

Thomas Paine, the poorly educated but fervent radical, was born in England and spent the first thirty years of his life being dragged through various occupations.

When fled from this life he was sheltered in 1774 by an attempt to organize the employees in a demand for higher wages.

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The Crisis No. 2

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In 1776, the Continental Army was exhausted, demoralized, and outnumbered by the enemy. Thomas Paine joined the army as it retreated from New Jersey to Philadelphia. On the way, he began to write a series of sixteen pamphlets called The American Crisis that urged Americans to tough it out and keep fighting.

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Reading Paine

Paine's writing was a variety of speeches, tracts, and pamphlets. He was a prolific writer, and his works were widely read. He was a powerful orator, and his speeches were often met with enthusiasm. He was a man of great energy and determination.

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Thomas Paine

(1737-1809)

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Most persuasive writer of the American Revolution (The American Revolution was a political upheaval that took place between 1765 and 1790 during which the Thirteen American Colonies broke from the British Empire and formed an independent nation, the United States of America.)

Common Sense, which he published in 1776, has been called the most important pamphlet in U.S. history.

Tehelka in Crisis

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The Age of Reason

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Part One of The Age of Reason sets forth Thomas Paine's beliefs about God and established religion: he believes in one God, a happy afterlife, and that all men are equal and their purpose on earth is in "doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy" (66). Paine, however, does not believe in organized religion or any national religious organization. National churches, rather than embracing the good principles of religion, are built on the attempt to gain power and exclude portions of society.

After this argument against established religion, Paine begins to write about the Christian Bible, with the goal of exposing its falsehoods and inconsistencies. He writes that, although the book claims to be based on revelations, this is impossible because by definition, a revelation must come directly from God to the people without an intermediary like the Bible. He adds that Jesus Christ wrote none of his own stories, which, Paine argues, throws the entire New Testament and the claim that Jesus is the son of God into question. Although Paine believes Jesus was an exemplary human being and should be looked back to as an example for all mankind, he doesn't believe that Jesus was the son of God or that he was sent to earth to die for the sins of the world.

He backs up this belief by arguing that it would diminish the power of God if He sent his son to earth to be the savior of mankind. This action ignores all other planets and galaxies, and suggests that God's power is not great or varied enough to be the God of all beings in the universe. Additionally, the message of God cannot be imparted through spoken word because of the wide variety of languages spoken on earth. Rather, writes Paine, "THE WORD OF GOD IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD: And it is in this word, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man" (68).

Paine concludes the first part of Age of Reason by discussing mystery, miracle, and prophecy, which he calls the three means by which Christianity has been imposed. These three phenomena are fallacies imposed by the Christian church, and they expose its errors and inconsistencies. Thus Paine argues that organized religion is a fallacy and that man should rather worship individually in order to better appreciate and know God's grandeur.

Part Two
The second part of The Age of Reason continues much in the same way as the first. Paine continues to prove the falsity of the Bible in order to take down Christianity and other organized and state-sponsored religions.



Tehelka in Crisis

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- *Most persuasive writer of the American Revolution (The American Revolution was a political upheaval that took place between 1765 and 1783 during which the Thirteen American Colonies broke from the British Empire and formed an independent nation, the United States of America.)*
 - *Common Sense, which he published in 1776, has been called the most important pamphlet in U.S. history.*

- *Thomas Paine, the poorly educated son of a corset maker, was born in England and spent the first thirty-seven years of his life drifting through various occupations.*
- *He was fired from his job as a tax collector in 1774 for an attempt to organize the employees in a demand for higher wages.*

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- *Paine's final notable work, **The Age of Reason**, laid out the principles of deism.*

The Age of Reason

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Part Two

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The Crisis No. 1

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Vocabulary

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Vocabulary

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Tyranny - Cruel use of power

Thomas Pain wants to end Britain's tyranny over
the Colonies

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Impious - Irreverent

*Paine considers Parliament's Declaratory Act
impious because it claims godlike power.*