IN OUR COUNTRY there were three infidels—Paine, Franklin, and Jefferson. The colonies were filled with superstition, the Puritans with the spirit of persecution. Laws savage, ignorant, and malignant had been passed in every colony for the purpose of destroying intellectual liberty. Mental freedom was absolutely unknown. The Toleration Acts of Maryland tolerated only Christians—not infidels, not thinkers, not investigators. The charity of Roger Williams was not extended to those who denied the Bible, or suspected the divinity of Christ. It was not based upon the rights of man, but upon the rights of believers, who differed in non-essential points.

The moment the colonies began to deny the rights of the king they suspected the power of the priest. In digging down to find an excuse for fighting George the Third, they unwittingly undermined the church. They went through the Revolution together. They found that all denominations fought equally well. They also found that persons without religion had patriotism and were willing to die for fighting George the Third, they unwittingly undermined the church. They went through the Revolution together. They found that all denominations fought equally well. They also found that persons without religion had patriotism and were willing to die

2 Robert Green Ingersoll (1833-99) was the foremost orator of late 19th century America. He was the first Attorney General of Illinois. He served with distinction in the Civil War, and was a firm ally of the Republican Party of Lincoln. It was his speaking career that made him famous—perhaps the best-known American of the era. His electrifying voice rang out (un-miked!) to packed houses across the country on diverse subjects, such as, literature, politics, reconstruction, science, religion, and much more. A staunch advocate of science and reason, he roundly disputed the Religious Right of his day. He celebrated Thomas Paine; and Charles Darwin; argued for the rights of women and African-Americans. He was the friend of presidents, reformers and radicals, figures in the arts and literature, industrialists.

Ingersoll's birthplace home in Dresden NY is a museum.

https://secularhumanism.org/ingersoll-museum/

Continued on page 5, Ingersoll on Paine the Infidel
... From page 4, Ingersoll on Paine the Infidel

Having done so much for man in America, he went to France. The seeds sown by the great infidels were bearing fruit in Europe. The eighteenth century was crowning its gray hairs with the wreath of progress. Upon his arrival in France he was elected a member of the French Convention—in fact, he was selected about the same time by the people of no fewer than four Departments.

He was one of the committee to draft a constitution for France. In the Assembly, where nearly all were demanding the execution of the king, he had the courage to [speak and] vote against death. To vote against the death of the king was to vote against his own life. This was the sublimity of devotion to principle. For this he was arrested, imprisoned, and doomed to death. While under sentence of death, ...[W]hile in the gloomy cell of his prison, Thomas Paine wrote to Washington, asking him to say one word to Robespierre in favor of the author of “Common Sense.” Washington did not reply. He wrote again. Washington, the President, paid no attention to Thomas Paine, the prisoner. The letter was thrown into the wastebasket of forgetfulness, and Thomas Paine remained condemned to death. Afterward he gave his opinion of Washington at length, and I must say, that I have never found it in my heart to greatly blame him.

Thomas Paine, having done so much for political liberty, turned his attention to the superstitions of his age. He published The Age of Reason; and from that day to this, his character has been maligned by almost every priest in Christendom...... Every man who has expressed an honest thought, has been waringly referred to Thomas Paine. All his services were forgotten. No kind word fell from any pulpit. His devotion to principle, his zeal for human rights, were no longer remembered. Paine simply took the ground that it is a contradiction to call a thing a revelation that comes to us second-hand. There can be no revelation beyond the first communication. All after that is hearsay. He also showed that the prophecies of the Old Testament had no relation whatever to human liberty, should feel under obligation to Thomas Paine for the splendid service rendered by him in the darkest days of the American Revolution. In the midnight of...... [battle], “The Crisis” was the first star that glittered in the wide horizon of despair. Every good man should remember with gratitude the brave words spoken by Thomas Paine in the French Convention against the death of Louis. He said: “We will kill the king, but not the man. We will destroy monarchy, not the monarch.”

Thomas Paine was a champion, in both hemispheres, of human liberty; one of the founders and fathers of this Republic; one of the foremost men of his age. He never wrote a word in favor of God? And the reply was: “I have no wish to believe on that subject.” These were the last remembered words of Thomas Paine. He died as serenely as ever a Christian passed away. He died in the full possession of his mind, and on the very brink and edge of death proclaimed the doctrines of his life.

Every Christian, every philanthropist, every believer in human liberty, should feel under obligation to Thomas Paine for the splendid service rendered by him in the darkest days of the American Revolution. In the midnight of...... [battle], “The Crisis” was the first star that glittered in the wide horizon of despair. Every good man should remember with gratitude the brave words spoken by Thomas Paine in the French Convention against the death of Louis. He said: “We will kill the king, but not the man. We will destroy monarchy, not the monarch.”

Thomas Paine was a champion, in both hemispheres, of human liberty; one of the founders and fathers of this Republic; one of the foremost men of his age. He never wrote a word in favor of

He believed in one God and no more. He was a believer even in special providence, and he hoped for immortality.

How can the world abhor the man who said: “I believe in the equality of man, and that religious duties consist in doing justice, in loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.” —

“it is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself.” —

“The word of God is the creation which we behold.” —

“Belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man.” —

“My opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good and endeavoring to make their fellow-mortsals happy, will be happy hereafter.” —

“One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests.”——

Continued on page 6, Ingersoll on Paine the Infidel