integrity of his work.

JOSEPH BRENT.

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\*Life of Thomas Paine, with a history of his literary, political and religious career in America, France and England. 2 Vols. 900 pp. 1893. G. P. Putnam's Sons.



THOMAS PAINE  
FROM PAINTING BY JARVIS, 1803



RESPONDING to the suggestion of the members of this little band of Psychic Research engaged in the study of new and advanced thought, and prompted by the fact that this year of 1909 is the centenary of his passing from the mortal life, this little paper has been prepared in which I have endeavored to give to you the salient points and outlines of Mr. Paine's distinguished and somewhat stormy career, covering a period from the time he came to America in the latter part of 1774, until he passed into the realm of spirit less than thirty-five years thereafter.

Within the length of a paper of this character it would be impossible to cover, at least by more than mere mention, the work of this ever active and busy man, for to have done otherwise would have taken the space which it was preferred to use in brief, running comments when going over, as stated, the principal events in Mr. Paine's life, as they were chronologically reached, as well in brief quotations from his principal works, therefore it is, many and most in number of the writings of Mr. Paine are not even mentioned.

\* \* \* \*

Born in 1736, the son of an English Quaker, and armed with letters of introduction from Dr. Franklin, who was then in London on an embassy from a North American State to the British Government, Mr. Paine emigrated to America in the latter part of 1774, when

the quarrel between the Colonies and the mother country was reaching an acute stage, and the question of submitting to petty and unjust taxes levied by the mother country was the paramount one.

Able, in the very prime of manhood, for he was but 38, of a combative temper, inherently a great lover of liberty and freedom, and a strong, vigorous and incisive writer, pre-eminently possessing the power of clearly and terribly stating a fact, Mr. Paine's opportunity came when the leaders of the opposition to England, in the latter part of 1775, had become weak and dispirited and ready to compromise on any reasonable terms.

Alluding to the predominant wishes of the colonists soon after his arrival in America, Paine, in his *Crisis* VII, says: that he found the disposition of the people such they might have been led by a thread and governed by a reed. Their attachment to Britain was obstinate, and it was at that time a kind of treason to speak against it; they disliked the ministry, but they esteemed the nation. Their idea of grievance operated without resentment and their single object was reconciliation.

Then it was that Paine, taking advantage of this fact, set the colonies on fire, laying the foundation of this great Republic, by the writing and publication of that famous pamphlet appealing to the feelings and pride of a brave, faithful, abused and misrepresented people, and which spoke a language so terrible in its consequences to England, and so strong, powerful and direct, setting forth in burning eloquence a telling array of facts and arguments, which showed the very need of



separation and, incidentally, the establishment of a Republic.

The enormous circulation of this remarkable little book of but forty-seven pages, a book which gave spirit and resolution to the wavering and undetermined, and inspired a decisive energy into their councils, instantly aroused smouldering public opinion, and by it, the feeling of the people of the colonies was consolidated. The loyalists could not, and dared not even attempt to answer the powerful, and, by reason of the circumstances, inflammatory utterances of the unknown author, and, public opinion thus aroused, launched the colonies on their seven year's struggle for commercial and national freedom.

Up to this time, it must not be forgotten, the idea of separation from England had not been seriously thought of. "Before the 19th of April" (1775), writes Jefferson, "I never heard a whisper of a disposition to separate from the mother country."

In March of that year (1775) Franklin declared that "No American, drunk or sober, thought of such a thing as independence."

It was in May of 1775, that George Washington, in reply to the interrogation of a friend as to his attitude on the question of separation, said, "If you ever hear of my joining in any such measure of separation, set me down for anything and everything wicked," and the sentiment was more strongly and unequivocally iterated by him in the following July, after he had taken command of the army, when he said that he abhorred the idea of independence.

It was Paine and his "Common Sense" (Jan. 9, 1776) which wrote the future of the United States and changed the views of Mr. Washington as well as a majority of the people of the colonies, and led to the Declaration of Independence and the subsequent career of Washington, who at that time was a very wealthy slave holding Virginia farmer. Had it not been for Thomas Paine, history would not record the struggle, known as the war of the revolution, and "Common Sense" may be called the fire that relighted the torch of liberty which the pessimism coming from hardships had well nigh exhausted.

There is a complete concurrence of testimony, and it was unanimously conceded by the people of the colonies at the time that the writing and publication of "Common Sense" was the turning point in the struggle, for it roused and consolidated public sentiment, swept the waverers along with the tide and independence was assured. To this fact I will again advert.

After the real beginning of hostilities following the Declaration, the little, half-clad continental army of a few thousands under Washington, suffering defeat after defeat, disheartened and discouraged, after having been driven across the Delaware, retreated to Newark (Nov. 23, 1776), where, because of the expiration of their enlistment, half of the little army returned to their homes, when affairs were in a desperate plight, for it must be remembered that the British held all of New Jersey, and, they claimed were only waiting for the river to freeze over to catch Washington and thus end the war. Philadelphia was in a panic. Congress, which had been meeting there had taken refuge in Baltimore.

Hosts of half-hearted people were taking what was called "British Protection," in other words, swearing allegiance to the King, and the times indeed were trying the very souls of men. Then it was that this man of unconquerable perseverance, who at the time was serving as a private soldier under General Washington, by the light of the camp fire, wrote the first number of that little pamphlet which has never been surpassed for true eloquence and power, which he called the "Crisis."

The battle of Trenton (Dec. 25, 1776), followed, before which what was left of the little army was called together in little groups to listen to the reading of Paine's thrilling exhortation, beginning:

"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of his country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell itself, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph; what we obtain too cheap we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a price on its goods, and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as Freedom should not be highly rated."

Toward the close of this remarkably adroit and powerful, simple and sympathetic address, after hinting at the treatment in the way of confiscation which ought to be accorded the loyalists or tories, Paine said:

"Quitting this class of men I turn with the warm

ardor of a friend to those who have nobly stood, and are yet determined to stand the matter out. I call not upon a few, but upon all. Not on this State, or that State, but on every State. Up and help us! Lay your shoulder to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world that in the depths of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and repulse it! Say not that thousands are gone, but turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but 'Show your faith by your works,' that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank in life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor will suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now, is dead. The blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made them happy. I love the man that can smile when in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink, but he whose heart is firm and whose conscience approves his conduct will pursue his principles unto death. My own line of reasoning is, to myself, as straight and clear as a ray of light. Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder, but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me

or those that are in it, am I to suffer for it? What signifies it to me whether he who does it is a king or a common man, my countryman or not my countryman, whether it be done by an individual villain or an army of them. If we reason to the root of things we shall find no difference, neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case and pardon in the other. Let them call me rebel and welcome for I feel no concern from it, but I should suffer the misery of devils were I to make a strumpet of my soul by swearing allegiance to one whose character is that of a sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man. I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a being who at the last day shall be found shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him, and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow and the slain of America!"

Printed copies of this little pamphlet were scattered broadcast, and in the army and out of it it had a simply marvelous effect in restoring a courage which was fast ebbing, and at the time likely to result in the disbanding of the army. It turned despair into hope, gloom into cheerfulness, and irresolution into firmness.

Men returned to the army. Washington saw his dispirited soldiers beaming with hope, and, "These are the times that try men's souls!" became a battle cry, and were a magical inspiration to the army.

Then, Mr. Chairman, came the English disaster at Trenton, (Dec. 25, 1776), the first practical and glorious victory of the continental army, a victory which resulted in the surrender of the Hessians.

This victory at Trenton with the capture of the hated Hessians put new life, vigor and hope into the hearts of the colonists. It was the turning point in the fortunes of the colonies, for victories followed which brought new recruits, and few doubted the ultimate result of the war. The brave patriots who had affixed their signatures to the Declaration of Independence had fewer visions of the drawing of the halter.

It has been stated by many that it was Paine with his pen and Washington with his sword, who fought and won the war of the revolution, a war which resulted in the establishment of a republic, now the greatest this world ever saw, and under the protection of which live over one hundred millions of people, but I deny the truth of a statement which thus associates the names of these two men together, for it is a belittling of the services of the former to thus associate with him the latter, of which I will have occasion to refer hereafter. Say rather, that it was George the Third, the stubborn and stupid hereditary tainted King of England, and Mr. Paine, and it would be nearer the fact.

Paul Allen, one of if not the earliest historical writer on the American Revolution (1819) in referring to the moulding of sentiment in the first half of 1776, in favor of separation, says:

“Among the numerous writers on the momentous question, the most luminous, the most eloquent, and the most forcible was Thomas Paine. His pamphlet entitled ‘Common Sense’ was not only read but understood by everybody. It contained plain and simple truths told in a style and language which entered the heart of every

man, and those who regard the independence of the United States as a blessing will never cease to cherish the remembrance of Thomas Paine."

Mr. John Fiske, a man of some erudition, a graduate of Harvard, and for a time its assistant librarian, some fifteen or twenty years ago essayed to write a history of the Revolutionary War (and from the fact that he refers to the tone of Paine's 'Age of Reason' as coarse, containing crude argument, and with the improvement of popular education was fast sinking into complete and deserved oblivion, and for other reasons apparent in his work, he is not here quoted as an authority, but rather as a compiler of historical facts) after speaking of Mr. Paine and his 'Common Sense' and that it was written at the suggestion of Benjamin Rush with the approval of Dr. Franklin and Samuel Adams, admits that this great caustic pamphleteer set forth a sensible and striking statement of the practical state of the case between England and the Colonies, the reason for looking upon reconciliation as hopeless, and for seizing the moment to declare to the world what the logic of events was already making as an accomplished fact, and he says these were shrewdly and vividly set forth and carried conviction wherever it went. Fiske says that it was difficult for the printers with the clumsy presses of that day to bring out copies of 'Common Sense' fast enough to meet the demand for it, more than one hundred thousand copies being speedily put out.

Ramsey, in his "American Revolution" (London, 1793), in referring to Mr. Paine's pamphlet, says: "In union with the feelings and sentiments of the people, it

produced surprising effects. Many thousands were convinced and were led to approve and long for a separation from the mother country, though that measure a few months before was not only foreign to their wishes, but the object of their abhorrence; the current became so strong in its favor that it bore down all before it."

Cheatham, the renegade apostate, and enemy of Paine, in his book which he called "The Life of Paine" (1809), says that "'Common Sense' spoke a language which the colonists had felt, but had not dared to think; that its popularity terrible in its consequences to the parent country, was unexampled in the history of the press. It was first read with alarm, but recovering from the first shock its arguments nourished the reader's feelings, appealed to his pride, reanimated his hopes and satisfied his understanding. The unknown author was hailed by the people (for everybody read it) as an angel sent from heaven to save all from the horrors of slavery by his timely, powerful and unerring counsels."

When "Common Sense" arrived in Albany the convention of New York was in session. George Scott, a leading member, alarmed at the boldness and novelty of its arguments, mentioned his fears to several of his distinguished colleagues, and suggested a private meeting in the evening for the purpose of preparing an answer. They accordingly met, and Mr. McKesson read the pamphlet through. At first it was deemed both necessary and expedient to answer it without delay, but casting about for the requisite arguments they concluded to adjourn and meet again. In a few evenings they reassembled, but so rapid was the change of opinion in the



colonies at large in favor of independence, and at a loss for answer, they agreed not to oppose it.

North Carolina took the first decisive action in the latter part of March, 1776.

Rhode Island, with its original charter needed not to form a new government, but on the fourth of May omitted the king's name from its public documents and sheriff's writs.

Virginia followed on the fifth by choosing a convention to consider the question of independence.

On the fifteenth of the same month Congress adopted the resolution of Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, recommending all the colonies to form for themselves independent governments, and in a preamble written by John Adams, it was declared that the American people could no longer conscientiously take oath to support any government deriving its authority from the crown, and with the adoption of this resolution the whole united colonies were put upon the verge of what was at the time termed "the glorious revolution."

Connecticut, like Rhode Island, having been organized under the charter of 1662, followed (June 14), and the following day New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, and on July first, every single one of the colonies had cut the apron strings which held them to the mother country.

From my early reading of colonial history, the war of the revolution, and especially of the period covering the fifteen years from 1770 to 1785, in my youth I formed an opinion to which I have remained steadfast, for in my subsequent reading it has never been shaken,

and that is: to the inspired Thomas Paine, and to him alone can be credited the creation and consolidation of a sentiment which in 1775 made the separation of the colonies from Great Britain, and their establishment into a confederation or republic possible, and at no time since have I doubted the truth of the old saying, that, when well wielded, "The Pen is Mightier than the Sword."

How few of us realize the vastness, the unparalleled resources, the greatness of our country. The United States with its area of three millions five hundred fifty-seven thousand square miles, is eighteen times larger than France, fifty-six times larger than England, and were the United States peopled as densely as those two countries they would contain, approximately, one thousand million of souls!

From the original thirteen colonies rebelling against George the Third, and which, urged and persuaded by Paine in that superbly bitter, that masterly and wonderfully forceful pamphlet of "Common Sense" declared their independence on July Fourth thereafter, there have sprung a people who have increased in number, wealth and intelligence, with a rapidity in which history furnishes no parallel.

The republic was established. Restless, and dissatisfied to remain in a country where full liberty was enjoyed, Paine determined to return to England and open the eyes of the people to the madness and stupidity of its government, and he did so.

It is said that when Dr. Franklin first met Paine, after having learned of his intended departure for England, he expressed regret that Paine was, voluntarily,

leaving a land where full liberty was enjoyed, saying, "Where liberty is, there is my country," and Paine quietly replied, "Where liberty is not, is mine."

In England, in reply to Burke's pamphlet, which he called "Reflections on the Revolutions of France," (1790) he wrote the "Rights of Man," the first part of which appeared in 1791, a copy of the original edition of one hundred sixty-two pages, as well as a governmental emasculated copy of the second part, issued in 1792, and rebound in one volume we have here in the library. Its circulation was enormous, and the English Government, taking the alarm, endeavored to suppress it, but without avail. Much of its influence was because of its force, its dignity, and temperance, and it was the clear statement of facts, and the time, which alone made it inflammatory.

In his preface to the second part of the work, and in justification of its production, after stating that it was for the good of nations, and, (taking a fall out of Burke who was on the government's secret pension list), not for the emolument and aggrandizement of particular individuals that governments ought to be established, and that mankind is at the expense of supporting it, he states an unanswerable proposition—and note with what clearness he does it:

"The defects of any government and constitution, both as to principle and form, must on a parity of reasoning, be as open to discussion as the defects of a law, and it is a duty every man owes to society to point them out. When those defects, and the means of remedying them, are generally seen by a nation, that nation will reform its government or its constitution in the one

case, as the government repealed or reformed the law in the other. The operation of government is restricted to the making and the administering of laws, but it is to a nation that the right of forming, or reforming, generating or regenerating constitutions and governments belong, and consequently, those subjects as subjects of investigation are always before a country as a matter of right, and cannot, without invading the general rights of a country be made subjects of persecution. On this ground I will meet Mr. Burke whenever he please."

Paine was indicted for treason, before which and pending his trial, in recognition of his ability, of his republicanism, and his championship of the people of France, he was elected by several of the departments as a member of the French convention. He accepted that of Calais.

As the easiest way to get rid of this firebrand, he was allowed by the English Government to pass into France, first, however, being branded as an outlaw.

In France (at Calais) he was received by the firing of guns from the battery, and the flying of flags, and became the guest of honor of the municipalities through which he passed on his way to the French capitol. He was treated with great respect, and while in and out of the convention always counseling moderation, and notwithstanding his inability to speak the language, because of his judgment, his power and force of argument, his very greatness, he wielded great influence in that stormy convention, and became a famous figure. He took his seat in this excitable body in the latter part of 1792, and in the memorable and exciting scenes which followed,

resulting in the execution of Louis XVI, Paine, moved by his humanity and mindful of the help the king had accorded the American colonists during their struggle for independence, strongly and eloquently urged disposition of the king by banishment to the United States, closing with this lofty sentiment, "My anxiety for the cause of France has become, for the moment, concern for its honor. If, on my return to America I should employ myself on a history of the French Revolution, I had rather record a thousand errors dictated by humanity than one inspired by a justice too severe."

After the guillotine had fallen which sent the soul of that staunch friend of the struggling American colonies into the presence of its maker, realizing his inability to accomplish any results in the interests of humanity and freedom within the convention, he absented himself much from its sittings, spending most of his time quietly in his lodgings and garden in the Faubourg St. Denis in the writing and preparation for the printer of the first part of the "Age of Reason," and, falling under the suspicion of Robespierre and Marat, who believed he had gone over to the Girondist party by reason of his having declined to cast his vote as a deputy for the death of the king, he was arrested and thrown into the prison of Luxembourg, charged with no other offense than of being a foreigner.

Expelled from the convention on Christmas night, his arrest was in the night of the 27th (1793), and, it is said that for some months previous Mr. Paine, seeing his friends one by one taken to Luxembourg, to leave it only to be beheaded, he looked daily for his own sum-

mons, and hurried along his greatest, and what he believed would be his last work for humanity.

Pause with me right here, Mr. Chairman, and consider and reflect for a moment at the wonderful mind of a man fully recognizing the fact that he was under the very shadow of the guillotine, which could in a few months and under such circumstances produce so thoughtful, so scholarly, so philosophical, so grand a work as the "Age of Reason." (Pub. at Paris, Jan. 27, 1794.)

Declaring his disbelief in what is called revealed religion and giving his reasons therefor, the reader is given Paine's conception of what he conceived to be the true word of God, the only true revelation, and as it breathes as pure a spirit of morality and philosophy as anything which was ever written, pardon me for quoting it here:

"It is only in the creation that all our ideas and conceptions of a word of God can unite. The creation speaketh an universal language independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they may be. It is an ever existing original which every man can read. It cannot be forged—it cannot be counterfeited, it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not. It publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this word of God reveals to Man all that is necessary for man to know of God! Do we want to contemplate His wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want

to contemplate His munificence? We see it in the abundance with which He fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate His mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance, even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not a book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the scripture called "The Creation!"

Where can greater and more sublime faith be found than in the following, which I take from the closing page of the first part of this work, six hours after the penning of which by him, the pulsations of whose heart were as loving and kind as ever throbbed in the breast of man, was under arrest and supposedly, on his way to death.

"The Creation we behold is the real and ever-existing word of God, in which we cannot be deceived. It proclaimeth His power, it demonstrates His wisdom, it manifests His goodness and beneficence. The moral duty of Man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God manifested in the creation toward all his creatures. That seeing as we daily do, the goodness of God to all men, it is an example calling upon all men to practice the same toward each other, and consequently that everything of persecution and revenge between man and man, and everything of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty."

Mr. Paine never believed that the grace of God would save souls any more than the grace of colleges would make scholars independent of earnest effort, nor that the blood of one could atone for the sins of another. He knew that true and exact justice was as sweet as

mercy, and he believed that God is just, and compensation an inexorable law.

Mr. Paine remained at Luxembourg ten months and nine days, being released in the latter part (Oct. 1794) of the following year. While in prison an order for beheading him was made, but by a mere accident, and Mr. Paine himself relates the story, he escaped.

While his friends were coming into the prison and out of it to the guillotine, expecting each day to be his last on earth, this remarkable man, it is said, wrote the second part of "The Age of Reason," though I am more inclined to believe that it was later, and in 1795, after his release from Luxembourg, and while for a year and a half as a guest, he was a member of the household of Minister Monroe at Paris, that the bulk of it was written and prepared for the press.

A natural inquiry here arises, and I must, for I cannot avoid sort of parenthetically referring to it, and that inquiry is: What was the American Government, in the meanwhile doing toward his release from Luxembourg? Nothing, simply nothing. Mr. Paine was an American citizen—a distinguished foreigner who had been invited into France to aid in the formation of a republic. He had been thrown into prison charged with no crime other than that of his citizenship. Unfortunately however by reason of his great popularity with the American residents and visitors to Paris, and from other causes, he had incurred the displeasure of the American minister, Mr. Morris, who, it is said, was ever in heart a royalist, and no genuine effort was made for his release.



Stray away right here for a moment with me and think of the picture thus presented. Paine, the author of "Common Sense," the "Crisis," "The Rights of Man," who, unselfishly and without reward other than that which came to his own conscience, had spent twenty of his best years in the work of humanity, liberty and freedom, who after rearing one republic in the new world, putting aside all ambition and hope of political reward or emolument, returned to a country whose monarch he had referred to as a drunken, worthless character, a stupid brute and murderer, and then in the cause of human freedom, in the interests of the common people, by agitation endeavored to rear another, and quitting this work only at the hasty call of a people living in distress under another monarchy, and fleeing to their aid, this grand man, this noblest of American citizens whose country was the world itself, in a foreign prison awaiting for eleven months the republic he reared to claim him!

Washington, who had become the first president, knew that Thomas Paine, whose able and trenchant pen had played such a part in creating the very republic over which he was the executive head, and recognized by its congress as the founder of the republic, ought to have known, if he did not, that the French Committee of Public Safety, appreciating the greatness and the humanity of the man, was only waiting for some authoritative request from America to set him at liberty, but, and ashamed am I to confess it, history contains no record of a single effort

put forth by President Washington to save this man from dying at the hands of a French mob.

If, Mr. Chairman, you now observe a slight degree of warmth settling under my ears in contemplation of this neglect, amounting almost to a crime, of President Washington, a man who possessed a rare balance of large powers, whose fine exterior attracted respect and whose natural dignity and silence tended to preserve it, but the pulsations of whose heart were abnormally slow, who was never charged by contemporary friend or foe with possessing a single sympathetic feeling; whose cold blood flowed sluggishly in his veins, in whose composition there was never found by friend a single kindly or lovable trait of character, and in the glamor of whose fame the American people have for nearly a century gone into rhapsodies, let it serve as an apology for my briefly calling attention to an historical fact, by relating one or two things which may put the student on inquiry and enable him to reform his judgment of American history, and it is this; that Washington is not entitled to the credit of bringing to a successful termination the War of the Revolution, for he was but a mere spoke in the wheel, and not a very efficient one at that.

Fame has always been unusually cheap, and grows greater to the uninformed with the lapse of time.

The war of the revolution had been happily ended with Washington commander-in-chief of the army. With much dignity he uncovered his head to receive the customary crown of laurel wreath. The bells were ringing, anvils were being fired, and every one was

joyous and happy. No one at such a time was disposed to dispute with Washington its possession.

It is conceded that Mr. Washington had no share in the political part of the revolution, and the services he rendered were entirely of a military character.

He began his command in June, 1775, with the rank or title only of commander-in-chief, *but in reality he had a separate command*. He had no control over or direction of the army to the northward under Gates that captured Burgoyne, or that to the south under Greene that recovered the southern states, but it served to throw upon him the lustre of those actions and make him appear as the soul and center of all military operations in America. His inactivity in 1775, when the enemy had a less force than in the campaign of 1776, produced the losses and misfortunes that marked this gloomy campaign, which Paine sought and in a great measure did repair with his first "Crisis."

Your new historian denies that it was Washington who fought and won the battle of Trenton, but he attributes it rather as a victory won by Paine and his "Crisis," and on this proposition he stands ready to make good, although a discussion of it here is beyond the limit of the present paper.

Burgoyne and his army in 1777 was captured at Saratoga by Gates, who was not under the authority of Washington it must be remembered, and the latter was afterward informed of the fact by a private letter, not from Gates, for there was no correspondence between them, but from Clinton. Burgoyne's capture

sent a thrill throughout Europe and brought to the colonies their alliance with France.

But, Mr. Chairman, I must hurry along, for what was intended as a brief sketch is reaching the proportions of a book.

We left Mr. Paine, if my memory serves me, after his release from the prison of Luxembourg, a guest of James Monroe, then American Minister to France, he who afterward became a President of the United States. The French Convention, from which he had been expelled, unanimously setting aside the order of expulsion, invited him to retake his seat therein, which he did, and continuing to serve with distinction he was shown great consideration, although not with the majority. He participated in the debates which resulted in the formation of the constitution.

The Convention being permanently dispersed and the Directory organized, the second part of the "Age of Reason" was brought out, (Oct., 1796), and he now wrote and published several pamphlets, the principal ones being his "Dissertations on First Principles of Government," which contained a clear and temperate statement of his theories... "Agrarian Justice Opposed to Agrarian Law," and the "Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance," which foretold the suspension of specie payments by the Bank of England, which was to follow.

In the same year (1796), at Paris, he published a letter, principally on the subject of the treaty Jay had concluded with Great Britain, and it was from this letter, which I believe to have been an injudicious one,

given to the press while Paine was smarting under the treatment which had been accorded him by Washington, that first served to call my attention to the fact that Washington in name only had been commander-in-chief, of the continental forces during the revolutionary struggle.

Paine for the next few years led a quiet, but an industrious life in Paris. Napoleon, who was then in the earlier stages of his career, called at his quarters and formed a pleasant acquaintance with him.

The desire, however, to return to his beloved America grew stronger and stronger, and while he diverted his mind in mechanics and inventions, he determined to take all chances of being found by a British cruiser, and he returned to America in the fall of 1802, landing at Baltimore.

The "Age of Reason" had, of course, preceded him, and on account of religious prejudice, to be seen in his society was to be socially ostracized and damned by one's neighbors. Forgetting the importance and the magnitude of his revolutionary services, unmindful of his grand ability, the loftiness of his soul, and his great love for humanity, of his sufferings and many deprivations for the cause of freedom, the author of "Common Sense" and the "Rights of Man" was unmercifully abused, roasted and villified by the political and secular press, and the church.

Thomas Jefferson was President, and he greeted Paine with great cordiality at the White House, which brought a storm of abuse upon him, and, to Mr. Jefferson's credit it may be said that, notwithstanding the

political and other disadvantages of Paine's friendship, he braved sentiment and publicly avowed that friendship.

Mr. Paine went to New York, where he was welcomed by Mayor Clinton and a few devoted friends, and from thence to Bordentown, and from there to his farm at New Rochelle, a farm which had some years before been presented to him by the State of New York.

All of Jefferson's enemies became Paine's, some of Paine's became Jefferson's, notwithstanding which the latter was re-elected to the presidency by a decisive vote, and this fact was really the one happy and shining episode which brightened the life of Mr. Paine, after resetting his feet on the shores of America, following his fifteen years of tumultuous life abroad.

In the beginning of 1809, in his seventy-third year, recognizing that he was approaching the end of the mortal, Mr. Paine made his will. The people of America knew, and those abroad were apprised of his physical condition, and then it was that brutal curiosity in some cases, and well meant kindness on the part of clergymen and religious fools and fanatics in others, did much to annoy him. Some of the latter sought to have him repent and believe, that he might avoid damnation and eternal suffering. His home and his sick chamber had to be guarded during the whole of his illness, and finally, on June 8, 1809,, at New York, the grand spirit of that ardent lover of human souls, whose country encompassed the whole globe, and whose religion was to do good, passed into the higher and better life.

Denied burial elsewhere, his poor, tired old body, followed only by the members of a little French family who in France had befriended him, and, in turn he had befriended, a couple of negroes, and a dear old Quaker by the name of Hicks, was two days afterward taken to his New Rochelle farm, and buried. Then there arose villifiers of all creeds and religions, because of Paine's crime for having stood for a pure natural religion, had written and published the fact that his God was Omnipotent Goodness, and the blood-guilty Jehovah of the Old Testament who bade his favorites wade in the blood of their enemy, was an intolerable calumny.

Ah, Mr. Chairman, you, sir, who have that wonderful clairvoyant power, that enables you to see spirit as well as material objects, look about you tonight! All over this little home, in the lower part of the house, prone on the floor and huddling in the corners of the rooms the better to cover their nakedness, a nakedness denoting the ignorance of their minds, the darkness of their souls, are six hundred ragged, wretched, disembodied spirits, silent, but terrible witnesses of the truth of what this man taught in his "Age of Reason" and for which he was stoned.

Through the press and otherwise, his political and personal enemies, the clergy and ignorant fanatical devotees of the church, shamefully traduced by libel and slander the character of this man when they learned that he was dead. He was pictured as a two-horned devil with the usual forked, orthodox tail, and as having possessed all the vices which had ever been charged to any member of the human race.

Conway in his *Life*, tells us that within the past fifteen years, in the British Museum, he himself counted three hundred and twenty-seven entries of books of and concerning Paine, in the majority of which he was characterized as this devil.

During all this time where was Thomas Paine? The unstrung, tuneless harp, that magnificent instrument upon which for many years by a master musician had been played a grand symphony of nature, the melody of which heard around the world had stirred the very souls of men prompting the exercise of thought and reason, lay dead and buried in a little corner of the New Rochelle farm, scoffed and jeered at by the ignorant and malicious, but sir, the living harper, the real player whose skillful touch on the strings of the mortal instrument had brought forth such grand and lofty music, and whose country was the very globe itself, his religion to do good, was over the mountains borne tenderly in the loving arms of divine teachers to spheres of learning and erudition, and without for a moment losing consciousness as he passed through the so-called gateway of death, he began at once breathing the pure atmosphere of spirit, and in continuance of his work on earth his power and eloquence were again being exercised in the cause of humanity that he so dearly loved.

Now comes a bit of embarrassment on my part, for this paper would not be considered complete by my hearers without after having outlined the principal parts of his work, my own judgment, humble as it is, was not expressed as to Mr. Paine's character.



I have looked for some grave faults in Mr. Paine, for though an ardent admirer I dislike to appear as one who, were there such, would gloss them over, but the fact is that so much has been said and written by the traducers of Mr. Paine during the fifteen or twenty years following his death, which was not truthful, so much after having been run down were found to be absolutely wicked falsehoods begotten by the ignorance and superstitions of the time, and which have since passed as history, that one cannot rely on a single statement then made and recourse must be had to that well-known maxim, so unquestionably a fact in the case of Mr. Paine, "Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus."

I am prepared to concede, however, and am glad to do so for I weary of eulogism, taking advantage of the fact that his friend and first biographer, Clio Rickman, failed to deny it, that during the Reign of Terror in Paris after he absented himself from the sittings of the French Convention and was for many months living quietly at his house in the Faubourg St. Denis preparing the first part of his "Age of Reason," and before he was sent to Luxembourg, he indulged somewhat freely in French brandy, and if this be true and the literary work then done was under its inspiration, I can but repeat the saying attributed to Lincoln that Mr. Paine should be severely censured in that the world was not apprised by him of the brand and the maker's name, that a barrel of it could possibly be found and, if you please, placed in the cellar of this home.

Mr. Paine was evidently a keen observer with a logical, scientific mind, a man of great determination and

wonderful perseverance. His biographers seem to think that he lacked knowledge of men, but those wonderful appeals to the patriotism of his countrymen in "Common Sense" and his earlier numbers of the "Crisis," bear witness to the contrary, and show that he intimately knew the human heart as well as how to reach it.

He certainly was absolutely lacking in that commercial spirit which clings as a close fitting garment to the average American of today, for he might have acquired considerable wealth by the sale of his copyrights alone, but he chose to present them to the people in behalf of whom his pen was ever wielded.

He was always brave, forcible and eloquent. It was a wonderful knack he had of stating a proposition, in fact stating anything, clearly and distinctly.

He was a man who possessed that highest attribute of the human heart, a large humanity, and he was as gentle and kindly as a child. Sensitive, though he lacked that pride which usually accompanies sensitiveness.

His biographers claim that he was comparatively ignorant of books, and came to his own conclusions by the logic of his own reasoning. Although he had an uncommon share of original genius, the implied compliment in the first half of this claim I do not assent to, although agreeing with the last. He certainly was one of the great luminaries of the age in which he lived, and because of his wonderful memory his mind was a perfect storehouse of facts.

He was religious, his convictions were few, but they were profound. He disliked war; he disliked injustice; he hated slavery, and his public life was one long battle

against every form of oppression. I presume he had faults, but they must have been trivial. He was very intolerant himself, and yet he seems to have abhorred it in others, but Mr. Chairman, during the period in which we have attempted to review him, never was there a pulsation of the kindly heart of this gifted, noble soul, which did not throb in behalf of humanity he so much loved.

His last days were bitter ones, for he was unable to endure the ingratitude and the contempt of his former friends. He did not enjoy being let alone, and during the last six years of his life in the mortal which were spent in his beloved republic, he was cross, sour, nervous, irritable and out of temper, and in that condition his great soul passed into the life of spirit, and, living there under its quickening influence, he seems never to have been able to forget the injustice and wrong done to his reputation, nor the noble cause for which it was sacrificed.

His inherent love of humanity accentuated as it was, as I have stated, by the quickening power of spirit and his determination to do good and aid in bringing religious freedom to the minds of the people, has prompted him since passing to the higher and better life where hosts of advanced helpers were found to carry on the fight for humanity, and the mighty influence of Thomas Paine, and that of his divine compatriots is now being felt over the entire civilized world, and along religious lines man is beginning to do his own thinking, has begun to use his God-given reason as this untiring and

unselfish laborer for humanity in his masterful work the "Age of Reason" urged he should do.

Then, Mr. Chairman, as thought has advanced during the century following his passing, and the human mind has become so liberalized along the lines I have referred to, we can perhaps now afford to become better acquainted with the divine patriotic, noble and unselfish life of Mr. Paine and reform our estimate of his character, for:

While the name of this great teacher and patriot has almost been left out of the history of the glorious deeds which his inspiration caused to be performed, in the perfected half regenerate future the author of that grand sentiment, which has been an inspiration to so many, "The World is My Country, to do Good My Religion," though he had never written "Common Sense," the "Crisis," or the "Rights of Man," nay, though he had never written another line, in the re-written history of the United States—of the world, that name will stand out in great letters of light.















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