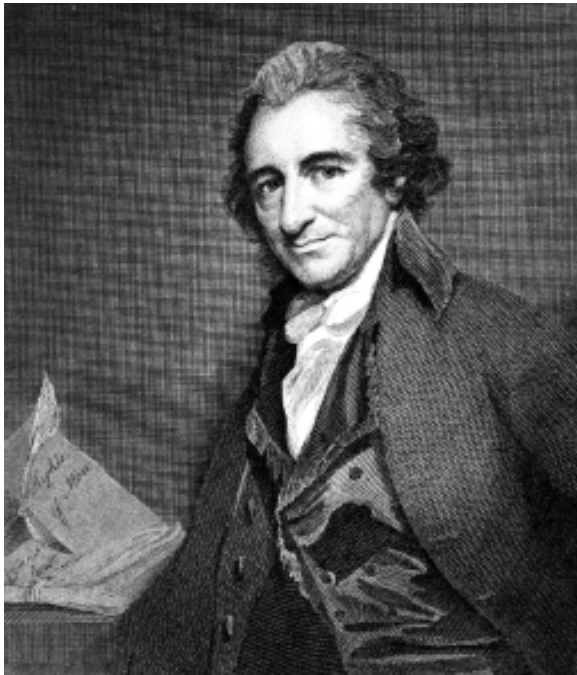


Thomas Paine and his Prophetic Dream



Thomas Paine was a man of words, whose writings sparked passions for freedom on both sides of the Atlantic. He had recently emigrated to America, under encouragement from Benjamin Franklin, when he had a dream of the forth coming Revolutionary War. His vivid dream of war made a very strong impression on him. It was published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in June of 1775, under the title “The Dream Interpreted.” Thomas Paine’s dream would have a tremendous influence on his writings and the destiny of a nation. Through his dream, he saw the struggle with England and America’s greatness after the war, which he so eloquently put into words. How coincidental for Thomas Paine to run into a stranger on an infrequently traveled trail in the woods, who could so profoundly interpret his prophetic dream which would become his fate and life’s work.

American history has not given Thomas Paine proper credit for his contributions to the Revolutionary War and foundation of the Republic. As Thomas A. Edison noted of Thomas Paine:

He was the equal of Washington in making American liberty possible. Where Washington performed Paine devised and wrote. The deeds of one in the field were matched by the deeds of the other with his pen. Washington himself appreciated Paine at his true worth. Franklin knew him for a great patriot and clear thinker. He was a friend and confidant of Jefferson. ...Paine's teachings have been debarred from schools everywhere and his views of life misrepresented until his memory is hidden in shadows, or he is looked upon as of unsound mind.¹

Perhaps it is because he was born in England, not America, or his later criticism of George Washington. Whatever the reason, the United States was blessed to have Thomas Paine and his writings at such a critical time in American history. It is not a stretch to say, that if there were no Thomas Paine, there may not have been a United States of America.

The Dream Interpreted

PARCHED with thirst and wearied with a fatiguing journey to Virginia, I turned out of the road to shelter myself among the shades; in a little time I had the good fortune to light on a spring, and the refreshing draught went sweetly down. How little of luxury does nature want! This cooling stream administered more relief than all the wines of Oporto; I drank and was satisfied; my fatigue abated, my wasted spirits were reinforced, and 'tis no wonder after such a delicious repast that I sunk insensibly into slumber. The wildest fancies in that state of forgetfulness always appear regular and connected; nothing is wrong in a dream, be it ever so unnatural. I am apt to think that the wisest men dream the most inconsistently: for as the judgment has nothing or very little to do in regulating the circumstances of a dream, it necessarily follows that the more powerful and creative the imagination is, the wilder it runs in that state of unrestrained invention: While those who are unable to wander out of the track of common thinking when awake, never exceed the boundaries of common nature when asleep.

But to return from my digression, which in this place is nothing more than that wandering of fancy which every dreamer is entitled to, and which cannot in either case be applied to myself, as in the dream I am about to relate I was only a spectator, and had no other business to do than to remember.

To what scene or country my ideas had conveyed themselves, or whether they had created a region on purpose to explore, I know not, but I saw before me one of the most pleasing landscapes I have ever beheld. I gazed at it, till my mind partaking of the prospect became incorporated therewith, and felt all the tranquillity of the place. In this state of ideal happiness I sat down on the side of a mountain, totally forgetful of the world I had left behind me. The most delicious fruits presented themselves to my hands, and one of the clearest rivers that ever watered the earth rolled along at the foot of the mountain, and invited me to drink. The distant hills were blue with the tincture of the skies, and seemed as if they were the threshold of the celestial region.

But while I gazed the whole scene began to change, by an almost insensible gradation. The sun, instead of administering life and health, consumed everything with an intolerable heat. The verdure withered. The hills appeared burnt and black. The fountains dried away; and the atmosphere became a motionless lake of air, loaded with pestilence and death. After several days of wretched suffocation, the sky grew darkened with clouds from every quarter, till one extended storm excluded the face of heaven. A dismal silence took place, as if the earth, struck with a general panic, was listening like a criminal to the sentence of death. The glimmering light with which the sun feebly penetrated the clouds began to fail, till Egyptian darkness added to the horror.

The beginning of the tempest was announced by a confusion of distant thunders, till at length a general discharge of the whole artillery of heaven was poured down upon the earth. Trembling I shrunk into the side of a cave, and dreaded the event. The mountain shook, and threatened me with instant destruction. The rapid lightning at every blaze exhibited the landscape of a world on fire, while the accumulating torrent, not in rain, but floods of water, resembled another deluge.

At length the fury of the storm abated, and nature, fatigued with fear and watching, sank into rest. But when the morning rose, and the universal lamp of heaven emerged from the deep, how was I struck with astonishment! I expected to have seen a world in ruins, which nothing but a new creation could have restored. Instead of which, the prospect was lovely and inviting, and had all the promising appearance of exceeding its former glory.

The air, purged of its poisonous vapours, was fresh and healthy. The dried fountains were replenished, the waters sweet and wholesome. The sickly earth, recovered to new life, abounded with vegetation. The groves were musical with innumerable songsters, and the long-deserted fields echoed with the joyous sound of the husbandman. All, all was felicity; and what I had dreaded as an evil, became a blessing. At this happy reflection I awoke; and having refreshed myself with another draught from the friendly spring, pursued my journey.

After travelling a few miles I fell in with a companion, and as we rode through a wood but little frequented by travellers, I began, for the sake of chatting away the tediousness of the journey, to relate my dream. I think, replied my friend, that I can interpret it: That beautiful country which you saw is America. The sickly state you beheld her in, has been coming on her for these ten years past. Her commerce has been drying up by repeated restrictions, till by one merciless edict the ruin of it is completed. The pestilential atmosphere represents that ministerial corruption which surrounds and exercises its dominion over her, and which nothing but a storm can purify.

The tempest is the present contest, and the event will be the same. She will rise with new glories

from the conflict, and her fame be established in every corner of the globe; while it will be remembered to her eternal honour, that she has not sought the quarrel, but has been driven into it. He who guides the natural tempest will regulate the political one, and bring good out of evil. In our petition to Britain we asked but for peace; but the prayer was rejected. The cause is now before a higher court, the court of providence, before whom the arrogance of kings, the infidelity of ministers, the general corruption of government, and all the cobweb artifice of courts, will fall confounded and ashamed.²

End of The Dream Interpreted

Thomas Paine was born in Thetford, England on January 29th, 1737. He had a younger sister Elizabeth, who was born in August of 1738. He grew up in a poor Quaker household at a time when Quakers in Thetford were considered to be “non-conformist.” His mother was said to be “a woman of sour temper and an eccentric character.” From an early age, many of these influences and others would shape the character and thinking of Thomas Paine. Of his younger years in England, he would later write, “my father being of the Quaker profession, it was my good fortune to have an exceeding good moral education, and a tolerable stock of useful learning.”³

Thomas Paine’s interest in America started at an early age. He explained, “I happened, when a schoolboy, to pick up a pleasing natural history of Virginia, and my inclination from that day of seeing the western side of the Atlantic never left me.”⁴ In his younger years, he worked in his father’s business trade of stay-making [woman’s corsets]. Looking for adventure, he attempted to sail on a ship named “Terrible,” headed by Captain Death. “He was over taken by his father on board, and [bodily] carried home again.”⁵ Fortuitous for Thomas Paine, as the ship lost a battle engagement with the loss of one hundred and seventy-five of its two hundred men on board. He would get his taste for adventure on the high seas satisfied when he later served on the ship King of Prussia. After his adventures at sea, he struck out on his own.

Thomas Paine found employment as a stay-maker and married Mary Lambert in 1759. She died the following year. He made a career move and entered the excise branch of the government. In 1761, he became a tax collector and married the daughter of his landlord Elizabeth Ollive. As a tax collector he lobbied for better wages and working conditions. He saw firsthand the corruption of Government. He saw a King not following the rule of law, making new rules to fit his whim. He also saw the political influence in Parliament as he lobbied for better pay. High taxes on spirits forced many into smuggling; enforcing the Excise Acts was a dangerous profession. In 1772, he wrote a small pamphlet called the “Case of the Officers of Excise” arguing for better pay and critical of excise officers. He was dismissed on false charges and separated from his wife soon afterwards.

It was a coincidental encounter with Benjamin Franklin in London that would change Thomas Paine’s future and the destiny of the Thirteen Colonies. At their coffeehouse meeting, Franklin advised him to emigrate to America and gave him letters of recommendation. At the age of thirty-seven, he left England to start a new life in America. He arrived in Philadelphia, November 30th of 1774 almost penniless. The letters of recommendation from Franklin helped him secure quick employment. He soon became a contributor to the first issue of the Pennsylvania Magazine and later its editor.

Soon after he arrived in America, Thomas Paine could feel the tension in the air over the struggle with Britain. Less than a half a year later, “the shot heard round the world” was fired at Lexington and Concord on April 15th of 1775. While not recognized by many colonists at the time, the Revolutionary War had begun and Thomas Paine knew it. “It was the cause of America that made me an author. The force with which it struck my mind, and the dangerous condition in which the country was in.”⁶ He also knew that eventually America would achieve independence from England. He wrote, “we have it within our power to begin the world over again,” and through his actions and writings, he helped achieve this outcome.

Thomas Paine's first pamphlet was called *Common Sense*, published on January 10th of 1776. *Common Sense* discussed the history of government and challenged the divine right of kings to rule. He presented his views on government and setting up districts for governmental representation in the colonies with great insight into the human condition. The pamphlet sold 120,000 copies in the first three months. Overall, 500,000 copies were sold, considered by some to be the best seller of all time, certainly a tremendous number of copies for its day. *Common Sense* had a profound effect on the thinking of many of the colonists toward oppressive British rule.

Thomas Paine did not profit from its sale; he donated the copyrights for *Common Sense* to the States for the cause of independence. He did not want anyone to misconstrue a profit motive for his honest work. The effect of the work as Dr. Benjamin Rush described, "burst from the press with an effect which has rarely been produced by types and paper in any age or country."⁷ Written at a time when the idea of separation from England was rarely discussed in public, *Common Sense* would so profoundly affect American history. Such an important work requires more than a few short sentences, therefore, below are some lengthy excerpts from *Common Sense*:



Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries BY A GOVERNMENT, which we might expect in a country WITHOUT GOVERNMENT, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. ...

In the early ages of the world, according to the scripture chronology, there were no kings; the consequence of which was there were no wars; it is the pride of kings which throw mankind into confusion. Holland without a king hath enjoyed more peace for this last century than any of the monarchical governments in Europe. Antiquity favors the same remark; for the quiet and rural lives of the first patriarchs hath a happy something in them, which vanishes away when we come to the history of Jewish royalty.

Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the Heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The Heathens paid divine honors to their deceased kings, and the Christian world hath improved on the plan by doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the title of sacred majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust! ...

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert, that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat; or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had any thing to do with her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom in Europe.

...

THOUGHTS OF THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

IN the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day. ...

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or a kingdom, but of a continent - of at least one eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected, even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of continental union, faith and honour. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound will enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters. ...

But admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title: And to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first king of England, of the present line [William the Conqueror] was a Frenchman, and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France. ...

The next war may not turn out like the Past, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because, neutrality in that case, would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof, that the authority of the one, over the other, was never the design of Heaven. The time likewise at which the continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled increases the force of it. The reformation was preceded by the discovery of America, as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this continent, is a form of government, which sooner or later must have an end: And a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under the painful and positive conviction, that what he calls "the present constitution" is merely temporary. ...

But where, says some, is the King of America? I'll tell you. Friend, he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind like the Royal Brute of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far we approve of monarchy, that in America THE LAW IS KING. For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the law OUGHT to be King; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony, be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is.

A government of our own is our natural right: And when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. ...

O! Ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind. ...

OF THE PRESENT ABILITY OF AMERICA, WITH SOME MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS

I have never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion that a separation between the countries, would take place one time or other: And there is no instance, in which we have shown less judgement, than in endeavouring to describe, what we call the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for independence. ...

As all men allow the measure, and vary only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavour, if possible, to find out the VERY time. But we need not go far, the inquiry ceases at once, for, the TIME HATH FOUND US. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things prove the fact.

It is not in numbers, but in unity, that our great strength lies; yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The Continent hath, at this time, the largest body of armed and disciplined men of any power under Heaven; and is just arrived at that pitch of strength, in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter, and either more, or, less than this, might be fatal in its effects. Our land force is already sufficient, and as to naval affairs, we cannot be insensible, that Britain would never suffer an American man of war to be built, while the continent remained in her hands. ...

In almost every article of defense we abound. Hemp flourishes even to rankness, so that we need not want cordage. Our iron is superior to that of other countries. Our small arms equal to any in the world. Cannon we can cast at pleasure. Saltpetre and gunpowder we are every day producing. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Resolution is our inherent character, and courage hath never yet forsaken us. Wherefore, what is it that we want? Why is it that we hesitate? From Britain we can expect nothing but ruin. If she is once admitted to the government of America again, this Continent will not be worth living in. Jealousies will be always arising; insurrections will be constantly happening; and who will go forth to quell them? Who will venture his life to reduce his own countrymen to a foreign obedience? The difference between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, respecting some unlocated lands, shows the insignificance of a British government, and fully proves, that nothing but Continental authority can regulate Continental matters. ...

APPENDIX

Since the publication of the first edition of this pamphlet, or rather, on the same day on which it came out, the King's Speech made its appearance in this city. Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of this production, it could not have brought it forth, at a more seasonable juncture, or a more necessary time. The bloody mindedness of the one, show the necessity of pursuing the doctrine of the other. Men read by way of revenge. And the Speech, instead of terrifying, prepared a way for the manly principles of Independence. ...

The Speech if it may be called one, is nothing better than a willful audacious libel against the truth, the common good, and the existence of mankind; and is a formal and pompous method of offering up human sacrifices to the pride of tyrants. But this general massacre of mankind. is one of the privileges, and the certain consequence of Kings; for as nature knows them NOT, they know NOT HER, and although they are beings of our OWN creating, they know not US, and are become the gods of their

creators. The Speech hath one good quality, which is, that it is not calculated to deceive, neither can we, even if we would, be deceived by it. Brutality and tyranny appear on the face of it. It leaves us at no loss: And every line convinces, even in the moment of reading, that He, who hunts the woods for prey, the naked and untutored Indian, is less a Savage than the King of Britain. ...

On these grounds I rest the matter. And as no offer hath yet been made to refute the doctrine contained in the former editions of this pamphlet, it is a negative proof, that either the doctrine cannot be refuted, or, that the party in favour of it are too numerous to be opposed. WHEREFORE, instead of gazing at each other with suspicious or doubtful curiosity; let each of us, hold out to his neighbour the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing a line, which, like an act of oblivion shall bury in forgetfulness every former dissension. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be heard among us, than those of A GOOD CITIZEN; AN OPEN AND RESOLUTE FRIEND; AND A VIRTUOUS SUPPORTER OF THE RIGHTS OF MANKIND AND OF THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA. ...

The Writer of this, is one of those few, who never dishonours religion either by ridiculing, or cavilling at any denomination whatsoever. To God, and not to man, are all men accountable on the score of religion. ...

It hath ever been our judgment and principle, since we were called to profess the light of Christ Jesus, manifested in our consciences unto this day, that the setting up and putting down of kings and governments, is God's peculiar prerogative; for causes best known to himself: And that it is not our business to have any hand or contrivance therein; nor to be busy bodies above our station, much less to plot and contrive the ruin, or overturn of any of them, but to pray for the king, and safety of our nation. and good of all men - That we may live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty; UNDER THE GOVERNMENT WHICH GOD IS PLEASED TO SET OVER US - If these are REALLY your principles why do ye not abide by them? Why do ye not leave that, which ye call God's Work, to be managed by himself? These very principles instruct you to wait with patience and humility, for the event of all public measures, and to receive that event as the divine will towards you. Wherefore, what occasion is there for your POLITICAL TESTIMONY if you fully believe what it contains? And the very publishing it proves, that either, ye do not believe what ye profess, or have not virtue enough to practice what ye believe. ...

And here without anger or resentment I bid you farewell. Sincerely wishing, that as men and christians, ye may always fully and uninterruptedly enjoy every civil and religious right; and be, in your turn, the means of securing it to others; but that the example which ye have unwisely set, of mingling religion with politics, MAY BE DISAVOWED AND REPROBATED BY EVERY INHABITANT OF AMERICA.⁸

End of excerpts from Common Sense

Common Sense did offer simple facts and plain arguments for separation with Britain. The problem for King George III and Parliament in Britain was that the simple facts and plain arguments could hardly be refuted. *Common Sense* would help to change the thinking of many in the Continental Congress and the committee of five who drafted the Declaration of Independence. The list of complaints against the King, natural rights and laws “under the government which God is pleased to set over us” are themes in the Declaration of Independence. In fact, some historians credit Thomas Paine with writing the original draft of the Declaration of Independence. They cite the anti-slavery text, Quaker phrases, style and punctuation. Others have argued that Jefferson owned slaves and it would be unlikely for him to have written the anti-slavery portions of the original draft. However, there is no question that Thomas Jefferson worked hard on the Declaration of Independence

and history has so credited his efforts. Thomas Paine's publication *Common Sense* did have its intended effect. His writings changed thinking of the citizens of America and those in the Continental Congress. Americans were now justified in considering separation from England. But further, he was able to convey the belief that as a Union of States; they were now strong enough to win a war of Independence from Britain.

In August of 1776, Thomas Paine enlisted in the army, took up arms under General Roberdeau and later under General Greene. As the cold winter closed in around the Continental Army, George Washington was in despair over the situation. He wrote that soldiers were "entirely naked" and about the losses to sickness and desertion. Washington wrote, "your imagination can scarce extend to a situation more distressing than mine." Further he wrote, "our only dependence now is upon the speedy enlistment of a new army. If this fails, I think the game will be pretty well up, as, from disaffection and want of spirit and fortitude, the inhabitants, instead of resistance, are offering submission and taking protection from Gen. Howe in Jersey." Thomas Paine continued his writings in what little time he was afforded in the struggles of war, usually at night by the light of camp fire or lantern. His words would warm the hearts of many in the cold of winter. *The American Crisis* was released on December 23rd of 1776 and read to the soldiers before the battle of Trenton. So inspiring were the words that Thomas Paine wrote that *The American Crisis* became mandatory reading in the Continental Army in December of 1776. George Washington ordered his officers to read *The American Crisis* to help in motivating the enlisted men:

THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right [not only to tax] but 'to bind us in all cases whatsoever,' and if being bound in that manner, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.⁹



Thomas Paine went further in *The American Crisis* reflecting on the role of Heaven or Providence in inspiring Joan of Arc in liberating France from England during the 100 year war:

My secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me, as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a house-breaker, has as good a pretence as he. ...

Britain has trembled like an ague at the report of a French fleet of flat-bottomed boats; and in the fourteenth [fifteenth] century the whole English army, after ravaging the kingdom of France, was

driven back like men petrified with fear; and this brave exploit was performed by a few broken forces collected and headed by a woman, Joan of Arc. Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment!

In January of 1777, Thomas Paine was appointed secretary to the Congressional Committee on Foreign Affairs. He was “sent to negotiate with the Iroquois at the town of Easton near Philadelphia.”¹¹ It has been suggested by some that his time spent with the Iroquois and his Quaker religious upbringing and may have affected his later writing such as “The Rights of Man.” Controversy erupted when Thomas Paine accused Silas Deane, the American Commissioner to France of profiting from foreign aid from France. Gouverneur Morris openly hostile to Thomas Paine, testified against him in Congress:

But, atlas, what would he think, should he be accidentally be informed, that this, our Secretary of Foreign Affairs, was a mere adventurer from England, without fortune, without family or connexions, ignorant even of grammar? ... Sir, this is the man whom we would remove from office, and this is the man, who has been just now puffed as of great importance. ... We must then proceed to assign our reasons for removing him from his office. These cannot be wanting. For, in the first place, he never was fit for it; in the second place, he has abused it in the instance before us most flagrantly, and therefore is utterly undeserving of any farther confidence. Lastly, we must remove him, for without this, in contradicting him, we shall not be believed. ... Duty to our ally [France] requires it.¹²

Thomas Paine resigned his position in Congress. In November of 1779, he was appointed as clerk of the assembly in Pennsylvania and wrote the preamble to the state’s law abolishing slavery. He wrote ‘Public Good’ to help get the Articles of Confederation ratified. He went to France with Colonel John Laurens in 1781 and was successful in petitioning Louis XVI for supplies for George Washington and the Continental Army.

Thomas Paine had a much larger vision for America than just the Union of States. He had a vision of a new country; he was the first to use the title “United States of America.” In his writings he was able to convey the power of union, liberty and what it meant to be an American. Thomas Paine in *The American Crisis* series supported the Revolutionary war like book ends. The first chapter was released in December 23 of 1776 opening with “THESE are the times that try men’s souls”. His writings supported the war effort of the Thirteen Colonies against England. He closed thirteen Chapters later with ‘*The Crisis*’; April 19th of 1783, “THE times that tried men’s souls, are over and the greatest and completest revolution the world ever knew, gloriously and happily accomplished.” He went on to say:

Now, as we cannot see a time when the strength of any one state, or several united, can be equal to the whole of the present United States, and as we have seen the extreme difficulty of collectively prosecuting the war to a successful issue, and preserving our national importance in the world, therefore, from the experience we have had, and the knowledge we have gained, we must, unless we make a waste of wisdom, be strongly impressed with the advantage, as well as the necessity of strengthening that happy union which had been our salvation, and without which we should have been a ruined people... I ever feel myself hurt when I hear the union, that great palladium of our liberty and safety, the least irreverently spoken of. It is the most sacred thing in the Constitution of America, and that which every man should be most proud and tender of. Our citizenship in the United States is our national character. Our citizenship in any particular state is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home, by the former to the world. Our great title is AMERICANS — our inferior one varies with the place.¹³

After the Revolutionary War, Thomas Paine focused his efforts on his inventions, a smokeless candle and an arched iron bridge. With lack of investment money and substandard iron in America at the time, he returned

to Europe in 1787. He went to secure a patent for his arched iron bridge and a sponsor to have it built. He spent his time focused on his bridge project and kept in touch with many close to British Parliament. He shared information on Parliament and the political situation in England with his friend Thomas Jefferson, ambassador to France. Thomas Paine said, “those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it.” He had experienced such fatigue from his support of the Revolutionary War. After the ravages of war, he preferred to spend his time in seclusion with friends in England and in France. While in England, he wrote a letter to a female friend Kitty Nicholson Few. In the letter, he reminisces on his life and his work for freedom in America and forgoing the opportunity of relationship and marriage:

Letter to friend Kitty Nicholson Few, Jan 6, 1789

Though I appear a sort of wanderer, the married state has not a sincerer friend than I am. It is the harbour of human life, and is, with respect to the things of this world, what the next world is to this. It is home; and that one word conveys more than any other word can express. For a few years we may glide along the tide of youthful single life and be wonderfully delighted; but it is a tide that flows but once, and what is still worse, it ebbs faster than it flows, and leaves many a hapless voyager aground. I am one, you see that have experienced the fate, I am describing. I have lost my tide; it passed by while every thought of my heart was on the wing for the salvation of my dear America, and I have now as contentedly as I can, made myself a little bower of willows on the shore that has the solitary resemblance of a home. Should I always continue the tenant of this home.¹⁴

Thomas Paine’s life of seclusion would soon end. In 1790, Edmond Burke published his pamphlet, *Reflections of the Revolution in France*. Paine considered Edmond Burke’s pamphlet to be a “flagrant misrepresentation,” an “outrageous abuse of the French Revolution” as well as an “imposition on the rest of the world.” Thomas Paine could not let “Mr. Burke’s,” as he called him, writings go unanswered. In a letter to George Washington on July 21, 1791, Paine expresses his feelings on the burden and obligation he had taken on in responding to Edmond Burke’s work and his personal situation in England:

The same fate follows me here as I at first experienced in America, strong friends and violent enemies, but as I have got the ear of the Country, I shall go on, and at least shew them, what is a novelty here, that there can be a person beyond the reach of corruption.”...”After the establishment of the American Revolution, it did not appear to me that any object could arise great enough to engage me a second time. I began to feel myself happy in being quiet; but I now experience that principle is not confined to Time or place, and that the ardour of seventy-six is capable of renewing itself. I have another work on hand which I intend shall be my last, for I long much to return to America. It is not natural that fame should wish for a rival, but the case is otherwise with me, for I do most sincerely wish there was some person in this Country that could usefully and successfully attract the public attention, and leave me with a satisfied mind to the enjoyment of quiet life: but it is painful to see errors and abuses and sit down a senseless spectator.¹⁵



Thomas Paine did shew them; he answered with a pamphlet titled *The Rights of Man* in 1791. He directly addressed “Mr. Burke,” and his words were more explosive than gunpowder to

the English and French Royalty. It has been said that his words provided a whole new meaning for the term “enlightenment.” *The Rights of Man* provided a logical defense for peaceful revolution from monarchical rule. He compared tyrannical monarchical rule to the self-government of the United States of America. His reference to the “Elector of Hanover, sometimes called the King of England” did not make him any friends in Parliament. In a calculated move, he addressed *The Rights of Man* to George Washington. No doubt this caused Washington some diplomatic headaches as he was attempting to get the British garrisons out of America after securing a recent treaty with England. *The Rights of Man* would also complicate the work of his friend Thomas Jefferson as ambassador to France. Below are a few selected excerpts from *The Rights of Man* part I & II:

George Washington

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA SIR,

I present you a small treatise in defence of those principles of freedom which your exemplary virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish. That the Rights of Man may become as universal as your benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the New World regenerate the Old, is the prayer of

SIR,

Your much obliged, and
Obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS PAINE

RIGHTS OF MAN PART II.

So deeply rooted were all the governments of the old world, and so effectually had the tyranny and the antiquity of habit established itself over the mind, that no beginning could be made in Asia, Africa, or Europe, to reform the political condition of man. Freedom had been hunted round the globe; reason was considered as rebellion; and the slavery of fear had made men afraid to think. ...

But such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks, - and all it wants, - is the liberty of appearing. The sun needs no inscription to distinguish him from darkness; and no sooner did the American governments display themselves to the world, than despotism felt a shock and man began to contemplate redress. ...

As America was the only spot in the political world where the principle of universal reformation could begin, so also was it the best in the natural world. An assemblage of circumstances conspired, not only to give birth, but to add gigantic maturity to its principles. The scene which that country presents to the eye of a spectator, has something in it which generates and encourages great ideas.

...

All the monarchical governments are military. War is their trade, plunder and revenue their objects. While such governments continue, peace has not the absolute security of a day. What is the history of all monarchical governments but a disgusting picture of human wretchedness, and the accidental respite of a few years' repose? Wearied with war, and tired with human butchery, they sat down to rest, and called it peace. This certainly is not the condition that heaven intended for man;

The Rights of Man Part 2 was released in February of 1792. By then, the crown had had enough of Thomas Paine and his writings on government and monarchical rule. Thomas Paine said, “time makes more converts than reason” and the crown cut short his time for their own reasons. On December 18th of 1792, he

was indicted on charges of treason with an order issued for his arrest. By luck or hand of God, the arrest order missed his departure from Dover, England to France by twenty minutes. He returned to France to assist in writing the French Constitution and was elected to the French National Convention. Thomas Paine's writings had turned up the political heat in both countries. After narrowly escaping arrest in England, little did he know at the time that he would be soon be arrested in France.

Thomas Paine's writing took a decidedly negative turn. This time in his work *The Age of Reason*, he wrote against God, specifically Christianity. He sent an early manuscript to Benjamin Franklin for review. Whether Franklin's undated letter made to Thomas Paine before it's release is uncertain. If Thomas Paine had received Franklin's response, he would have done well to heed his friends advice and "burn this piece." It would have saved him "a good deal of regret and repentance."

TO THOMAS PAINE.

DEAR SIR,

I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundations of all religion. For without the belief of a Providence, that takes cognizance of, guards, and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his displeasure, or to pray for his protection. I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my opinion, that, though your reasonings are subtle and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject, and the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits against the wind, spits in his own face.

But, were you to succeed, do you imagine any good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous life, without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is, to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots, that a youth, to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother.

I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person; whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked with religion, what would they be if without it. I intend this letter itself as a proof of my friendship, and therefore add no professions to it; but subscribe simply yours.¹⁶

B. Franklin

Samuel Adams after hearing that he had turned his "mind to a defence of infidelity" wrote to Thomas Paine. He asked, "Do you think that your pen, or the pen of any other man, can unchristianize the mass of our

citizens, or have you hopes of converting a few of them to assist you in so bad a cause?" He wrote, "I felt myself much astonished and more grieved," that he would "attempt to measure so injurious to the feelings and so repugnant to the true interest," of the country. He was grieved that a friend and fellow patriot who had "awakened the public mind, and led the people loudly to call for a declaration of our national independence" with his writings, could turn his pen to undermine the very religion the new Republic and it's institutions were based on [Old and New Testament].

In the heat of the French Revolution, at the National Assembly, Thomas Paine stood up to plead for the life of King Louis XVI, a man he personally detested. While he and Colonel John Laurens had previously successfully lobbied King Louis XVI for much needed supplies for the Continental army during the Revolutionary war, personal principles were at stake. Even facing possible death, he stood by his words and his principles, "he that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself." Thomas Paine pleaded with the National Assembly, "kill the King; but not the man." He was quickly arrested and thrown in jail, December 28th of 1793.



Just before his arrest, he was able to hand off his recent writing, *The Age of Reason*, which he had completed just six hours earlier to his friend Joe Barlow. While in prison, he wrote the second part of *The Age of Reason*. In his work the *The Age of Reason*, he attempted to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of many organized religions around the world. In a word he tried to remove man's personal experience with God from Religion. He attempted to argue that the Bible scriptures were not the word of God.

What Thomas Paine did not know at the time was that his work, *The Age of Reason*, would be used by a radical offshoot of the enlightenment movement called the Illuminati. This secret society would infiltrate the Jacobins, Masons and many governmental structures in Europe. They would attempt to remove God from European society; they would become the antipathy of the "One Nation Under God" of the United States. Copies of Thomas Paine's works found their way back to America and were used by atheists to undermine formal religion. Far from flawed theology on the Old and New Testament, Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, it was as Charles Carroll, signer of the Declaration of Independence described Paine's work as "blasphemous writings against the Christian religion."¹⁷ From all of Thomas Paine's writings, *The Age of Reason* would be the one work that he would come to deeply regret at the end of his life. He would plead to God for forgiveness on this death bed for publishing this work.

Thomas Paine wrote later about his time in jail, "one hundred and sixty-eight persons were taken out of the Luxembourg in one night, and a hundred and sixty of them guillotined next day, of which I knew I was to be one." Paine said that "no man could count upon his for more than twenty-four hours"¹⁸ at a time as more were taken daily to the guillotine and later for hanging. By act of God or by coincidence, Thomas Paine escaped the guillotine. He explained:

The manner I escaped that fate is curious, and has all the appearance of accident. The room in which I lodged was on the ground floor, and one of a long range of rooms under a gallery, and the door of

it opened outward and flat against the wall; so that when it was open the inside of the door appeared outward, and the contrary when it was shut. I had three comrades, fellow prisoners with me, Joseph Vanhuile of Bruges, since president of the municipality of that town, Michael and Robbins Bastini of Louvain. When persons by scores and by hundreds were to be taken out of the prison for the guillotine it was always done in the night, and those who performed that office had a private mark or signal by which they knew what rooms to go to, and what number to take. We, as I have said, were four, and the door of our room was marked, unobserved by us, with that number in chalk; but it happened, if happening is the proper word, that the mark was put on when the door was open and flat against the wall, and thereby came on the inside when we shut it at night; and the destroying angel passed by it.¹⁹

The one man who could have secured Paine's release from prison was Gouverneur Morris, the American foreign minister to France. But Gouverneur Morris and Thomas Paine were enemies. Morris considered Thomas Paine and his writings to be anti-religious and a threat to United States diplomacy. Thomas Paine had a good relationship with Washington, Jefferson and other founding fathers. Paine did not approve of the way Gouverneur Morris was conducting business in France. Morris intercepted his letters and did not accurately represent Paine's situation to Congress and George Washington. Thomas Paine languished in jail for over nine months with no charges against him. After seven months of imprisonment, he came down with a fever, which nearly killed him. For over a month he lay stricken with a fever, at times unconscious. While Thomas Paine waited in jail, Gouverneur Morris wrote his infamous "lest I should forget" letter to then Secretary Thomas Jefferson:

Lest I should forget it, I must mention that Thomas Paine is in prison, where he amuses himself with publishing a pamphlet against Jesus Christ. I do not recollect whether I mentioned to you that he would have been executed along with the rest of the Brissotins if the advance party had not viewed him with contempt. I incline to think that if he is quiet in prison he may have the good luck to be forgotten, whereas, should he be brought much into notice, the long suspended axe might fall on him. I believe he thinks that I ought to claim him as an American citizen; but considering his birth, his naturalization in this country, and the place he filled, I doubt much the right, and I am sure that the claim would be, for the present at least, inexpedient and ineffectual.

George Washington eventually recalled Gouverneur Morris, replacing him with James Monroe, a good friend of Thomas Paine. Thomas Paine had spent ten months in prison when Monroe was finally able to secure his release on November 4th, 1794. James Monroe took Paine back to his house to nurse him back to health. He was in such poor health that he almost died under Monroe's care. While recovering, he wrote *The Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance* in 1796, *Agrarian Justice* in 1797 and the *Maritime Compact* in 1800. He later wrote Thomas Jefferson, suggesting the purchase of Louisiana from France in late 1802.

Thomas Paine was extremely critical in his public talks on the lack of theology or reference to God in schools [France] that taught the sciences. The evil that resulted he said was a "species of Atheism." He dismissed out of hand most well reasoned and centuries old theology of God by the theologians and sages of the ages. He said, "my own mind is my own church," "I believe in one God, and no more." Thomas Paine rejected many of the Biblical truths he had learned, because they did not fit with his world views of God. He developed his thoughts on God from his readings, observations and life experiences. While they not always wrong, they also were not always right, but they were as he said of his own mind. Below is a discourse he delivered to the Society of Theophilanthropists in Paris on "The Study of God" on January 16, 1797:

What is God? Search not written or printed books, but the Scripture called the Creation. It has been

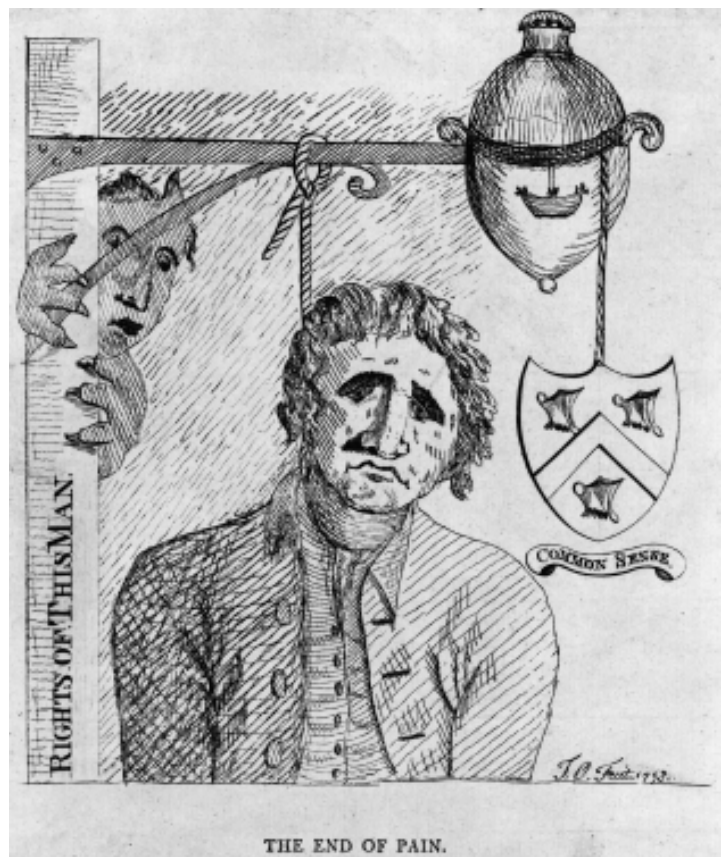
the error of the schools to teach astronomy, and all the other sciences and subjects of natural philosophy, as accomplishments only; whereas they should be taught theologically, or with reference to the Being who is the author of them: for all the principles of science are of Divine origin. Man cannot make, or invent, or contrive principles. He can only discover them; and he ought to look through the discovery to the Author.

When we examine an extraordinary piece of machinery, an astonishing pile of architecture, a well executed statue or a highly finished painting where life and action are imitated, and habit only prevents our mistaking a surface of light and shade for cubical solidity, our ideas are naturally led to think of the extensive genius and talents of the artist. When we study the elements of geometry, we think of Euclid. When we speak of gravitation, we think of Newton. How then is it, that when we study the works of God in the creation, we stop short, and do not think of God? It is from the error of the schools in having taught those subjects as accomplishments only, and thereby separated the study of them from the Being who is the author of them. ...

The evil that has resulted from the error of the schools in teaching natural philosophy as an accomplishment only has been that of generating in the pupils a species of Atheism. Instead of looking through the works of the creation to the Creator himself, they stop short, and employ the knowledge they acquire to create doubts of His existence. They labor with studied ingenuity to ascribe everything they behold to innate properties of matter; and jump over all the rest, by saying that matter is eternal.²⁰

After Thomas Paine had recovered, he became dejected that George Washington, a fellow patriot, had not done more to gain his release from prison. In a letter to Washington on February 22nd of 1795, he wrote, “as it is always painful to reproach those one would wish to respect, it is not without some difficulty that I have taken the resolution to write to you. The danger to which I have been exposed cannot have been unknown to you, and the guarded silence you have observed upon that circumstance, is what I ought not to have expected from you, either as a friend or as a President of the United States.” With lack of response from George Washington, he fired off a scathing letter on July 30th of 1796, “and as to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship [for so you have been to me, and that in the day of danger] and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any.”²¹ George Washington eventually did respond to Thomas Paine’s letter, however his response was guarded and did not address the points Paine had raised.

Thomas Paine used his pen again, this time to criticize George Washington on his handling



of the Jay Treaty with England. He also criticized George Washington in letters to the press and friends. His criticism of Washington lost him respect among many of his friends and supporters. After fifteen long years in Europe, Thomas Paine returned back to the United States in October of 1802. It had been many years since the Revolutionary War. His writings during the war and service to the country had long since been forgotten by many, however his public criticism of George Washington and writing, *The Age of Reason* was not.

Thomas Paine's writing, *The Age of Reason* turned most of the Founding Fathers, American public and many in Europe against him. John Adams wrote in his diary, "The Christian religion is, above all the religions of the world that ever prevailed or existed in ancient or modern times, the religion of wisdom, virtue, equity, and humanity. Let the Blackguard [scoundrel] Paine say what he will; it is resignation to God, it is goodness itself to man."²² "The distinguished Presbyterian, Dr. Ashbel Greene, characterized Paine's *The Age of Reason* as 'a book in which the most contemptible ignorance, the grossest falsehood, the most vulgar buffoonery, the most unblushing impudence, and the most daring profaneness are united.'²³ It has been said that "the newspapers of the land teemed with fury. ...in the wrathful vesification of the New York Evening Post on December 8, 1802,"²⁴ which wrote:



To Tom Paine

Detested reptile! There has thou come
To add new evils to our groaning land?
To some wild desert let thy carcass roam,
Where naught can wither by thy blasting hand

In the dark hour that brought thee to our shore,
The shade of Washington did awful scowl-
Hence, gloomy monster! curse mankind no more
Thy person filthy as thy soul is foul.²⁵

Unfortunately, Paine's lasting legacy to many was his controversial paper, *Biblical Blasphemy*, critical of formal religion. As the Greek philosopher Plato stated in his 'Laws', "atheism is a disease of the soul, before it comes an error of the understanding" and "that there are a few men are so obstinate in their atheism, that a pressing danger will not compel them to acknowledgment of a divine power."²⁶ Thomas Paine was one of those men. His anti-religious beliefs and writings he developed later in life would take a dramatic turn as he came close to death. Plato also stated that, "no one ever dies an atheist," nor did Thomas Paine. So accurate were the words John Adams recorded in his diary regarding Thomas Paine and his writings, "it is resignation to God, it is goodness itself to man." On his deathbed, just before he died, Thomas Paine uttered the words, "I would give worlds, if I had them, if The Age of Reason had never been published. . . . O Christ, help me! . . . stay with me . . . It is hell to be left alone." His life in America ended as it had started; he died penniless in New York City on June 8th, 1809.

Thomas Paine was a man of words; his words helped shape the destiny of America as well as France and England. His words emboldened those fighting the Revolutionary War, while comforting others to its just cause. His words helped many endure a dark time in American history, when they were needed most. Perhaps an overstatement on his contribution to independence, nevertheless, John Adams said, "history will ascribe the American Revolution to Thomas Paine." Adams stated in 1806, on Paine's influence on history, "I know not whether any man in the world has had more influence [good & bad] on its inhabitants or affairs for the last thirty years than Thomas Paine."²⁷

Paine understood on an intuitive level that there was a greater reason for the struggle for the Republic, "the cause of America is, in a great measure, the cause of all mankind," he wrote. With tremendous insight, Thomas Paine wrote about the effect that the American Revolution would have on world history. He may have also described for us the reason why the hand of Providence assisted in the creation of the new Republic. In this excerpt from *The Rights of Man*:

Note: *Ultima Ratio Regum* - The final argument of Kings, often embossed on cannons to announcement of intention to attack when diplomacy fails.

From a small spark, kindled in America, a flame has arisen not to be extinguished. Without consuming, like the *Ultima Ratio Regum*, it winds its progress from nation to nation, and conquers by a silent operation. Man finds himself changed, he scarcely perceives how. He acquires a knowledge of his rights [given by God] by attending justly to his interest, and discovers in the event that the strength and powers of despotism consist wholly in the fear of resisting it, and that, in order "to be free, it is sufficient that he wills it...."

How fortunate for the United States to have had patriots like Thomas Paine, whose writings would contribute so much at a critical juncture in history. Even his life challenges growing up in England seemed to

groom him for what lay ahead in America. At a time of crisis for America, few, if any, had the talent, training or fortitude to deliver as he did. When you view the early American Republic like a puzzle, you can see the hand of Providence putting together the pieces like the contributions of Thomas Paine.

Thomas Paine's dream and subsequent interpretation by a stranger on the trail in the woods was nothing short of prophetic. His writings would forever influence the minds of many around the world, challenging the authority of Kings and Queens to rule. Thomas Paine stated in *Common Sense*, "of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived." By all accounts, he was an honest man; his singular impact on the "crowned ruffians" is now part of history. Whether he knew it or not, and whether he wanted to or not, Thomas Paine was instrumental in assisting "the court of Providence [God's will], before whom the arrogance of Kings, the infidelity of ministers, the general corruption of government, and all the cobweb artifice of courts, will fall confounded and ashamed,"²⁸ which they did. Thomas Paine and his writings assisted Providence in ushering a whole new paradigm into the world of self-government and rights; rights that are given to man by God, not by government.

While Thomas Paine accomplished many positive and important things during his life on earth, in the end, he could not escape judgement for the bad things he had done. He returned back to the one God who had blessed him with his gift of words and writing. He returned to the one God, his later blasphemous writings were so vehemently directed against. In death, his resignation was on to God, he was left to account for his "most contemptible ignorance, the grossest falsehood, the most vulgar buffoonery, the most unblushing impudence, and the most daring profaneness" and damage his writings did to so many by undermining Christianity in Europe. How God judged Thomas Paine is not for us to know. We are only left with his dying plea for help to contemplate. "I would give worlds, if I had them, if *The Age of Reason* had never been published. O Lord, help me! O Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be left alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one."²⁹

Quotes attributed to Thomas Paine (1737-1809) Patriot, Author and Pamphleteer

"The Almighty implanted in us these inextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of His image in our heart. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals."

"'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death."

"Reputation is what men and women think of us; character is what God and angels know of us."

"We still find the greedy hand of government thrusting itself into every corner and crevice of industry, and grasping at the spoil of the multitude. Invention is continually exercised to furnish new pretenses for revenue and taxation. It watches prosperity as its prey and permits none to escape without a tribute."

"When men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon."

"Arms discourage and keep the invader and plunderer in awe, and preserve order in the world as well as property... Horrid mischief would ensue were [the law-abiding] deprived of the use of them."

"Character is much easier kept than recovered."

“It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime.”

“Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice.”

“That government is best which governs least.”

“When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary.”

“To say that any people are not fit for freedom, is to make poverty their choice, and to say they had rather be loaded with taxes than not.”

“Lead, follow, or get out of the way.”

“The word liberty is often mistakenly put for security.”

“The natural mightiness of America expands the mind, and it partakes of the greatness it contemplates. Even the war, with all its evils, had some advantages. It energized invention and lessened the catalogue of impossibilities.”

“Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America. Her situation is remote from all the wrangling world, and she has nothing to do but to trade with them.”

“It is always to be taken for granted, that those who oppose an equality of rights never mean the exclusion should take place on themselves; and in this view of the case, pardoning the vanity of the thing, aristocracy is a subject of laughter. This self-soothing vanity is encouraged by another idea not less selfish, which is that the opposers conceive they are playing a safe game, in which there is a chance to gain and none to lose; that at any rate the doctrine of equality includes them, and that if they cannot get more rights than those whom they oppose and would exclude they shall not have less.”

“It is easy to see that when republican virtue fails, slavery ensues.”

“What we obtain too cheaply, we esteem too lightly; 'tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.”

When a people lose their history, they lose a part of who they are.
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