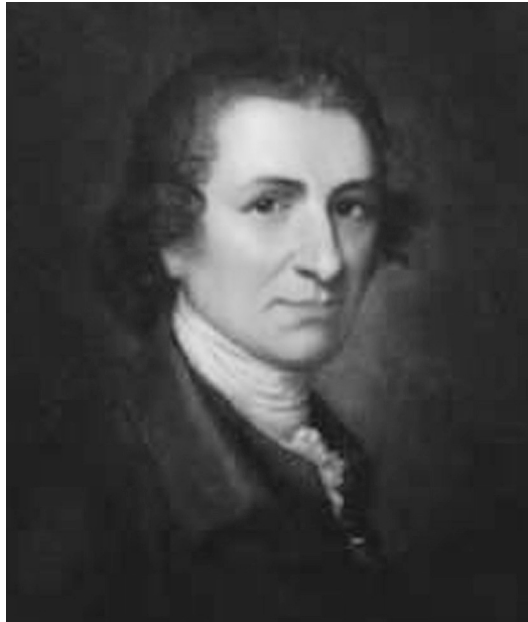


## 17 QUOTATIONS



Thomas Paine

(1737-1809)

Thomas Paine is the voice of the American Revolution. As a tax collector in England he developed such a hatred of social inequality he became a radical. Benjamin Franklin recruited him in England to the American Revolution against his country. Paine arrived in Philadelphia in 1774 and became Editor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In his essays for the magazine he advocated for abolition of slavery, women's rights, a system of international arbitration, national and international copyright, kindness to animals and other causes. In 1776 he published *Common Sense*, making his case with such passionate eloquence he became the leading propagandist for the Revolution. After the Battle of Lexington, he left his editorship and joined George Washington's army in its retreat across New Jersey in 1776. He sat down on a log beside a campfire and using a drumhead for a desk he wrote the first in a series of pamphlets called *The American Crisis*, beginning "These are the times that try men's souls."

Washington ordered his words to be read aloud to the troops shivering in the snow. The exhortation of Thomas Paine inspired them to surprise the world by defeating the British a few days later at Trenton. In 1787 Paine moved on and joined the French Revolution, barely escaping execution by the radical faction led by Robespierre. He wrote *The Age of Reason* (1794, 1796) partly while in prison waiting to bow his head to the guillotine. This book is an expression of the Deistic rationalism common to intellectuals during the Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but it was interpreted by many Americans as atheist. Paine had also become an internationalist rather than a patriot. Consequently, after escaping execution, when he returned in poverty to the United States in 1802, he was reviled and ostracized. His request to be buried on his little farm in New York was ignored and what became of his bones remains unknown.

Thomas Paine's writing epitomizes the aesthetic values of Neoclassicism. Few inspirational writers in American history are the equal of Paine other than Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1961 the famous line in President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address—"Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country"—was probably inspired by the antitheses, rhythms, and ringing clarity of Paine.

ORDER OF TOPICS: call to liberty, America, war, government, civic virtue, morality, character, religion, God and immortality:

## LIBERTY

From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms!  
Through the land let the sound of it flee;  
Let the far and the near all unite, with a cheer,  
In defense of our Liberty Tree.

## AMERICA

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 as a stranger and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

*Common Sense* (1776)

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 his 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; 'tis dearness only that gives everything 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.

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.

*The American Crisis*, No. 1  
(23 December 1776)

## WAR

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it... We fight not to enslave, but to set a country free, and to make room upon the earth for honest men to live in.

No. 4 (12 September 1777)

It is the object only of war that makes it honorable. And if there was ever a just war since the world began, it is this in which America is now engaged.

(21 March 1778)

War involves in its progress such a train of unforeseen and unsuspected circumstances that no human wisdom can calculate the end. It has but one thing certain, and that is to increase taxes.

*Prospects on the Rubicon* (1787)

## GOVERNMENT

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.

## CIVIC VIRTUE

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

## MORALITY

Suspicion is the companion of mean souls, and the bane of all good society.

A thing moderately good is not so good as it ought to be. Moderation in temper is always a virtue; but moderation in principle is always a vice.

### CHARACTER

Character is much easier kept than recovered.

### RELIGION

My country is the world and my religion is to do good.

Every religion is good that teaches man to be good.

I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy.

It is with a pious fraud as with a bad action; it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

*The Age of Reason, pt. I (1793)*

### GOD AND IMMORTALITY

I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

