

could have been weak enough for that, they have taken care to cure me of it thoroughly." ²⁴

Paine visited Jefferson and discussed political and scientific issues. He refused to accept any public office, but continued to advise the President through correspondence on many important political issues of the day as well as to supply him with ideas on the European situation based on his rich experience abroad. Most of his time, however, was devoted to activity in aiding Elisha Palmer promote the religion of Deism in New York. He contributed articles and letters to the *Prospect* expanding some of the themes he had touched upon in *The Age of Reason*. It was unfortunate in one sense that he concentrated so largely upon religious issues, for it rendered his political activities less useful. But he was forced to elaborate his position to clear himself of unjustified charges, and he believed that the struggle against the reactionary clergy was essential for the further progress of the Jeffersonian cause in America.

But the campaign of slander increased the more he ventured to attack the strong-hold of reaction. On one occasion, when he tried to engage passage from New York to Trenton, the stagedriver refused him a seat. "My stage and horses were once struck by lightning, and I don't want him to suffer again," he told Paine to the amusement of his well-to-do passengers. Later a singer in a New York Presbyterian church was suspended for having visited him. His moderate appetite for brandy was distorted into drunkenness by cartoonists and writers. In 1806 came the greatest effrontery of all when he was denied the right to vote by Federalist officials in New Rochelle on the charge that he was not an American citizen.

Although he led an increasingly harried life, Paine enjoyed the company of "the laboring class of emigrants," and spent many enjoyable days with Robert Fulton, who shared his democratic views, observing his steamboat experiments on the Hudson. For several months in the winter of 1807 he lived with John Wesley Jarvis. The painter wrote to a friend on May 2nd, "I have had Tom Paine living with me for these five months. He is one of the most pleasant companions I have met with for an old man." ²⁵

²⁴ Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Paine, January 13, 1803, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁵ H. E. Dickson, "Day vs. Jarvis," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. lxiii, April, 1939, p. 187.