

makes lunatics, if they dwell too long in her presence. I feel the enchantment myself with a strange fever in my blood."

*To be Continued.*

THOMAS PAINE.

*[Continued from 1st. Page.]*

fore the National Assembly of France and no other American citizen ever more grandly used the opportunity. Whatever Paine might have said or done, we should forget it, as we see him standing before that howling mob, mad with the desire for blood, and pressed forward by a madder set behind, and pleading for mercy to the French king, when he knew that the guillotine awaited him at the close of his defense. That magnificent action of the companion of Washington and Jefferson should forever silence those libelers whose courage all oozes away before any determined assault, and also disprove the charge that he whined for mercy on his death-bed and in craven terror bewailed his mistake in writing the "Age of Reason." The two actions are inconsistent; we know what was his action before the national assembly; the supposed action when on his death-bed is a story prepared by his enemies.

It is well, once in the year, to devote one Sunday to the memory of those who have served the cause of Freethought. Some of these our orthodox friends honor, when the Freethought suits them. Luther, Zwingle and Calvin in their day were as much condemned as Paine, Ingersoll and Voltaire in these days, but a number of protestant denominations, claiming to be orthodox, have descended from these infidels. John Wesley and Alexander Campbell were bitterly condemned in their day as opposed to christianity; surely then it would become preachers of sects, whose founders were denounced in bitter terms, to be a little careful as to what they say of others; not so long ago were they regarded as enemies of God, to destroy whom would be to do God service; now it is claimed that they were really working for God; may not these preachers be mistaken when they denounce Paine and Voltaire? In the twentieth century Paine's conclusions, as expressed in the Age of Reason, will be generally accepted as correct. We may quarrel with his language and his arguments, but shall be compelled to admit that his estimate of the bible is correct; to this conclusion advanced scholars are rapidly forcing the christian world and when the polychrome bible is published, these conclusions can be grasped by the dullest, and the oldest idea of the bible will have gone never to return and we shall no longer have a book to enslave the people and stifle Freedom of Thought.

But to return to my memorial

day for infidels. I have long dedicated the Sunday on or nearest Paine's birthday to the memory of the proscribed and hated infidels. The church has set apart one day for all saints and another for all souls; now all lovers of Freethought should set apart the Sunday nearest the birthday of Paine in honor of all heretics and nonconformists, all so called infidels, when we will call over the roll of those heroes and martyrs of Freethought, hated by the church and to be honored everywhere by all lovers of civil and religious freedom. And as we name them from the dawn of history to the present day, from Moses to Ingersoll, from Paul to Channing, from Socrates to Swing, from Luther to Voltaire, from Huss to Tolstoi.

You will find that all of these men have one element in common, nonconformity; that in the list are those who in their day were hated and banned by one set of men and esteemed and revered by another; that they are like the Jewish prophets, in that they speak the truth and relentlessly attack the old, if they believe that old to be false. In this list are many, if not most, of the brightest in the several centuries, and Paine suffered not in comparison with the others. About many of them lies have been told; nothing more evil has been said of Paine than of Luther, who was called a drunkard and an adulterer by the priests of his day and yet protestant christendom cannot find praise too exalted to be lavished on Martin Luther. This will be the case, in the coming century with regard to Paine; many balances will be adjusted, many wrongs righted, and many sent to their own place, when we have entered the new century.

The time may come, as I believe it surely will, when the old abuse of Paine will die out and his true merit shall be recognized; when the Scotch heretics and the heretical poets of many lands, when the heroes of Freethought in every land and every age shall be known as the true prophets of God; hated as the prophets have always been hated by the priests and the priestenslaved people; but really like the prophets of Judea proclaiming the word of God and confined to no race and to no time. I want again, as I have before, to call attention to the circumstances under which the "Age of Reason," the cause of all the assaults upon Paine, was written; and it would seem that the most bigoted of men would have sense enough to cease his abuse. The first part was prepared while Paine was a member of the National Assembly of France, and was written with the purpose of saving from the wreck of state and church a reverence for virtue, morality, God and true religion. The second part was written when Paine was expect-

ing each day to be led forth to the guillotine, from which fate he escaped by what in the case of a church member would have been called a miracle. No one, who has any sense of the true relation of things, but will admit that under such solemn circumstances, in the very sight of death, no man will indulge in ribaldry. The "Age of Reason" as you think of when and where it was written, becomes a truly sacred writing to be read with uncovered head as in the presence of the divine. No book in the Hebrew bible was written amid such tragic surroundings. Not even the revelation to Moses on Mt. Sinai was given under more solemn circumstances. Bunyan's "Pilgrims Progress," was written in prison, but the prisoner was not in danger of his life. Paine's "Age of Reason" was written when each sentence might be last. It is a solemn message from a love of humanity and of God; is as much a prophecy as any writing now extant. It is a word of God spoken in the interests of truth and righteousness. Its arguments are old fashioned, its words ill suit the most elegant task of this age, the author is often too blunt, but its effect in favor of Freethought, its power to overthrow the reign of orthodoxy, letter worship, and priestcraft is almost as great as when the book was first published. Many will read essays on the higher criticism, will listen to the scholars, as in polished words they say what Paine said, and continue to worship the book, the day and the man, but a careful reading of the "Age of Reason" forever destroys the old idols. And finally, listen to the ever memorable words of the modern prophet, certainly no more unsavory in appearance, if you believe the worst which can be said of him, than some of those Jewish prophets whose words we accept as direct from God. "My country is the world, to do good is my religion."

No one, since the time of Jesus, has more completely summed up the spirit of the New Testament. Jesus, we read, went about doing good, and Paine tells us that doing good is his religion; then certainly if he lived up to his religion, he was a christian, and even the most hostile of biographers, whose eyes were veiled by the dense fog of theological bigotry which distorts everything, turning white to black and black to white; even these calumniators admit that Paine was ever on the alert to help the needy and distressed, even exposing himself to the charge of profligacy in his efforts to help a poor woman in distress. Paine, more than any other of his time, and than most since his time, understood the spirit of Jesus, for he says "my country is the world," and again his life proved that he meant what he said, for

having firmly seated liberty in America, he hastened to England and then over to France, on the same errand; wherever there was oppression, he was needed to help break the yoke, and where there was danger of beheading the sacred name of liberty he must be present to keep the shield pure and bright. Judged by what we know, not by what half informed writers surmise, it is not too much to say that Thomas Paine was a better christian than those who revile the memory of the author hero of the Revolution, and more thoroughly grasped the central idea of Jesus' universal brotherhood than do any of those who rail against him. "My country is the world to do good is my religion," are words which should be blazoned in gold and set in the hall of state as the model for the world to copy, containing the essence of true religion and true statesmanship.

When for years injustice has been done to a man deserving especially well of Americans, and where this injustice has been publicly committed and continuously, though its iniquity has been proven, then in an equally public way should justice be done; and so I set apart one Sunday in the year, that in as public a way as possible, some small reparation may be made for the evil done. Heretics and nonconformists are the ones to whom human progress is due; this has by the church been carefully concealed from the public view; then it is but right to have one Sunday set apart in honor of heretics, nonconformists and Infidels and as the church has selected Paine as the arch Infidel, the day should be placed as near his birthday as possible. Let justice be done and honor given where honor is due. May the time soon come when the world shall learn that heresy is not a crime and that the heretic may be one of earth's noblest souls, indeed that it takes great men to be independent in thought and action. Nonconformity augers a strong character, and that Paine was exceptionally strong is proved by the fact that he was the first in America to publicly protest against duelling, to demand an international copyright law, to plead for kindness to animals, to propose international arbitration, to argue for political equality between men and women and to propose the emancipation of Negro slaves.

Look at that picture and you can never believe for a moment the stories which have been told about his immorality and terrible death-bed. Clear cut and vigorous are the features, vivacious and determined the face; that man who would not quail before a French mob would never weaken before the accident of death. Such as the picture shows him, such was he to the end. Honor, all honor to the hero author of the revolution, the friend of humanity and the prophet of God.