

## A ROMAN CATHOLIC CANARD.

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### A Fabricated Account of a Scene at the Death-bed of Thomas Paine. Did Bishop Fenwick Write It?

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"I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind; my time has been spent in doing good, and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my creator God" (Will of Thomas Paine, Jan. 18, 1809).

Several newspapers, religious and secular, have lately published a long and libelous account of "The Last Hours of the Great Infidel Thomas Paine," purporting to be a letter signed "†Benedict, Bishop of Boston." The Right Rev. *Benedict* Joseph Fenwick, D.D., was born in St. Mary's county, Md., Sept., 3, 1782, was bishop of Boston in 1825, and died Aug. 11, 1846. The letter, if authentic, was written to his brother Enoch, who died in 1828. It begins thus:

"A short time before Paine died I was sent for by him. He was prompted to this by a poor Catholic woman who went to see him in his sickness, and who told him among other things that in his wretched condition, if anybody could do him good it would be a Roman Catholic priest. This woman was an American convert (formerly a shaking Quakeress), whom I had received into the church only a few weeks before. She was the bearer of this message to me from Paine. I stated the circumstance to F[ather] Kohlman at breakfast, and requested him to accompany me. After some solicitation on my part he agreed to do so, at which I was greatly rejoiced, because I was at the time young and inexperienced in the ministry, and glad to have his assistance, as I knew from the great reputation of Paine that I should have to do with one of the most impious as well as infamous of men."

Father Fenwick at this time had been a Jesuit priest about one year, was not yet twenty-seven years old,

and was sent in that very year from Georgetown, D.C., with Father Kohlman, another Jesuit, to take charge of the only Catholic church in New York city. Now there were two classes of men that Paine hated above all others, namely, Scotch tories and Catholic priests. But the writer of this letter tells us unequivocally and repeatedly that Paine sent a poor shaking Catholic Quakeress to invite a Romish priest to visit him, and that she accordingly went and summoned a young Jesuit father who had just become pastor of the only Catholic church in New York. *Credat Jesuiticus cum pelle caudæ!*

Arriving at the house where Paine lodged, the two priests were met at the door by a "decent-looking, elderly woman," who inquired if they were the Catholic priests. "For," said she, "Mr. Paine has been so much annoyed of late by ministers of other denominations calling on him that he has left express orders with me to admit no one to-day except the clergymen of the Catholic church."

Poor pestered Paine! Parsons Milledollar and Cunningham had been there, and the latter had said to him, "You have now a full view of death; you cannot live long, and whosoever does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will assuredly be damned." And to this pious and polite address Paine had replied: "Let me have none of your popish stuff. Get away with you. Good morning, good morning." And when Mr. Milledollar attempted to address him he was interrupted with the same language. And when they were gone Paine said to Mrs. Heddon, an elderly woman employed to wait on him, "Don't let 'em come here again; they trouble me" (Sherwin's Paine, 220). Other clergymen had spoken to him in a similar manner, and were similarly repelled. But after all this we are told that Paine sent for a Jesuit and gave orders to his pious Protestant attendant to let in none that day but Catholics! *Credat holy friar!*

The two priests entered the parlor. Paine was asleep, and the housekeeper said it wouldn't do to wake him, it made him so cross. Mr. Sherwood, a neighbor, who frequently visited Paine in his illness, says that old Mrs. Hedden was a religious bigot, and never let slip an opportunity of teasing Paine with her clattering tongue, and that she was artfully sent by priests to attend on him during his illness. She would frequently read the Bible to him, but to this he paid no attention (Sherwin's Paine, 222, 226).

The Jesuits resolved to wait until Paine awoke. Meanwhile the woman said to them:

"Gentlemen, I really wish you may succeed with Mr. Paine, for he is laboring under great distress of mind ever since he was informed by his physician that he cannot possibly live, and must die shortly. He sent for you to-day because he was told that if any one could do him good you might."

*Credat Joseph Cook!*

The next sentence of this woman's reported conversation is remarkable:

"Possibly he may think you know of some remedy which his physicians are ignorant of."

As if Dr. Manley and other regular physicians were to be superseded by the medical skill of a youthful priest who had recently arrived from the Jesuit college of Georgetown, D. C. *Credat ex-Surgeon-General Hammond!*

But now comes a sentence for which we happen to have a prior parallel in a letter written Sept. 27, 1809, by Paine's physician, Dr. Manley, at the request of the malignant libeler, Cheetham, and published that same year. Here are the parallel sentences:

*From Dr. Manley's Letter, 1809.*

He would call out during his paroxysms of distress, without intermission, 'O Lord, help me! God help me! Jesus Christ help me!' etc., repeating the same expressions without the least variation, in a tone of voice that would alarm the house."

*From the Fenwick Letter, 1849.*

"'O Lord, help me!' he will exclaim in his paroxysms of distress, 'God help me! Jesus Christ help me!' repeating the same expression without the least variation, in a tone of voice that would alarm the house."

Here is a sentence of thirty-seven words plagiarized from Dr. Manley's letter. The only words that differ from Manley's are "will exclaim in" for "would call out during." Four words are transposed and two omitted by the literary thief. This evidence alone stamps the Fenwick letter as a fabrication. Its first publication was in the *United States Catholic Magazine* for 1846, and in the *Catholic Herald*, Oct. 15, 1846. That was the year Bishop Fenwick died, and was eighteen years after the death of the brother to whom it purports to have been addressed. And now the question for the Catholic church in America to answer is, Did Bishop Fenwick write it? *Credat Leo XIII.*

But now we propose to prove that Dr. Manley's statement is untruthful. It is certainly a gross perversion of the facts. He says he was called upon by accident to visit the patient on the 25th of February, 1809; that the next day he related his condition to two of Paine's friends, one being an executor of his estate (the will is dated Jan. 18th, and the executors named are Walter Morton, Thomas Addis Emmett, and Mrs. Bonneville, all legatees), and being requested to pay him particular attention, he from that time considered Paine under his care. It certainly looks as if Dr. Manley sought to be employed, and his whole conduct was, to say the least, unfair and deceitful. Soon after writing that letter he joined the church. It was written at the solicitation of Paine's enemy and calumniator Cheetham, to be incorporated into Cheetham's "Life of Paine," then preparing for the press. The author solicited Dr. Manley's observations on Paine's "temper and habits, the cause and nature of his disease, the kind of persons by whom he was visited during his illness, their general conversation with him respecting his Deistical works, his own remarks, opinions, and behavior" (Cheetham's Paine, 300). Five days after the date of that re-

quest Dr. Manley has an answer completed, filling eleven pages of Cheetham's lying biography. The doctor says:

"I hasten, in conformity to your wishes, to communicate the information I possess respecting its subject. Though my opportunity has been great, you will, no doubt, observe *my knowledge to be very limited*" (Ibid).

The house where Paine died was owned by Amasa Woodsworth, who was living as late as 1839 in East Cambridge, Boston. In that year he made an authorized statement to Gilbert Vale about Paine's last days, in which he characterizes Dr. Manley's published account as false. He says that he visited Paine every day for six weeks before his death, frequently sat up with him, and did so on the last two nights of his life. He was always there with Dr. Manley, assisted him in lifting Paine, and was present when the doctor asked him if he wished to believe that Jesus Christ was the son of God, and heard Paine's emphatic answer, "I have no wish to believe on that subject" (Vale's Paine, 156).

Now at that very time Dr. Manley says he introduced the subject to Paine by saying:

"Why do you call on Jesus Christ to help you? Do you believe he can help you? Do you believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ? Come, now, answer me honestly. I want an answer from the lips of a dying man, for I verily believe that you will not live twenty-four hours.' I waited some time at the end of every question; he did not answer, but ceased to exclaim in the above manner. Again I addressed him: 'Mr. Paine, you have not answered my questions. Will you answer them? Allow me to ask again, "Do you believe, or, let me qualify the question, Do you wish to believe, that Jesus Christ is the son of God?"' After a pause of some minutes he answered, 'I have no wish to believe on that subject'" (Cheetham's Paine, 307).

These were Paine's last words, and were uttered in the hearing of Dr. Manley and Amasa Woodsworth. we now quote from the latter's authorized statement in 1839, made to Paine's biographer, Vale:

"He informs us that he has openly reprov'd the doctor for the falsity contained in the *spirit of that letter*, boldly declaring before

Dr. Manley, who is yet living, that nothing which he saw justified his (the doctor's) insinuations."

The fact was, as Woodsworth states, that Paine was too ill and too much tortured to converse on abstract subjects. And anyone can see that Dr. Manley was impertinent and cruel in insisting upon an answer to such a question from a dying man. And his repeated statement about Paine's calling on Jesus Christ to help him is a gross perversion. For this same Woodsworth in 1842 was asked by Philip Graves, M.D., if Paine recanted and called upon God to save him. And Woodsworth replied :

"No. He died as he had taught. He had a sore upon his side, and when we turned him it was very painful, and he would cry out, 'O God!' or something like that. But that was nothing, for he believed in a God" (Ingersoll's Paine Vindicated, Truth Seeker Tract No. 123, p. 21).

Another probable source of this perversion of facts is an extract from the journal of Stephen Grellet, a Quaker preacher, made in the fall of 1809. He records the falsehoods of Mary Roscoe. We quote the last few lines :

"She told him [Paine] that when very young his 'Age of Reason' was put into her hands, but that the more she read in it the more dark and distressed she felt, and she threw the book into the fire. 'I wish I had done as you,' he replied, 'for if the devil ever had any agency in any work, he has had it in my writing that book.' When going to carry him some refreshments, she repeatedly heard him uttering the language, 'O Lord!' 'Lord God!' or 'Lord Jesus, hav mercy on me!'" (Ibid, pp. 13, 14).

The reader will now begin to see the probable source of the Manley inspiration. Cheetham wanted evidence of Paine's recantation. The lying Mary Roscoe, who probably never visited Paine, was reporting to her Quaker brethren that Paine regretted his Deistical work and called on Jesus to have mercy on him.

Ten years later, when Mary Roscoe had become Mary Hinsdale, another Quaker, Charles Collins, learning that William Cobbett contemplated writing a life

of Paine, went to him and wanted to persuade him that Paine had recanted. Cobbett laughed at him, and sent him away. The wily Quaker came again and again; he wanted Cobbett to say, "It was said that Paine recanted." "No," said Cobbett; "but I will say that you said it, and that you tell a lie, unless you prove the truth of what you say. Give me proof, name persons, state times and precise words, or I will denounce you as a liar." Friend Charley was posed, but something had to be done. He at last brought a paper cautiously and craftily drawn up and signed with initials. Cobbett compelled him to give the full name; it was Mary Hinsdale. As soon as practicable, Cobbett called on Friend Mary. She shuffled, evaded, equivocated. It was so long ago she could not speak positively of anything; she had never seen the paper; had never given Friend Charley authority to say anything in her name. And finally she said:

"I tell thee that I have no recollection of any person or thing that I saw at Thomas Paine's house" (Vale's Paine, 183, 184).

The falsehood about Paine's recantation is now so apparent that no intelligent and reputable person pretends to believe it. The following letter, therefore, from the Rev. A. W. Cornell, of Harpersville, N. Y., to the *New York World* in 1877, will be highly amusing to those who never read it before:

"I see by your paper that Bob Ingersoll discredits Mary Hinsdale's story. . . . Ingersoll is right in his conjecture that Mary Roscoe and Mary Hinsdale was the same person. Her maiden name was Roscoe. . . . My mother was a Roscoe, a niece of Mary Roscoe, and lived with her for some time. I have heard her relate the story of Tom Paine's dying remorse, as told her by her aunt, who was a witness to it. She says (in a letter I have just received from her) 'he (Tom Paine) suffered fearfully from remorse, and renounced his Infidel principles, calling on God to forgive him, and wishing his pamphlets and books to be burnt, saying he could not die in peace until it was done'" (Ingersoll's Paine Vindicated, Truth Seeker Tract No. 123, p. 57).

Reader, what do you think about the case now? The Rev. A. W. Cornell says in another part of his

letter, "No one who knew that good lady [Mary Roscoe Hinsdale] would for one moment doubt her veracity, or question her testimony." *Credat Cornell!*

But let us return to the Fenwick letter. The talk of the old housekeeper to the Jesuit priests continues:

"Sometimes he cries, 'O God! what have I done to suffer so much?' Then shortly after, 'But there is no God!' And again a little after, 'Yet, if there should be, what will become of me hereafter?'"

The original of this falsehood will be found in the journal of the Quaker Grellet in 1809, as quoted above. Mary Roscoe said that she repeatedly heard Paine say, "O Lord!" "O God!" or "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me." And Parson Cornell says her veracity was beyond question. But it so happens that the Quaker merchant and preacher Willet Hicks, whose standing was beyond reproach, discredits Mary's story altogether. He was in the habit of visiting Paine, and sending little delicacies to him by his daughters, one of whom afterward stated that their hired girl Mary Roscoe "once wished to go with her but was refused" (Vale's Paine, 177-178).

In 1841 Gilbert Vale interviewed the venerable Willet Hicks, concerning the last hours of Paine. The old gentleman said that his servant Mary Hinsdale never saw Paine to his knowledge. After Paine's death, the Friends annoyed and pressed him to say something detrimental to Paine. He was beset by them here and in England, where he went soon after. They wished to convict Paine of calling on Jesus, and they would say: "Did thee never hear him call on Christ?" And he added:

"You cannot conceive what a deal of trouble I had; and as for money, I could have had any sums if I would have said anything against Thomas Paine, or if I would even have consented to remain silent. They informed me that the doctor [Manley!] was willing to say something that would satisfy them if I would engage to be silent only. But, they observed, he (the doctor) knows the standing of Willet Hicks, and that he knows all about



Paine, and if he (Hicks) should contradict what I say [*i. e.*, what the doctor says] he would destroy my [*i. e.*, the doctor's] testimony."

The reader will perceive from this that Dr. Manley's testimony might have been still more false but for the fear of Willet Hicks.

In conclusion, Mr. Hicks said to Mr. Vale, who took down the words and published them :

"Thomas Paine was a good man—an honest man."

And with great indignation he added :

"He was not a man to talk to Mary Hinsdale" (Vale's Paine, 178, 179).

When Cobbett had got from Mary Hinsdale a recantation of the falsehood that Paine had recanted, he sought to bring Friend Charley's nose to the grindstone; but Charley had left town for fear of the yellow fever, and Cobbett soon returned to England.

Some years afterward this same Collins called at the house of Gilbert Vale to beg him not to leave the *Beacon* at his house. Mr. Vale then asked Collins what induced him to publish the account of Mary Hinsdale. Collins said he thought it true; he believed she had seen Paine, who might confess to a girl what he would not to Willet Hicks. He knew that Hicks and many other respected Friends did not believe it, but yet it might be true. Vale asked him what he thought of her character now. He replied: "Some of our Friends believe she indulges in opiates, and do not give her credit for truth." "Do you believe they are justified in their opinions?" said Vale. "Oh, yes," said Collins; "I believe they speak the truth, but this does not affect her testimony when a young woman; she might then have spoken the truth" (Ibid, 185, 186).

No more need be said on the question of the veracity of Mary Roscoe Hinsdale, or whether the dying Deist said in her hearing, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me." Nor will any intelligent reader of Paine's "Age of Reason" believe that he ever cried out in the hear-

ing of his housekeeper, "But there is no God!" Or that he ever said in his senses, "Yet if there should be, what will become of me hereafter?" *Credat Mrs. Partington!*

The old housekeeper continued her talk to the Jesuits, as reported in the Fenwick letter:

"Thus he will continue some time, when on a sudden he will scream as if in terror and agony, and call out to me by name. On one of these occasions, which are very frequent, I went to him and inquired what he wanted. 'Stay with me,' he replied, 'for God's sake, for I cannot bear to be left alone.' I then observed that I could not always be with him, as I had much to attend to in the house. 'Then,' said he, 'send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone.' I never saw, she concluded, a more unhappy, a more forsaken man; it seems as if he cannot reconcile himself to die."

This is borrowed from Dr. Manley, who says:

"He would not be left alone night or day; he not only required to have some person with him, but he must see that he or she was there, and would not allow his curtain to be closed at any time; and if, as would sometimes unavoidably happen, he was left alone, he would scream and holla until some person came to him."

The doctor had previously said that at first Paine was satisfied to be left alone during the day, but later he was afraid he should die when unattended. And though he professed to be above the fear of death, some parts of his conduct were with difficulty reconcilable with his belief. But he further states that Paine's expressed anxiety was concerning the disposal of his body, an application being pending for an interment in the Friends' burying-ground, which was at last rejected. And in this conversation the doctor reports Paine as saying, what one may well imagine he would, "I think I can say what they make Jesus Christ to say—'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'" Such expressions may be used by sick or distressed people, and it is easy to torture them into profanity. But Paine was never charged with profanity of speech, and Dr. Manley introduced the subject of religion to him by saying:

"You have never been in the habit of mixing in your conversation words of coarse meaning; you have never indulged in the practice of profane swearing."

We now return to the Fenwick letter. Paine having awoke, the two Jesuits were conducted into his room :

"On entering we found him just getting out of his slumber. A more wretched being in appearance I never before beheld. He was lying in a bed, sufficiently decent of itself, but at present besmeared with filth."

O holy mother! Did the "decent-looking elderly woman," who was expecting the priests to call that day, introduce them to the dying man in a bed besmeared with filth? Why did not Dr. Manley or the executors discharge such a nasty nurse? *Credat Lord Dundreary!*

"His look was that of a man greatly tortured in mind; his eyes haggard, his countenance forbidding, and his whole appearance that of one whose better days had been one continual scene of debauch."

Paine was troubled in mind about his burial, just as Voltaire was before him. Dr. Manley argued with him that that should be a matter of least concern. Paine answered "that he had nothing else to talk about, and that he would as lief talk of his death as of anything; but that he was not so indifferent about his corpse as I appeared to be." The description of Paine's person in the Fenwick letter is borrowed from various accounts by his lying adversaries in those times. *Credat Dr. Talmage!*

"His only nourishment at this time, we are informed, was nothing more than milk punch, in which he indulged to the full extent of his weak state."

Did the scholarly bishop of Boston, ex-president of Georgetown College, commit the solecism, "only nothing more than?" *Credat Artium Magister!*

When Dr. Manley first saw Paine he had been dispensing with the usual quantity of stimulus, which privation seemed to make him worse, and he had just

resumed it. And the doctor further says, "He never slept without the assistance of an anodyne."

The Fenwick letter proceeds :

"He had partaken, undoubtedly, but very recently of it, as the sides and corners of his mouth exhibited very unequivocal traces of it, as well as of blood which had also followed in the track and left its mark on the pillow. His face to a certain extent had also been besmeared with it."

Shame on such a nurse! At this time Paine's executors were paying \$20 a week for the sick man's board and attendance. Why didn't this "decent-looking" nurse wipe her patient's face before bringing in these two priests? *Credat Mark Twain!*

Dr. Manley says that, about a fortnight after his first attendance on the patient,

"He became very sore, the water which he passed in bed exoriating the parts to which it applied, and this kind of ulceration, which was sometimes very extensive, continued in a greater or less degree till the time of his death. . . . In this deplorable state, with confirmed dropsy, attended with frequent cough, vomiting, and hiccough, he continued growing from bad to worse, till the morning of the 8th of June, when he died. . . . During the last three weeks his situation was such that his decease was confidently expected every day, his ulcers having assumed a gangrenous appearance, being excessively fetid, and discolored blisters having taken place on the soles of his feet, without any ostensible cause, which baffled the usual attempts to arrest their progress; and when we consider his advanced age, the feebleness of his constitution, his constant practice of using ardent spirits *ad libitum*, till the commencement of his last illness, so far from wondering that he died so soon, we are constrained to ask, How did he live so long?"

Mark the language—"using ardent spirits *ad libitum* till the commencement of his last illness." The doctor is unwilling to attest the *ad libitum* indulgence during the last sickness, and what did he know about prior indulgence? It looks as if Cheetham had a hand in the draft of the Manley letter. The doctor evidently stopped the diet of milk punch and prescribed morphine; for he says the patient never slept without the assistance of an anodyne.

The stories about Paine's beastly intemperance are

all lies. They were started by Cheetham, the convicted libeler, and were continued by Grant Thorburn, who after Paine's death was compelled by advice of his counsel, the late Horace Holden, to retract a libel about Mrs. Bonneville, if we remember rightly, but incidentally about the deceased Infidel. Perhaps the most plausible authentic testimony against Paine's sobriety was given by Carver, who invited him to board at his house. Nothing was said about charging for board, and Paine remained with him some months.

While there Paine had a stroke of apoplexy, and for a while had to have a nurse. Carver got straitened for money, and sent Paine a bill for board for himself and nurse. Paine was indignant, and was going to pay it and cut Carver's friendship. But his friends said the charge was exorbitant and persuaded him to resist payment. Then Carver wrote a scurrilous letter in which he accused Paine of helping himself too freely from Carver's demijohn of brandy, and pretending that it was a stroke of apoplexy that caused him to fall down stairs. But that it was apoplexy appears from Dr. Manley's letter, who says he found the patient in a "fever, and very apprehensive of an attack of apoplexy, as he stated that he had had that disease before, and at this time felt a degree of vertigo." And in August, 1806, Paine wrote to his farm tenant Dean, saying that he had a stroke of apoplexy, Sunday, Aug. 15th, the fit taking him on the stairs, that he was supposed to be dead at first, and had not been able to get out of bed since. "I consider the scene I have passed through," he writes, "as an experiment on dying, and I find that death has no terrors for me."

For a complete refutation of the libels about Paine's intemperance, see Vale's "Life of Paine," and Ingersoll's "Vindication of Paine," Truth Seeker Tract No. 123. Paine intended to make Carver one of his legatees, but after this affair he renounced him. The bill was amicably settled by Paine's friends, and Carver

confessed that he wrote in anger. But he was angrier still some years later to see the correspondence republished by Grant Thorburn, and cut it out of the book. He said that Cheetham first printed the letter without his consent for base purposes. And when Paine was on his death-bed Carver wrote him a tender letter of apology and sympathy, which is published in the preface of Vale's "Life of Paine." Jarvis, the celebrated portrait painter, with whom Paine lived after leaving Carver, says that Paine was neither dirty in his habits nor drunken.

In a compendium of the "Life of Paine" by the same author (New York, 1837) Mr. Vale says:

"In reply to a query which we recently put to Col. Burr, as to Mr. Paine's alleged vulgarity, intemperance, and want of cleanliness, as disseminated by those who wished it true, he remarked, with dignity: 'Sir, he dined at my table!' Then, am I to understand that he was a gentleman? 'Certainly, sir,' replied Col. Burr; 'I always considered Mr. Paine a gentleman, a pleasant companion, a good-natured and intelligent man, decidedly temperate, and with a proper regard to his personal appearance, whenever I saw him.'"

But to return to the Fenwick letter:

"As soon as we had seated ourselves F[ather] Kohlman, in a very mild tone of voice, informed him that we were Catholic priests and were come on his invitation to see him. Paine made no reply."

They had come on his invitation, and he had instructed the housekeeper to admit that day none but Catholic priests, and yet they said to him: "We are Catholic priests, come on your invitation!" *Credat tonsured monk!*

"After a short pause F[ather] Kohlman proceeded thus, addressing himself to Paine in the French language, thinking that as Paine had been in France he was probably acquainted with that language (which however was not the fact) and might better understand what he said, as he had at that time greater facility, and could express himself better, in it than in the English."

Perhaps Father Kohlman, whose name is a German one, could talk French better than English; but when the writer says that Paine, who had lived nine years

in Paris, was not acquainted with the French language,  
*Credat Ollendorf!*

The newspaper copy of this letter omits the French; we supply it from the lives of "Deceased Bishops," published by O'Shea, New York, 1872.

"Mons. Paine, j'ai lu votre livre intitulé *L'Age de la Raison*, ou vous avez attaque l'écriture sainte avec une violence, sans bornes, et d'autres de vos écrits publiés en France, et je suis persuadé que"—

"Paine here interrupted him abruptly, and in a sharp tone of voice, ordering him to speak English thus: "Speak English, man; speak English."

As if Paine could not understand French! for that is not only the inference but the fact alleged by the writer. As if Paine had to wait until forty words of a foreign language were spoken before he interrupted the speaker! And as if Father Fenwick many years afterward could report the very words spoken in French, and remembered that Father Kohlman was interrupted at the particle *que!* *Credat notre Dame!*

The apocryphal character of the Fenwick letter is now so apparent that perhaps further comment will be superfluous. The writer translates the beginning of the sentence, and has Father Kohlman complete it with variations, thus:

"Mr. Paine, I have read your book entitled, the "Age of Reason," as well as your other writings against the Christian religion, and am at a loss to imagine how a man of your good sense could have employed his talents in attempting to undermine what, to say nothing of its divine establishment, the wisdom of ages has deemed most conducive to the happiness of man. The Christian religion, sir—"

"That's enough, sir, that's enough," said Paine, again interrupting him. "I see what you would be about; I wish to hear no more from you, sir. My mind is made up on that subject. I look upon the whole of the Christian scheme to be a tissue of absurdities and lies, and J. C. [*sic*] to be nothing more than a cunning knave and an impostor."

Any one who has read the "Age of Reason" knows that Paine never could have said that Jesus Christ was a knave and an impostor. *Credat ignoramus!*

The next three paragraphs being omitted in the

newspaper copy, we supply them from the book. The canard is incomplete without them :

“F[ather] Kohlman here attempted to speak again, when Paine, with a lowering countenance, ordered him instantly to be silent, and to trouble him no more. ‘I hav told you already that I wish to hear nothing more from you.’

“‘The Bible, sir,’ said F. Kohlman, still attempting to speak, ‘is a sacred and divine book, which has stood the test and criticism of abler pens than yours—pens which have at least made some show of argument, and—’

“‘Your Bible,’ returned Paine, contains nothing but fables; yes, fables, and I have proved it to a demonstration.’

“All this time I looked upon the monster with pity mingled with indignation at his blasphemy. [Here the newspaper copy begins again]. I felt a degree of horror at thinking that in a very short time he would be cited to appear before the tribunal of his God, whom he so shockingly blasphemed, with all his sins upon him. Seeing that F. Kohlman had completely failed in making any impression upon him, and that Paine would listen to nothing that came from him, nor would even suffer him to speak, I finally concluded to try what effect I might have. I accordingly commenced with observing:

“‘Mr. Paine, you will certainly allow there exists a God, and that this God cannot be indifferent to the conduct and action of his creatures.’

“‘I will allow nothing, sir,’ he hastily replied. ‘I shall make no concessions.’

“‘Well, sir, if you will listen calmly for one moment,’ said I, ‘I will prove to you that there is such a being, and I will demonstrate from his very nature that he cannot be an idle spectator of our conduct.’

“‘Sir, I wish to hear nothing you have to say. I see your object, gentlemen, is to trouble me; I wish you to leave the room.’

“This he spoke in an exceedingly angry tone, so much that he foamed at the mouth.

“‘Mr. Paine,’ I continued, ‘I assure you our object in coming hither was purely to do you good. We had no other motive. We had been given to understand that you wished to see us, and we are come accordingly, because it is a principle with us never to refuse our services to a dying man asking for them. But for this we should not have come, for we never obtrude upon any individual.’

“Paine, on hearing this, seemed to relax a little. In a milder tone than he had hitherto used he replied:

“‘You can do me no good now; it is too late. I have tried different physicians, but their remedies have all failed. I have nothing now to expect’ (this he spoke with a sigh) ‘but a speedy dissolution. My physicians have indeed told me as much.’

“‘You have misunderstood,’ said I, immediately, to him; ‘we



are not come to prescribe any remedies for your bodily complaints; we only come to make you an offer of our ministry for the good of your immortal soul, which is in great danger of being forever cast off by the Almighty on account of your sins, and especially for the crime of having vilified and rejected his word and uttered blasphemies against his Son.'

"Paine, on hearing this, was roused into a fury; he gritted his teeth, turned and twisted himself several times in his bed, uttering all the while the bitterest imprecations."

Dr. Manley does not describe the patient as able to turn and twist in his bed, and he expressly says he was not a profane man. But this writer says he uttered the bitterest imprecations. *Credat Anthony Comstock!*

"I firmly believe that such was the rage in which he was at the time that if he had a pistol he would have shot one of us, for he conducted himself more like a madman than a rational creature."

What a lucky escape for Father Fenwick! Just think of the youthful priest being sent straight to paradise by a pistol shot from the trembling hand of the dying Infidel! *Credat George Francis Train!*

"'Begone!' said he, 'and trouble me no more. I was in peace,' he continued, 'till you came.'

"'We know better than that,' replied F. Kohlman; 'we know that you cannot be in peace; there can be no peace for the wicked; God has said it.'"

And why didn't he add, "Your housekeeper has confirmed it?" *Credat Judge Benedict!*

"'Away with you, and your God, too; leave the room instantly,' he exclaimed; 'all that you have uttered are [*sic*] lies, filthy lies, and if I had a little more time [and strength?] I would prove it, as I did about your impostor Jesus Christ.'"

In the "Age of Reason" Paine says of Jesus Christ, "He was a virtuous and amiable man." Now he tells the Jesuits that he was an impostor! *Credat Beelzebub!*

"'Monster!' exclaimed F. Kohlman in a burst of zeal; 'you will hav no more time; your hour has arrived. Think rather of the awful account you have already to offer, and implore pardon of God. Provoke no longer his just indignation upon your head.'

“Paine here again ordered us to retire in the highest pitch of his voice, and seemed a very maniac with his rage and madness. ‘Let us go,’ said I to F. Kohlman, ‘we have nothing more to do here; he seems to be entirely abandoned by God; further words are lost upon him.’”

Yes, of course; and why should not the Jesuits have discovered that at first? Was it not evident to the dullest mind? And how thin the pretense that after repeatedly refusing to hear any argument about the Bible and Christianity Paine relaxed when told that they had come purely to do him good, and at his own invitation, and that he then expected them to prescribe some remedy for his disease! Their persistence was far greater than that of the hypocritical Manley. The insolent priests did not go until ordered to do so some six times. *Credat Diabolus ridens!*

“Upon this we both withdrew from the room, and left the unfortunate man to his thoughts. I never before or since beheld a more hardened wretch. This you may rely upon; it is a faithful and correct account of the transaction.”

*Credat Baron Munchausen!*

The newspaper copy adds what the book does not, to wit:

“I remain your affectionate brother,

“† BENEDICT, Bishop of Boston.”

*Gloria patri Benedicto!*

And now we challenge the dignitaries of the Catholic church to produce the original letter and prove who wrote it. We do not believe that Bishop Fenwick ever saw it. It is a fabrication, like the Decretals of the primitive popes, and the apocryphal gospels of the early Catholic church. By such forgeries Christianity was propagated through the Dark Ages; but they only serve a contrary purpose now.

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for Paine” (Rev. xvi, 10).

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