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YOUNG THOMAS PAINE, WESLEYAN METHODIST OR RATIONAL DISSENTER?

Jeremy Goring

Most biographers of Thomas Paine say something about his early religious associations. There is general agreement that his father was a Quaker and his mother an Anglican, that he was baptised and confirmed into the Church of England and that as a boy in Thetford he preferred the quiet meetings of the Friends to the services at the parish church. It is also well known that, although he continued all his life to admire the Quakers for their good works, he could never completely accommodate himself to their life-style.

Though I reverence their philanthropy I cannot help smiling at the conceit that, if the taste of a Quaker had been consulted at the creation, what a silent and discoloured creation it would have been! Not a flower would have bloomed its gayeties nor a bird been permitted to sing.

But if neither the Church nor the Quakers attracted him, where could he find a place to belong religiously?¹

John Keane, in a biography that has been acclaimed as 'definitive', has suggested that as a young man Paine had a significant 'brush with Methodism':

In Thetford Paine reportedly heard John Wesley preach. Wesley's journal also records that when Paine was living in Dover, Benjamin Grace, Paine's employer, took him along to the Methodist chapel on Limekiln Street, where Paine, aged twenty-one, confessed himself a believer and later preached sermons to the congregations ('the hearers') who gathered in that chapel.

This gives the impression that Wesley, who frequently visited Dover, had himself supplied this important information. Only those readers who turn to Keane's copious endnotes will realise that the Dover story did not come from Wesley but from the editor of the 1916 edition of his *Journal*, who recorded it in a footnote. The authority he cited was an article that had appeared ten years previously in the *Methodist Recorder*, in which an anonymous contributor – following a day trip to Dover – assembled a few miscellaneous facts about the local history of Methodism. After

describing the chapel that Wesley had opened in Limekiln Street the writer added this interesting snippet:

The building in question, now a public house, has one queer association. Tom Paine, author of *The Age of Reason*, read a sermon there one day. He was apprenticed to Mr. Grace and went with him to class and chapel. He professed to believe, and was so far trusted that when a minister failed one day Tom Paine took the service.

Since the information was provided by a leading Methodist whose family had lived in Dover for generations there is likely to be some truth in it. In fact, as Keane points out, the story is attested by this inscription in a copy of *Wesley's Sermons on Several Occasions* taken to America in the nineteenth century:

Out of this volume Thomas Paine, author of *The Age of Reason*, used to read sermons to the Congregations at the Methodist Chapel in Dover when they were disappointed of a Preacher. At that time he belonged to the Methodist Society in that place.

Be that as it may, Paine did not stay long in Dover. After only a year he moved to Sandwich where he remained until 1761 and, according to a local tradition, sometimes preached 'as an independent or a Methodist' to small gathering in his own lodgings.²

Paine's involvement with Methodism, it is suggested, did not end on his departure from Sandwich, as Keane speculates that during the year and a half he spent as an Excise officer in Grantham (1763-4) he relieved his boredom either by 'socialising with patrons of the George inn' or by 'mixing with local Methodists' – activities that, in view of the Wesleyans aversion to alehouses, might be considered barely compatible. The mixing with Methodists is said to have continued after Paine, following brief sojourns in Alford and Diss, eventually moved to London in 1766. Here for a time he eked out a living by teaching in an academy run by Daniel Noble, which, according to Keane, 'stood in a forest of private-enterprise schools then shooting up in London.

Some of these charitable schools were run by Methodists and Methodist sympathisers for labourers' children, who were taught godliness, craft skills, and their social duties and rights. Noble's academy was one of these.

It is, however, rather misleading to include this academy in the general run of 'charitable schools'. Noble was no ordinary private school proprietor and was almost certainly not a 'Methodist sympathiser'. Such a description is not borne out by the brief biographical details Keane himself supplies.

[Noble] had been well educated at the Kendal Academy under Caleb Rotheram (a friend of Joseph Priestly) and at Glasgow University. He had a large private library and was well known for his Dissenting sympathies and active support for civil liberties.

Apart from the confusion of Rotheram with his son of the same name (who was Priestley's contemporary) his description of Noble, taken from a letter written to the *Times Literary Supplement* by the Baptist historian Ernest Payne, is accurate and to the point.³

Keane considers it likely that Paine assisted Noble in the work of preaching to his Seventh Day Baptist congregation at Mill Yard. He also gives some credence to a tradition that during his brief residence in London he preached in the city's open fields. Here again, it is suggested, there was a significant link with Methodism.

The Methodists, for whom he had preached in Dover and Sandwich, welcomed lay preachers in the struggle for ministers especially among London's poorer folk, whose souls they thought could be saved from wickedness and whose lives could be defended in the name of humanity and civilization.

But would they have welcomed Paine as a preacher if they had known that he was an associate of Noble? As Ernest Payne pointed out, Noble 'belonged to a group of Baptists who added Arian sympathies to their Arminian and Sabbath-Keeping views'. Moreover, as another Baptist historian W. T. Whitley expressed it, 'he did not escape the drift towards Socinianism which was prevalent nor did he seem to have been attracted by the revival under the early Methodists.'⁴

Paine in Lewes

As it transpired, Paine's association with Noble was not to last long. Early in 1768, having been appointed to the post of Excise officer there, he left London and moved to the Sussex town of Lewes, where he took lodgings in the house of a tobacconist named Samuel Ollive. Keane states that he acquired this accommodation

'through Methodist connections', but, since there were no Wesleyans in or around Lewes at this time, this is highly unlikely. It was not until the nineteenth century that Lewes became what he calls 'a town of Nonconformist churches'. Apart from the Quakers there were in Paine's day, only two non-Anglican congregations there and both belonged to 'Rational', as opposed to 'Evangelical', Dissent. These were the General Baptists in Eastport Lane, and the mixed Presbyterian-Independent congregation at the Westgate Meeting, to which Ollive – who lived next door at Bull House – himself belonged. By this date the General Baptists and the Presbyterians, who were eventually to unite to form a single Unitarian congregation, were drawing closer together. Therefore it may be that, metaphorically speaking, Paine came to Bull House by way of Eastport Lane. The little congregation meeting there formed part of a General Baptist association extending throughout Kent and Sussex with which Noble, who was later to be invited to become their 'Messenger' or district minister, was closely associated. When needing help to find lodgings in Lewes it would have been only natural for Paine to turn to him.⁵

Where did Paine worship during his six years in Lewes? Lodging where he did, it is likely that, if he went anywhere, it would be to the Westgate Meeting. 'Bull Meeting', as it was also sometimes known, and Bull House had originally been one building and the wall of partition between them remained thin. Indeed, if Paine stayed in bed on a Sunday morning he might have heard the singing of psalms next door. On occasion he might have been inclined, if only out of courtesy, to accompany the Ollives to their family chapel. It is said that it was here that he went with Samuel's daughter Elizabeth in March 1771 to exchange vows before going to be legally married to her at St. Michael's church over the road. It is likely, however, that he was never formally a member of the Westgate congregation. The shilling a year that he agreed to pay to the trustees was not a membership subscription. It was, as he expressed in a letter to them in 1772, 'an acknowledgement for their sufferings the droppings of rain' which fell into the meeting-house yard from a structure that he had erected above it.⁶

Had he attended services at Westgate Paine would probably have approved of the preaching of Ebenezer Johnston, the liberal-minded Scotsman who had ministered there since 1742. Like Noble he had been educated at a Dissenting academy and well grounded in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Although none of

his sermons survive it is certain that, like all the Rational Dissenters, his emphasis would not have been upon the saving work of Christ but upon 'practical religion'. At a time when many Protestant Dissenting congregations were experiencing divisions and schisms, Johnston succeeded – possibly by being 'all things to all men' – in keeping his people together. Although probably not himself a Socinian, he would have tolerated heretical views if he encountered them. And so if Paine, in the course of conversation, had expressed doubts about the Atonement or the Trinity or even gone so far as to question the whole idea of revealed religion, Johnston would not have been shocked.⁷

It is not certain where Paine stood theologically during his time in Lewes, but it is clear that he was mentally on the move. For many people their early 30s are formative years and for Paine, who was regularly exercising his critical faculties and speaking skills in debates at the local Headstrong Club, they may have been specially so. If, as Keane suggests, he was the 'P....' who wrote a satirical poem entitled 'An Arithmetical Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer' printed in the *Lewes Journal* in July 1771, he may by then have reached a Deist position. Perhaps his anger against injustice had already led him to reject revelation and question the truth of what Noble had said in a 1767 sermon about 'the wisdom of Christ':

It is certainly proof of the wisdom of Christ that he did not at all interfere in civil matters or make such declarations in behalf of the common rights of universal mankind as could only have tended to draw down the whole fury of the secular power upon all his followers.

By the time he left Lewes in 1774 it is likely that Paine, never one to worry about drawing down fury, would have openly disagreed with this statement and with Noble's conclusion that philosophy must always be 'assisted by Revelation'.⁸

Conclusion

Which then had the greater influence on Paine as a young man – Wesleyan Methodism or Rational Dissent? John Keane is evidently convinced that it was Methodism. In a sub-section of his book entitled 'The Methodist Revolution' he considers the effects of Paine's involvement with the Wesleyan movement. He contends that historians have misunderstood Methodism, wrongly seeing it

as 'a reactionary protest against Enlightenment reason and a movement that seduced its followers into conformism'. On the contrary, he says, Methodism 'fed the modern democratic revolution in mid-eighteenth century England by offering a vision of a more equal and free community of souls living together on earth' Although he admits that 'the extent of Paine's involvement with Methodism is uncertain' he believes that it was primarily from this that the young man derived his egalitarianism, his passion for justice and his conviction that individuals were morally responsible for their own conduct. Several sentences begin with statements such as 'Methodism demonstrated', 'Methodism showed' or 'Methodism convinced him'. Moreover it was Methodism that allegedly provided Paine with 'the exhilarating view, traceable to the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, that Christ's sacrifice and atonement meant that all men and women might be saved'.

'You are steeped in sin, and there is nothing in you which merits God's goodness', the young Paine may have told his nervous and spellbound congregations in Dover and Sandwich, rephrasing words from other Methodist preachers that he had heard in action. 'Yet remember: the new light of God's grace shines equally upon the poor and the rich. God is ready to welcome you – all of you – as His children so long as you strive to attain His grace and live the holy life which allows you to enter into His Kingdom'.

But do these sound like the words of a man who had been (at the age of seven or eight) 'revolted', by a sermon on the Atonement and had ever since 'either doubted the truth of the Christian system or thought it to be a strange affair'? Although the Wesleyan doctrine of the Atonement was more liberal and humane than that of the Calvinistic Methodists it is doubtful if it could ever have been acceptable to Paine, whom the whole idea of God sacrificing his own son was repugnant.⁹

Because of his distaste for the orthodox 'Christian system' it is likely that Paine responded positively to the heterodox preaching of Rational Dissenters such as Daniel Noble. Although, as Keane points out, Noble 'preached Arminian views', his Arminianism was very different from Wesley's. While Wesley's position was close to that of Arminius himself (as introduced into England by the Caroline divines), Noble's was that of a later generation of Dutch Remonstrants, whose views had been introduced into England by Limborch and Locke. Having been steeped in Locke's philosophy at Kendal academy, Noble was ore concerned with enlightening

men's minds that with saving their souls. His Arminianism, to borrow a phrase from Geoffrey Nuttall, was not 'of the heart' but 'of the head'.¹⁰

Some idea of what Noble's preaching was like can be obtained from a sermon he delivered during Paine's time in London, entitled 'Religion, perfect Freedom'. It is full of references to such things as 'the providence and moral government of God', the 'Sovereign Being who is able to make all things work together for good' and the 'laws of benevolence which are the true spirit of the Gospel'. 'Is it not evident', he asked, 'that the pure and undefiled religion of Jesus bears a very friendly aspect to the cause of *civil liberty*?' This is a very different tone than that of the average Methodist sermon with its heavy emphasis on sin and personal salvation. Is there not a foretaste here of what Paine was to write in *The Age of Reason*? Could not Noble's preaching have helped to convince him that 'the oral duty of man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God' and that 'everything of persecution and revenge between man and man, and of everything of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty'? Apart from the reference to cruelty to animals, which shows Paine to have been far 'ahead of his time', the phraseology could have been lifted from almost any Rational Dissenting sermon.¹¹

Was it not from the Rational Dissenters rather than the Methodists that Paine derived the belief that his religion was simply 'to do good'? Is it not likely that, as Ernest Payne suggested, his association with Daniel Noble was 'of some importance for the young man's intellectual and spiritual development'? Judging by 'A Sketch of the Character of the late reverend and learned Daniel Noble' published in *The Protestant Dissenters' Magazine* some years after his death he sounds like a man after Paine's own heart.

He had very enlarged ideas of the rights of others and was, upon principle, a thorough friend to the civil and religious liberties of all mankind. In conversation he was open and liberal, and at the same time serious and instructive.

By all accounts Ebenezer Johnston of Lewes was a man of similar temper. Could the author of *The Age of Reason* have found better mentors than these two very rational Dissenters?¹²

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NOTES ON TOKENS AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE HISTORY OF THE LABOUR AND RADICAL MOVEMENT

Christopher Brunel and Peter M. Jackson

We do not intend to discuss the economic reasons which led to the widespread issuing of tokens during the latter quarter of the eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth century. Our purpose is rather to examine some designs which illuminate the values and themes of reform agitation during this period. It is sufficient to say that changing economic and social circumstances resulted in a demand for small change which the Royal Mint failed to meet. The problem was particularly acute in isolated areas and manufacturers were forced to create their own coinage. According to Lord Liverpool: "Many principal manufacturers are obliged to make Coins or Tokens... to enable them to pay their workmen, and for the convenience of the poor employed by them: so great is the demand for good Copper Coin in almost every part of the kingdom".¹ The lead provided by manufacturers in the late 1780s was quickly followed by others: traders realised that tokens had publicity as well as exchange value and political partisans of both left and right began issuing tokens. These were usually pennies, halfpennies and farthings.

Thomas Spence is without doubt the most remarkable and profile of all token issuers who come under notice in this paper. It is therefore thought appropriate to give a brief account of his life. Several such accounts have been published, the first by Eneas Mackenzie appeared in 1827.² It is known that Spence's father was a net maker and native of Aberdeen. He moved to Newcastle about 1739 where, according to Mackenzie, he set up as a hardware dealer. Thomas was born on June 21, 1750. His education, while rudimentary, was not neglected, and led to his early employment as a clerk. He soon abandoned this occupation and eventually opened his own school. In his early twenties he joined the Newcastle Philosophical Society and in 1775 he read a paper before them entitled 'The Real Rights of Man'.³

His attempt to promulgate his views was resisted and means were taken to prevent children attending his school. Following the death of his wife, he moved to London in December 1792 and was

arrested almost at once for selling Paine's *Rights of Man*. He was fortunate and some flaw in the law led to his acquittal. There is no evidence of his returning to teaching, instead he published and sold tracts at first from The Hive of Liberty, at 8, Little Turnstile, Holborn, and later from 9, Oxford Street and finally from a barrow. He also sold saloop (hot sassafras). Place says of him that 'he was a very simple, very honest, single-minded man', though 'soured by circumstances', yet, 'he loved mankind, firmly believed that a time would come when men would be wise, virtuous and happy. He was perfectly sincere, unpractised in the ways of the world to an extent few could imagine in a man who had been pushed about in it as he had been. Yet what is still more remarkable, his character never changed, and he died as much of a child in some respects as he was when he arrived at the usual age of mankind'.⁴

Throughout the 1790s Spence was a source of handbills, chalked notices, broadsheets and a periodical entitled *A Penny Worth of Pig's Meat; or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude* (1793-1796). Between May and December 1794, he was imprisoned in connection with these activities under the suspension of Habeas Corpus. Between 1795 and 1797 he supplemented his income by dealing in Jacobin and other token coinage. Place, in his manuscript biography of Spence, prepared some years after his death, states that 'he had Blanks rudely cut out, not quite so large or so thick as a halfpenny on which he struck words with punches, one, the only one I now have by me, has on one side "Spence's Plan - Small Farms" on the other "Full Bellies".⁵ Mackenzie also refers to 'one of the singular' methods Spence adopted of 'attracting attention to his plan, was the striking of a variety of copper coins, some of which are extremely curious These coins he frequently distributed, by jerking them from his windows amongst passengers'.⁶

The following contemporary observations suggest that Spence, while he may have succeeded in advertising his schemes for social reform, confused and alienated the more conservative token collector. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, after making some critical observations concerning a fellow dealer, goes on to Spence:

'But he (Skidmore) does not deserve so much censure as Spence, the author of some contemptible political pamphlets. This man would impugn the conduct of the administration and plead as an advocate for

public justice and yet had not private honesty to recommend *himself*. His dies were numerous; and they were interchangeable almost beyond the power of calculation. The designs of many of his pieces were contemptible as illiberal in the extreme. In common with all other reverses, exclusive of their inconsistency, they have not either taste or beautiful execution to recommend them, but are struck in a very careless and awkward manner upon the most corrupt copper [this remark about corrupt copper is quite inaccurate – P. M. J.]. Skidmore has some claim to our pardon on account of his beautiful series of London Churches; but of Spence it may be said that he alone has done more harm to the (token) coinage (collecting) than any other persons in the aggregate'.⁷

The writer concluded that Spence was 'destitute of respectability', and that he had experienced the punishment of dishonesty and was now bankrupt. This must have occurred towards the end of 1797 so his activities as a token issuer must have taken place during the years 1793-7. That these were busy years is suggested by an earlier observation: 'It is not long since I called at Spence's shop, and saw many thousands of different tokens lying in heaps, and selling at what struck me to be very great prices. These, therefore, could not be considered as struck for limited sale. I confess, considering the number I saw struck and what the subject of them were, I thought myself justified in supposing it was the intention to circulate them very widely'.⁸

This was no idle claim; though Spence's tokens were not genuine trader's token, i.e., they carried no promise of repayment, they often passed as token currency and circulated so freely that they even reached France. The French Ambassador complained to Pitt about the revolutionary slogans inscribed on the tokens which he feared might inflame the French people.⁹ Other commentators, while recognising the seditious intentions of the issuer, saw little cause for alarm. In December 1796, a Scottish correspondent wrote: 'With regard to the trifling political jetton of Spence and others such can produce no effect more important than that of licentious caricature, which incite laughter or incur contempt. The less serious attention to this rude species of whit, so much the better'.¹⁰

The information following gives a few particulars respecting the devices and legends appearing on tokens which may be of interest to the historian.¹¹



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2



3



4



5



6



7a



7b



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9



10



11

1. Bust of Spence with below James 1794. Reverse: Legend, T. Spence: 7 months imprisoned for High Treason. The engraved portrait published in his works is similar to that on the token. The die records his imprisonment in 1794.
2. Inscribed in eight lines: T. Spence Bookseller Dealer in Prints and Coins No.8 Little Turnstile High Holborn
3. Noted Advocate for the Rights of Man with in three lines in centre, Thos. Spence Sir Thos More Thos Paine. Whatever else one might say of this die, it would seem to indicate that Spence was not lacking in self-approbation. This opinion would certainly be endorse by one of his critics who wrote that Spence's vanity 'was only equalled by his contemptible artifice , and his personal head is scarcely more valuable than the coin that

bears it resemblance' (*Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1798.p.119).

4. A pig trampling on the regalia of church and state: Crowns, etc. a cap of liberty above Pig's Meat Published by T. Spence London. This die advertised Spence's publication *Pig's Meat or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude*. It was issued weekly price a penny and subsequently in volume form, each consisting of 284 pages with an index. Although not dated the first volume was published in 1795. The title was an obvious parody on Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and his claim that '...learning will be cast in the mire and trodden down under the hoofs of the swinish multitude'. Spence also published handbills which he called Loose Meat for Pigs. These consisted of songs on reform topics and short prose articles. There were caricature plates bound in with some of Spence's *Pig's Meat*, one is illustrated below.



5. Three soldiers described as Armed citizens standing to attention with the legend: Who Know Their Rights and Knowing Dare Maintain 1795. This was taken from an ode written by the orientalist Sir William Jones. It was reprinted in *Pig's Meat*, Vol.1. 3rd. edn., p.59:

AN ODE
IN IMITATION OF ALCAEUS

What constitutes a State?
Not high-rais'd battlement or labour'd mounds,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crown'd.

Not bays and broad-armed parts,
 Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride.
 Nor starr'd and spangled courts,
 Where low-brow'd baseness wafts perfumed to pride.
 No: - MEN, high-minded MEN,
 With pow'rs far above dull brutes endured,
 In frost, brake, or den,
 As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude;
 Men, who their duty know,
BUT KNOW THEIR RIGHTS, AND, KNOWING, DARE MAINTAIN,
 Prevent the long-aimed low,
 And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain:
 These constitute the State.

Edward Thompson claims that Spence was connected with the physical force wing of the Reform Movement in that the treason trials of 1794 provide 'some sketchy evidence of arming and drilling connected with his shop'.

6. A cowed lion with tail between his legs and in the distance a Gallic Cock crowing Let Tyrants Tremble at the Crow of Liberty. 1795. The allusion is to the spread of revolutionary doctrines and their effect on the Pitt government. Again Spence uses a most telling design in connection with an appropriate legend. In *Pig's Meat* (Vol. 2. p.91) he prints a song 'God Save the Rights of Man' set to the tune of 'God Save the King'. Two of the verses may be said to illustrate the die:

'Sore have we felt the stroke;
 Long have we born the yoke,
 Sluggish and tame;
 But now the lion roars,
 And a loud note he pours,
 Spreading to distant shores,
 LIBERTY'S flame!

'Let us with France agree,
 And bid THE WORLD BE FREE,
 Leading the way
 Let tyrants all conspire,
 Fearless of sword and fire,
 FREEDOM shall ne'er retire,
 FREEDOM shall sway!'

7. The cock and the Swine also come together in the design on the reverse of a ½d. issued in 1795 to celebrate Daniel Isaac Eaton's acquittal of sedition charge for publishing Paine's

works. Obverse: A cock crowing over pigs in a sty. Printer to their Majesty of the People, London. 1795. Reverse: Bust with Frangas Bib Fletes on a ribbon under, D. I. Eaton Three Times Acquitted of Sedition.

Eaton's address at the time was 74, Newgate Street, London, the sign of the house being The Cock and Swine. Eaton's career was acclaimed by the *Monthly Magazine*, where it is noted that he began life as a papermaker and that for the last twenty-five years he had been known as 'an undaunted publisher of pamphlets in opposition to the foreign and domestic policy of the British government. In this perilous and unthankful employment he became the object of six successive prosecutions, from all of which he was relieved by the independence of the juries by whom the charges were tried'. He died in 1814 at the age of 70. The London Corresponding Society celebrated Eaton's acquittal in March 1794 by issuing a well designed and now scarce penny token listing the names of the eleven jurors. The obverse depicts a fine cock surrounded by the words: Struck by Order of the London Corresponding Society.

8. A North American Indian standing with axe and bow, the legend reads: If Rents I Once Consent to Pay/My Liberty is Past Away.

The legend is in the form of a doggerel rhyme. In this die Spence uses the American Indian as a means of drawing attention to his scheme of land reform. In an account of the land called 'Spensonia' (a country without landlords) published in *Pig's Meat*, Spence converses with an Indian who says, 'How is it that you have no landlords? We never heard that men could be civilised, or be Christian, without giving up their common right to the earth, and its natural produce to tyrants, called Landlords. Among such people, according to universal report, the land is claimed by a few individuals, who dispose of it at their pleasure, and parcel it out to others for tribute or rent. Many colonies of Christians have established themselves in various parts of America, and carry on here, as in their original country, the iniquitous traffic in the soil. They expel and exterminate us, the natives, because we will not work, or pay rent to them, for living in our own country, neither have these Europeans the common honesty to share equally, among themselves, their unrighteous plunder; but levy rents off each other here, as they do at home... We, free born Indians

dwell upon the earth, though he would say God would have it so' (Vol. 2. pp.206-7).

9. An ass standing laden with two pairs of panniers, the lower labelled rents and the upper tax's (sic). The legend reads: I Was An Ass To Bear The First Pair. Spence campaigned against private ownership of land. The die may be said to represent 'that dull ass the public' acquiescing in the payment of both taxes and rent. The design was also used in one of his caricatures, as show below:



THE CONTRAST.

10. A lean man in a prison cell gnawing a bone, his legs chained to the wall and the legend: Before the Revolution 1796. This and the following dies represent the lot of reformers before the 'revolution'. Spence was fully acquainted with the interior of

English prisons having been incarcerated for seven months following the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1795.

11. A man standing in ragged clothed, his hands tied behind his back and his feet in fetters with a large padlock on his mouth, this being an allusion to the Gagging Act of 1796. The legend reads A Free-Born Englishman. 1796. The device also appears on a farthing die with the legend Mum, implying that citizens should remain silent in face of abuse.

12. A representation of Cain pointing to the mutilated body of his brother Abel, with the legend: The Begining (sic) of Oppression + Cain and Abel. The letter N's are reversed.

13. A village in ruins with the legend, Only One Master Grasps the Whole Domain. This is taken from Goldsmith's poem 'The Deserted Village', from which Spence reprinted certain stanzas in *Pig's Meat*, Vol.1, p.33, entitled, 'A Lamentation for the Oppressed', the purpose being to draw attention to the tyranny of private landlordism.

'Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the law,
They sports are fled, and all they charms withdrawn;
Amidst they bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all they green:
ONE ONLY MASTER GRASPS THE WHOLE DOMAIN'.

14. A dog walking: *Much Gratitude* Brings Servitude'. The dog is said to represent the compliant British public. The dog at one time free from tyranny and oppression was now, owing to the habit of submission, in a condition little better than servitude or slavery.

15. Britannia seated, her right arm resting upon the union shield, her left arm holds a spear from which a Cap of Liberty is in the act of falling, the legend reads Rouse Britannia. This die is another illustration of Spence's wit, in making the British Nation represented by Britannia, as either being asleep or indifferent and consequently about to loose their liberty.

16. A man walking on his hands and feet with the legend, If the Law Requires It We Will Walk Thus. It represents the conformism of the British public. Spence appears to be exhorting them to stand up for their rights like free men. If they continue in their quietistic ways the law one day might require them to crawl. It would seem

that this lot they would willingly accept. Spence published a small caricature with the same design. See below:



THE CIVIL CITIZEN

1796

Published by T. Spence, Turnstile, Holborn.

17. Two men acclaiming to a bonfire upon which are being consumed books and parchments, the legend reading: The End of Oppression. This appears to represent the destruction of documentary evidence establishing a title to private ownership of land and the manner in which this would be received by the populace. Spence published a pamphlet entitled ** The End of Oppression. **

18. Head of George III to the left conjoined to that of an ass to the right. The legend reads: A Million Hogg a Guinea-Pig * Odd Fellows and the date between the ears of the ass 1795. The head of George III is not unlike that which appeared on regal coinage and conjoined to that of an ass it represents the idea of 'a dull ass, the public' supporting 'the million hogg', or his Majesty. It was a severe attack on the rapacity of monarchy and the government of the day.

19. George III wearing a crown and holding a sceptre, riding on a bull with the head of an ass, with the legend: Am I Not Thine Ass. This is another fine specimen of Spence's wit and daring. In making the king ride upon John Bull turned jackass.

In the spirit of public journals for 1800 these lines occur:

'John once deemed John Bull but now, alas!
His spirit gone, he's mildly turned Jackass'.

In *Pig's Meat* (Vol. 1, p.221), Spence prints a poem:

Thus Kings are raised to bless the land,
And Church and State go hand in hand,
The blessings to ensure;
Upon men's backs the Juno rides,
So soft they sit upon their hides,
Tis pleasant to endure'.

20. Bust to the right, below it in small letters James, the die sinker's name, with the legend: John Thelwell. Thelwell was born in 1764 and merits an important place in the history of 18th and 19th century radicalism. Spence would have come into contact with him through the leadership of the London Corresponding Society. It would seem likely that the token was struck to commemorate his acquittal at his trial for high treason in December 1794. For a perceptive account of this remarkable man's career see E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963), *passim*.

21. Four men dancing around a pole surmounted by the head of William Pitt. Radiated between the men and outside the group are sprigs (of oak?) and two cornucopias appear below. The legend is Tree of Liberty. This is another example of Spence's courage and audacity in attacking one of the principal opponents of reform. The symbol of a liberty tree was widely used by reformers during the 1790s [See Thompson. *Ibid.* pp.101-185: Planting the Tree of Liberty. He gives an example of a Citizen Lee who published a series of tracts from the 'British Tree of Liberty, 98, Berwick Street, Soho', whose titles included *King Killing*, *The Reign of the English Robespierre*, and *The Happy Reign of George the Last*]. That fourteen reverses of this token were used in association with the die indicates its popularity. These vary from the legend Thomas Spence, etc, to a picture of a guillotine.

22. An open book inscribed *Pig's Meat* held by a hand. The legend reads *If Lords All Mankind Are*Then They Rents Should Share. This die like No.4 advertises *Pig's Meat*. Spence took the legend from his own *Rights of Man* in verse published in 1782. The verse reads:

'Rent to ourselves now we pay,
Dreading no quarter day,
Fraught with distress.
Welcome that day draws near,
For then our rents we share,
Earth's rightful lords are we
Ordain'd for this'.
(see *Pig's Meat*. Vol.1. p.42)

There are several of Spence's dies that we would like to have included in this commentary, which neither of us possess. Attempts to borrow examples of these have unfortunately proved unsuccessful.

The late Christopher Brunel was a joint Founder of the TPS, while Dr. Peter M. Jackson, a former Member of Parliament, is a member. There is a second part to this paper, but so far I have not located a copy. If I do it may be possible to reprint it in a latter issue.

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5. B.M. Mss. 27808, fl. 184.
6. Mackenzie. *Op.cit.* Vol.1. p.401.
7. C. Shephard. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1798. pp.121-2
8. 'R. Y.' *The Gentleman's Magazine*. April, 1897. p.269.
9. *Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin*. June, 1964. p.229. We have been unable to authenticate the claim, but the author, Mrs. Monica Bussell assures us she has seen evidence in its support.
10. *The Gentleman's Magazine*. January, 1797. p.32.



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Book Reviews

FREETHINKERS, A HISTORY OF AMERICAN SECULARISM. Susan Jacoby. New York, Metropolitan Books, 2004. 417pp. Illustrated. Hardback. ISBN 0 8050 7442 2. \$27.50 (£17.50).

Although it may seem something of an exaggeration I nevertheless feel that books devoted to the history of secularism are sadly as rare as hens teeth, so it was something of a surprise when I read a mention in an American publication about the forthcoming publication of the work under review. The author's name was unfamiliar to me, something which made me wonder just what sort of book she had produced, would it turn out to be a poorly researched work that damned secularists and then went on to describe them as old fashioned and out of date because Christianity had changed so much, which it has not? Or would it be a melodramatic essay based around the activities of a few controversial figures such as Madalyn Murray O'Hair?

Well, in the event the book turned out to be an extremely well written and very readable work, and, yes, it does mention Madalyn Murray O'Hair, albeit briefly, the author describing her as "almost alone in her willingness to call herself an atheist", and who earned her place in the religious right's pantheon of demons for her success in having prayers banned in American schools. However, although individuals loom large in the pages of the book, by no means all having actually connected with organised secularism as such, the authors overwhelming concern is with issues, and it is the secular response to these that is the main characteristic of the book. Nevertheless in the process the author, who does not lack a sense of humour, introduces her readers to characters such as Philo D. Beckworth, who built a "grand theatre" or "temple of the performing arts", in Dowagiac. Beckworth was "a committed freethinker" and the town's main employer, his factory being one of the largest producers of stoves and furnaces in the United States. He had a strong philanthropic streak and not only paid his employees high wages but also gave them sick pay, which, Ms. Jacoby remarks, was in 1890s America almost unheard of. His theatre was, which was adorned with busts of famous freethinkers,

including Ingersoll, Paine, Voltaire, Susan B. Anthony, George Elliot, Victor Hugo, George Sand and Walt Whitman, theatre was dedicated by Ingersoll, who, she writes, "seized the once-in-a-lifetime chance to dedicate a building prominently displaying his own graven image – a distinction customarily reserved for the honoured dead". The theatre was demolished in 1968 and many of the busts were destroyed, however, local freethinkers rescued that of Ingersoll and it can now be seen in the Ingersoll Birthplace Museum in Dresden, New York. Another bit of odd information was that the notorious Roman Catholic bishop Fulton J. Sheen, went to considerable lengths to conceal the fact that he had a Protestant half-sister, and what was more, something he acknowledged with great reluctance, his great uncle Daniel Sheen had been a partner in Robert Ingersoll's law practice in Peoria, but, claimed Sheen, he never embraced his partner's agnosticism.

American is a country in which state and church are legally separated, but as Ms. Jacoby notes, it is "one of the greatest unresolved paradoxes of American history that religion has come to occupy such an important place in the communal psyche and public life of a nation founder on the separation of church and state". The early chapters of the book discuss the influence of Thomas Paine, to whom a whole chapter is devoted and attempts to impose religion on the new republic, one such attempt being made by Patrick Henry, who in 1784 introduced a bill into the Virginia General Assembly to assess all citizens for taxes to pay teachers of religion. The bill's passage appeared to be a foregone conclusion but following a campaign against it led by James Madison, which even gained support from religious groups – one petition against it was signed by four thousand Quakers, it was, the author says, "relegated to the dustbin of history", and instead the Assembly adopted Jefferson's proposal for the complete separation of church and state, with some modifications.

Essentially this book might be describe in broad terms as being thematic, in that the author examines in subjects such as woman's rights, slavery, evolution and anti-evolution, the rights of America's coloured population, cultural activities, the 'Unholy Trinity: Atheists, Reds, Darwinists' (a chapter heading) which introduces readers to among others, the Scopes trial, which has popularly been represented as a defeat for obscurantist fundamentalism, but, as the author points out, this was not quite so, and literary censorship, discussing in detail the efforts to suppress Walt Whitman's poem

Leaves of Grass. In these issue, the author presents the attitudes and work of individual secularists, but also brings to the fore just how much support they received from religious individuals and groups.

Freethought had little impact on one major group in America society, the coloureds. Ms. Jacoby discusses the reasons for this and in the process introduces us to the Negro secularist W. E. B. Du Bois, not that he appears to have had any formal connection with any freethought group. Brought up a Christian he increasingly came to regard "the church as an institution which defended such evils as slavery, colour caste, exploitation of labour and war", although this clearly points to his freethought, or if you like, secularism, having been founded on and inspired by political considerations. In 1894 he had created a storm of controversy while employed as a lecturer at Wilberforce College, a college for Negroes run by the Ohio state government and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, when he flatly refused to lead students in public prayer. He was to write as a consequence of having studies in Europe that, "Religion helped and hindered my artistic sense. I knew the old English and German hymns by heart. I loved their music but ignored their silly words with studied inattention. Grand music came at last in the religious oratorios which we learned at Fisk University but it burst on me in Berlin with the Ninth Symphony and its Hymn of Joy. I worshipped Cathedral and ceremony which I saw in Europe but I knew what I was looking at when in New York a Cardinal became a strike-breaker and the Church of Christ fought the Communism of Christianity. The cardinal in question was Patrick Hayes. In old age Du Bois joined the Communist Party as a protest against McCarthyism.

Secularists prominent in the fight for woman's rights including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Ernestine Rose, both of whom get good coverage in the book. The work of the anti-immorality campaigner Anthony Comstock in seeking to use the legislation he and his associates had inspired in an attempt to suppress the distribution of freethought and secularist works, targeting in particular the freethought publisher D. M. Bennett, whom he managed to have jailed having trick him into selling him an immoral pamphlet and sending it through the post, this being the charge, however, Comstock's real aim, as Ms. Jacobi notes, was to close down Bennett's successful journal the *Truth Seeker*. In this he failed.

It may well be that in the coverage of individual Secularists one could wish for more detail, as in the case of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. His success as a publisher is recounted, indeed his Little Blue Books sold in their hundreds of millions, but there is no mention of the attention FBI's chief J. Edgar Hoover's animosity and his attempts to have Haldeman-Julius indicted as a communist, however, unlike so many others Haldeman-Julius's great wealth made this difficult because he could afford to hire good lawyers. He was certainly a sort of ambivalent socialist but he never a member of the Communist Party, even if he did publish a gushingly uncritical biography of Stalin written by Joseph McCabe, although this was during the war when Stalin was very much an 'Uncle Joe' figure. One might add that Ms. Jacoby says Haldeman-Julius also published an edition of the bible, though while I possess the Stalin biography I have never seen a copy of this, though it would not surprise me if he did, its rather too long for the Little Blue Book format, or the other series, the Big Blue Books, in which the Stalin biography appeared.

This is a truly fine book, even if it is not about organised secularism as such, and here the title is a bit misleading, but secularism in broad terms, or secularisation if you prefer. Nevertheless it deserves a place on the shelves of anyone interested in freethought history. It is well indexed, and has a bibliography that has extended my books wanted list considerably. What is more, for a well-bound, illustrated hardback the price is reasonable, there are many paperbacks that nowhere approach its value priced far in excess of it. I do not often describe a work as being essential reading, but in this case I have not the slightest hesitation in doing so.

Robert Morrell.

THESE ARE THE TIMES, A LIFE OF THOMAS

PAINE. Trevor Griffiths. Nottingham, Spokesman. xii & 195pp. Paperback. ISBN 0 85124 695 8. £15.00

In a sense this book, the screenplay written by Trevor Griffiths for the proposed film of the in his life of Paine, well almost, as it does not take boyhood, saddens me, since its publication infers, to me at least, that the film may never be made. Sir Richard

Attenborough attempts to obtain funding for the film have not met with the success they deserve, which is a great pity, as Paine's life would make a superb film. We can but hope that the project even now will come to fruition.

Set in Britain, America and France, Griffiths recreates episodes in Paine's life with a dialogue that incorporates his opinions, and those of others, but moulded into a continuous thread with what may be described as a degree of literary license, but it should be remembered that in a film of Paine's life the scriptwriter would have no option but to combine some fiction with fact so inevitably some liberties have had to be taken even though they may upset purists, but this film has to entertain as well as inform so this is inevitable. There is humour, too, and the odd crack at Washington's expense, or expanse. The book is a good read, but I fear the price is rather on the steep side which may put people who might otherwise buy it off doing so.

Robert Morrell.

THE TROUBLE WITH TOM: The Strange Afterlife and Times of Thomas Paine. Paul Collins. 275pp. Paperback. Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN 0 7475 7768 4. £12.99.

This is a book that truly lives up to its title, a labyrinthine journey the author takes to trace the bones of Thomas Paine. After his burial in America, they were dug up by William Cobbett who brought them back to England with him, and initially lodged them in a hotel in Liverpool. Thereafter, they changed hands a number of times until they disappeared altogether.

The author starts his search in New York, initially tracking down the house that Thomas Paine died in and visiting various other sites associated with his last days, before his burial at his farm in New Rochelle.

He then journeys to England, visiting any places or sites where the bones may have been taken. He also writes about all those associated with Thomas Paine and all who wrote about him and published his works, particularly his biographer Moncure Conway, after whom Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London, is named.

One of the difficulties of the book is the immediate detail the author describes in following up his trail. The children playing in the streets he visited, the coffee he drank in cafés, nothing is spared in the minutest detail.

However, what it does demonstrate is how the influence of Thomas Paine lives on, and interest in his work that has never ceased, and nor will ever.

Martin Green.

THE POLITICS OF MEDIEVAL UNBELIEF

A summary of the 2006 Eric Paine Memorial Lecture

Dr. John H. Arnold

When one thinks of the middle ages, religion is perhaps the first feature that springs to mind, whether in a positive sense – the beauty of Chartres cathedral – or a negative one – the brutality of the Crusades. It is indeed most often assumed that the middle ages were an 'Age of Faith' – a time when a religious mindset was common to all, when miracles and the supernatural were almost commonplace, where the Church ruled the lives of many, and, in short, where people were innately and cripplingly credulous.

Such a vision of the middle ages remains important to various grand narratives about how we became the people we are today: the credulous middle ages was that which we had to escape, firstly through Reformation and Renaissance, latterly through the Enlightenment, in order to become 'modern'. Some current debates about the role of religion and the relations between East and West are inflected with this sense of the medieval. The militantly atheist line propounded by Richard Dawkins sees religion as something pernicious out of which societies must grow. In a curiously mirrored fashion, the strongly religious position (whether Islamic or Christian) sees western secularity as an historical falling away from devotion. A neo-conservative depiction of a 'clash of cultures' often depicts fundamentalist Islam as in some sense 'medieval' (in its perceived barbarity), and therefore in need of those same steps in historical 'growing up' that the west has taken: a Reformation, and an Enlightenment. In all cases, the medieval is apparently the childhood that we must escape, an hence a time of simplicity and credulity. And, perhaps from the perspective of a Thomas Paine, therefore also a pre-political time; religion as the opiate of the masses, as another great thinker put it.

But the middle ages weren't as simple as that. Whilst there were mechanisms for controlling faith, they were not as powerful as one might suppose. There was no permanent 'The Inquisition', for

example, until the later fifteenth-century. Inquisitors, prior to that period, were officials appointed to investigate heresy in particular times and places. Their success in such a task depended very much upon the support of secular powers – which was far from always forthcoming. Bishops, who had the more regular task of organising ordinary people's beliefs, might have desired a strong degree of control, but largely lacked the structural resources to bring such a thing about. In most places and times, what was most powerful was the sense of expectation from one's neighbours – the sense in which religious observance was an essential part of community.

On some occasions, however, communities could use religious ideas and imagery to act politically against power. At a local level, in complaints against priests not fulfilling their parochial tasks, and at a wider level, in critiques of rapacious landlords not living up to their God-given role as protectors. Thus, although the theology of Christendom was socially static and quietist, it could be *cited* tactically in opposition to those stated principles – as we famously hear in the cry by the 1381 rebels, 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then a gentleman?'

Perhaps even more importantly, however, one can find evidence that not all medieval people were as uniformly devout as the popular image might suggest. Some, moreover, were capable of profound scepticism. At what one might call the softest end of unbelief, there is ample evidence that, as a thirteenth-century confession manual puts it, when hearing masses '[the penitent] has quickly been brought to boredom'. Many medieval preachers noted rowdy, argumentative and disruptive audiences for their sermons – and, moreover, people simply being absent from church. Most episcopal visitation records turn up something of the latter; for example, in the parish of Burghill in 1397, eleven women from one parish were noted for failing to attend church on Sundays and feastdays, and at Dormington, 'Margaret Northyn chatters in church, disrupting the divine service'. Evidence for blasphemy is also common – some of which implies a strong belief in the God one was cursing, but some of which is more questionable. Some blasphemers, the inquisitor Nicholas Eyemerich noted, attacked the articles of faith. They might say, for example, that God could not make the weather good or make it rain, or they dishonoured the Virgin Mary, calling her a whore. People were often

accused of speaking against the faith when gambling, and in the tavern. Richard Lyllyngston of Castle Combe admitted, when questioned by his bishop in the fifteenth century, that 'whan so ever was eny prechyng or techyng of the word of god in the pulpyte, I wold contrary hit atte alehouse'.

These cases are but a fraction of the surviving evidence, and the evidence itself surely but a fraction of actual practice, since it seems unlikely that every instance of blasphemy, laxity or passing scorn was diligently recorded in some ecclesiastical archive. One can in fact point to some further, albeit somewhat rarer, instances of more pointed scepticism. The power of saints and relics was quite often questioned: for example the friend of a butcher who was paying reverence to relics of Mary Magdalen told him that 'he had not kissed her shin bone but the arm of some ass or pack animal which the clerics show to simple folk for the purpose of enriching themselves'. The Eucharist – arguably the most central mystery and symbol to medieval Catholicism – was also questioned. Medieval preachers in fact recognised that the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharist was a difficult concept: 'It is a big thing to think of, Remigio de Girolami said in a sermon, 'that the bread and wine become Christ's true body and blood ... It is a big thing to think of, that it should be in so many places, on all the altars, in heaven and on earth, in over 100, 000 places ... But God is there to help our faith, so that a man must not say: "What is this that I am supposed to believe?"'. Presumably, therefore, some men did say exactly that, despite the Dominican preacher's best efforts. Ridiculing the idea of Christ's presence in the Host is frequently found in the trials of heretics. Some of this was undoubtedly due to their divergent theologies, but in many instances when lay supporters recounted the rejection of the Host, they did so in less abstract and more sceptical terms, most commonly saying that if Christ's body was really present, 'even if it was as big as a mountain it would have been eaten up by now', given the number of times priests said mass. A French peasant, questioned by an inquisitor, admitted that he had said many times that the Host was nothing but dough, nothing but the bread that one ate every day; and that 'if the body of Christ is that corn which he has in his storehouse, he could make many more bodies of Christ'.

Even deeper scepticism can be found. Some people did not believe that the soul had eternal life, and hence that heaven and hell, Purgatory and the Resurrection were all myths. Like a modern day atheist, for some of them at least, death was simply the end. An eleventh-century chronicler tells of a tavern conversation wherein a man claimed that 'the soul of man is nothing, and in his last breath it is utterly dispersed on the breeze'. Thomas Tailour, in trouble with his bishop in the 1480s, admitted that he believed that, 'like the blowing out of a candle', the soul is destroyed upon the death of the body. He was not alone.

In all of these cases and others, one must remember that we can only know about those people who got themselves into trouble by *voicing* their scepticism. One suspects that more was lurking, now inaudible to the historian. None of this means that religion was not an important facet of medieval society; but it does suggest that medieval society was not as unquestioning as is sometimes supposed. In terms of modern debates about religion, this may have some important implications – most notably that we today, in the secular west, need to understand better how we came to be 'modern'; and that we should not assume that the presence of strong religion silences all scepticism.

John H. Arnold is Reader in Medieval History at Birkbeck College, University of London, and author of several books, including *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (Hodder Arnold, 2005)

A VISIT TO THE GRAVE AND MONUMENT OF THOMAS PAINE

P. F. Andre

Reprinted from *The Reasoner*, July 22, 1860

On the 10th March, 1860, after having resided seven years within thirty miles of the monument of a man whose country was the world, and whose religion was to do good, I at length found a convenient opportunity for paying a long contemplated visit to the spot where he had spent many of the last years of his life, and where stand his grave and monument.

These memorials are situated in the township of New Rochelle, in Westchester County, state of New York, and are distant from the city of New York 22 miles, and within two miles of the New Rochelle station of the New York and New Haven Railway.

The monument stands on the east side of the highway, between Whiteplains and New Rochelle, and is built of white marble, with a side-face bust of Paine in the centre in relief, and with this inscription beneath it:

THOMAS PAINE,
AUTHOR OF 'COMMON SENSE.'
ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION.

It was erected about 1838, and cost 1,200 dollars. A stone fence separates the small lot on which the monument stands from the grave where Paine was interred, and whence William Cobbett removed the bones on the occasion of his visit to the United States. It was the original intention of the friends and admirers of Paine, to place the monument over the site of the grave, but the owner of the land on which the grave stood, refused to sell it for such a purpose. On the day I visited the monument, I found it, I am sorry to say, bespattered with mud, which the neighbours say was thrown by 'rowdy' boys. My respect for the author of *Common Sense* was enough to impel me to devote a quarter of an hour to cleaning it, as well as I could with the nozzle of my umbrella. I must say that every one in the neighbourhood to whom I mentioned the circumstances, condemned quite as thoroughly as I did the meanness of the action.

To the east of the monument lie the farm of Paine, still called Paine Farm, and the house in which he passed the latter portion of his life, still called the Painehouse. This farm was purchased some fifteen years ago by the Paine Association, but lately sold by them to its present possessor, Mr. Hayes, an Englishman by birth. Through his courtesy, I was enabled to see the rooms which Paine occupied. They are exceedingly pleasant rooms, although low roofed, according to the fashion of farm houses of those days.

Mr. Hayes told me he has about five or six visitors a year to see the house, mostly from New York, or from England.

Mr. Hayes also told me that he possessed a grove of by far the finest mulberry trees of the neighbourhood, which were originally sent over from France to Paine; also he showed me some fine pear trees, which came from the same source.

On the opposite side of the Whiteplains highway, stands the little tavern, now a farm labourer's or 'hired man's' cottage, where Paine used to indulge a little too freely. Mrs. Bedeau, whose property it is, and who still lives in the adjoining house, and has attained the age of 77, remembers Paine well. The tavern was then owned by her mother. She speaks highly of Paine, and defends him warmly against those who asperse his memory. She denies that he was a confirmed toper; she never saw him not a master of himself. Mr. Bedeau, aged 84, and now totally blind, planted the interior of the railed spaces around Paine's monument with rose trees, briars, &c., and used to keep it kempt and in order, but there is now no one to attend to this duty.

The truth compels me to say that John Soulice, a hospitable farmer of liberal views and high character, who resides in the neighbourhood, and knew Paine, gives a more unfavourable version of Paine's proclivity for liquor in the latter days of his life. 'When Uncle Tom died – that was the nickname of Paine – we boys used to say the price of brandy would fall.'*

Mrs. Bedeau says a stray pilgrim to this shrine of the Freethinkers, occasionally visits her for the purpose of inquiry.

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