

thomas paine age of reason

****Thomas Paine and The Age of Reason: A Radical Challenge to Faith and Authority****

thomas paine age of reason is a phrase that instantly brings to mind one of the most provocative and influential works of the Enlightenment era. Written by Thomas Paine, a revolutionary thinker and political activist, **The Age of Reason** boldly questioned traditional religious beliefs and advocated for reason and scientific inquiry as the true paths to understanding the world. This work not only stirred controversy in its time but continues to spark discussions about faith, reason, and the role of religion in society.

The Historical Context of Thomas Paine's Age of Reason

To fully appreciate **The Age of Reason**, it's important to understand the turbulent historical backdrop against which Thomas Paine wrote. Paine lived through the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and a period of intense intellectual upheaval known as the Enlightenment. This era emphasized rational thought, skepticism of authority, and a push toward secular governance.

Thomas Paine, already famous for his earlier pamphlet **Common Sense**, which galvanized American colonists to seek independence, turned his attention to religion in **The Age of Reason**. Published in three parts between 1794 and 1807, the work was groundbreaking in its unapologetic critique of institutionalized religion, particularly Christianity, which Paine believed was rife with superstition and corruption.

Who Was Thomas Paine?

Before delving deeper into **The Age of Reason**, it's helpful to know more about Paine himself. Born in England in 1737, Paine was largely self-educated and worked various jobs before becoming a writer. His sharp intellect and passion for justice drove him to become a key figure in revolutionary movements in both America and France. Paine's writings consistently championed liberty, equality, and the application of reason over dogma.

Core Themes in The Age of Reason

The Age of Reason is not just a critique; it is also a manifesto for embracing reason as the foundation of belief. Paine's arguments can be grouped into several key themes that resonate even today.

Critique of Organized Religion

One of the most striking aspects of Paine's work is his direct attack on organized religion. He argued that religious institutions manipulated people's fears and ignorance to maintain power. Paine was especially critical of the clergy, whom he saw as hypocritical and self-serving.

He challenged the authenticity of the Bible, pointing out contradictions and historical inaccuracies. Paine believed that the Bible should not be accepted as literal truth but rather examined critically like any other historical document. This skeptical approach was revolutionary at a time when questioning scripture was often dangerous and taboo.

Emphasis on Natural Religion and Deism

Rather than rejecting spirituality altogether, Paine advocated for Deism—a belief in a Creator who does not intervene in human affairs and whose existence can be understood through reason and observation of the natural world. This idea contrasted sharply with the doctrines of divine revelation and miracles central to Christianity.

Paine's Deism encouraged people to seek God through the study of nature and the use of reason rather than relying on church dogma. This approach aligned closely with Enlightenment values and inspired many to rethink their relationship with faith.

Reason as the Path to Truth

At the heart of **The Age of Reason** is the conviction that reason and critical thinking should guide human understanding. Paine urged readers to question everything, including long-held religious beliefs. This emphasis on intellectual freedom and skepticism paved the way for modern secular thought.

The Impact and Legacy of The Age of Reason

The Age of Reason was met with fierce criticism from religious authorities and many contemporaries who saw Paine's ideas as dangerous and blasphemous. Despite—or perhaps because of—this backlash, the work played a crucial role in shaping discussions about religion and society.

Influence on Secularism and Free Thought

Paine's arguments helped lay the groundwork for secularism, the idea that religion should be separate from government and public policy. His writings inspired later thinkers and activists who advocated for freedom of religion and freedom from religious oppression.

In many ways, **The Age of Reason** anticipated debates about the role of religion in public life that

are still relevant today. The work encouraged people to embrace intellectual independence and challenged the monopoly of religious institutions over moral and philosophical discourse.

Controversy and Criticism

Understandably, Paine's blunt style and radical views made him a target. He was denounced by clergy and politicians alike, and his reputation suffered, especially in the United States, where Christianity was deeply ingrained in the national identity.

Yet, it's worth noting that Paine's commitment to reason and liberty transcended simple atheism. His critique was aimed at promoting human dignity and rational inquiry, values that continue to resonate in modern debates about faith and science.

Why Thomas Paine's Age of Reason Still Matters Today

In an era where misinformation and dogma can still influence public opinion, revisiting *The Age of Reason* offers valuable insights. Paine's insistence on questioning authority and seeking evidence-based understanding is a powerful reminder that faith and reason need not be mutually exclusive but should coexist in a balanced dialogue.

For those interested in philosophy, history, or theology, *The Age of Reason* provides a fascinating glimpse into the intellectual battles of the past. It encourages readers to think critically about inherited beliefs and to value the freedom to explore ideas openly.

Tips for Reading The Age of Reason

Approaching *The Age of Reason* with an open mind can deepen your appreciation of its arguments:

- **Contextualize the text**: Remember the historical and cultural environment in which Paine wrote to grasp the boldness of his claims.
- **Compare with other Enlightenment works**: Reading alongside thinkers like Voltaire or Rousseau can enrich your understanding of the period's ideas.
- **Reflect on its relevance**: Consider how Paine's advocacy for reason relates to contemporary issues around faith, science, and freedom of expression.

Exploring Thomas Paine's Broader Philosophical Contributions

While *The Age of Reason* is often highlighted as Paine's most controversial work, it is part of a larger body of writing that championed human rights, democracy, and social justice. His earlier pamphlets, such as *Common Sense* and *The Rights of Man*, laid the foundation for modern democratic thought.

Paine's unwavering belief in the power of the individual to think freely and act justly continues to inspire activists and thinkers worldwide. *The Age of Reason* fits within this legacy as a call to question not only political authority but also spiritual authority.

In exploring Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, you encounter a text that challenges assumptions, encourages skepticism, and celebrates the human capacity for reason. It invites us to reconsider how we understand faith, knowledge, and the pursuit of truth in an ever-changing world.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Age of Reason' by Thomas Paine about?

'The Age of Reason' is a philosophical work by Thomas Paine that critiques organized religion and promotes deism, emphasizing reason, free thought, and the importance of individual belief over dogma.

When was 'The Age of Reason' written and published?

'The Age of Reason' was written between 1794 and 1807, with its first part published in 1794, followed by subsequent parts in later years.

What are the main themes explored in Thomas Paine's 'The Age of Reason'?

The main themes include criticism of institutionalized religion, advocacy for deism, the use of reason and scientific inquiry in understanding God, and rejection of biblical miracles and revelations.

How did Thomas Paine's 'The Age of Reason' influence religious thought?

Paine's work challenged traditional Christian doctrines, encouraging skepticism and rational inquiry, which influenced the development of secularism and free thought movements in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Why was 'The Age of Reason' controversial during Thomas Paine's time?

'The Age of Reason' was controversial because it openly criticized the Bible and Christian dogma, which offended religious authorities and led to Paine being labeled an atheist and facing social and political backlash.

What is Thomas Paine's perspective on the Bible in 'The Age of Reason'?

Paine viewed the Bible as a collection of myths and contradictions written by fallible humans,

arguing that it should not be accepted as divine revelation without question or critical examination.

How does 'The Age of Reason' reflect Thomas Paine's Enlightenment ideals?

The book embodies Enlightenment ideals by promoting reason, skepticism of tradition, individual liberty in thought and belief, and reliance on empirical evidence rather than faith or superstition.

Additional Resources

****Thomas Paine Age of Reason: A Critical Examination of Enlightenment Rationalism****

thomas paine age of reason stands as one of the most provocative and influential works in the history of political philosophy and religious critique. Written during the late 18th century, this seminal text challenged traditional Christian dogma, promoted deism, and advocated for reason as the ultimate foundation for understanding the universe and human existence. Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" was not merely a religious treatise but also a bold statement on human liberty, scientific inquiry, and the role of institutional religion in society. This article delves into the intricacies of Paine's work, exploring its historical context, thematic content, and lasting impact on both religious thought and Enlightenment philosophy.

Historical Context and Background

Thomas Paine, a prominent intellectual and revolutionary figure, is well-known for his earlier works such as "Common Sense" and "The Rights of Man," which incited political upheaval and inspired democratic movements. However, the "Age of Reason," published in three parts between 1794 and 1807, marked a distinct shift toward religious criticism. Paine's work emerged in an era characterized by the Enlightenment, during which reason, science, and skepticism toward traditional authority—especially religious authority—gained unprecedented prominence.

The late 18th century was a period of intense ideological transformation. The American and French Revolutions were challenging monarchic and clerical power, while scientific advancements questioned long-held theological explanations of natural phenomena. Against this backdrop, Paine articulated a vision for a society grounded in rational inquiry rather than revelation or superstition. His critique of organized religion, particularly Christianity, was radical and controversial, leading to significant backlash from religious institutions and conservative factions.

Core Themes and Philosophical Underpinnings

At its heart, the "Age of Reason" is an argument for deism—a belief in a Creator who does not intervene in human affairs, rejecting miracles and divine revelation as credible sources of knowledge. Paine emphasized reason as the primary tool for understanding God and the universe, dismissing the Bible as a flawed human document rather than divine truth.

Rational Critique of Scripture

One of the most contentious aspects of the "Age of Reason" is Paine's critical examination of the Bible. He argued that the scriptures were riddled with contradictions, historical inaccuracies, and moral inconsistencies. Paine urged readers to approach religious texts with the same skepticism and analysis applied to any other literature. This approach was revolutionary, as it undermined the Bible's authority as the infallible word of God, a cornerstone of Christian doctrine.

Deism and Natural Religion

Paine's deism is characterized by a belief in a Creator discernible through nature and reason rather than revelation. He posited that the complexity and order of the universe pointed to a divine designer but rejected the idea of ongoing divine intervention. This natural religion aligned with Enlightenment values, emphasizing human reason and empirical observation over faith and dogma.

Criticism of Organized Religion

The "Age of Reason" also contains a trenchant critique of organized religion, particularly the institutional structures that Paine saw as corrupt and oppressive. He condemned the clergy for manipulating scripture to maintain power and control over the populace. Paine's work thus served not only as a theological critique but also as a political statement against religious tyranny.

Impact and Reception

The publication of "Age of Reason" sparked intense debate and controversy. While it found admirers among Enlightenment thinkers and advocates of secularism, it was widely condemned by religious authorities and many contemporaries who saw it as an attack on faith and social order.

Contemporary and Later Influence

Despite—or perhaps because of—the backlash, the "Age of Reason" became a foundational text in the development of secular and humanist thought. It influenced later freethinkers, skeptics, and reformers who sought to separate church and state and promote rational inquiry. Its emphasis on questioning authority and tradition resonates in modern discussions about religion and secularism.

Criticism and Limitations

While groundbreaking, Paine's work has also faced criticism. Some scholars argue that his deism simplifies complex theological issues and that his dismissal of organized religion overlooks its social and cultural functions. Additionally, his tone and polemical style alienated some readers, limiting the

work's broader acceptance during his lifetime.

Key Features of Thomas Paine's Approach in the Age of Reason

- **Empirical Emphasis:** Paine grounded his arguments in observable reality and reason rather than faith or tradition.
- **Textual Analysis:** A methodical critique of biblical texts to expose contradictions and human authorship.
- **Advocacy for Freedom:** Linking religious skepticism with political liberty and individual rights.
- **Accessible Language:** Written to be understood by the general public, aiming to democratize rational thought.

Comparisons to Other Enlightenment Thinkers

Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" fits within a broader intellectual movement that included figures like Voltaire, David Hume, and John Locke. However, Paine's work distinguishes itself by its combination of political activism and religious critique. Unlike some contemporaries who maintained more nuanced or private skepticism, Paine openly challenged religious orthodoxy and connected it directly to political liberation, making his work uniquely incendiary.

Legacy in Modern Religious and Secular Discourse

Today, "Age of Reason" remains a touchstone for discussions on faith, reason, and secularism. It is often cited in debates about the compatibility of religion and science, the role of religion in public life, and the rights of individuals to question dogmatic beliefs. The text's insistence on critical thinking and evidence-based belief continues to inspire advocates of secular humanism and rational inquiry.

Moreover, the work invites ongoing reflection on the balance between religious tradition and modernity. While some view Paine's critique as overly dismissive of religion's positive contributions, others regard it as an essential call to intellectual honesty and freedom.

The enduring relevance of Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" lies in its bold challenge to unquestioned authority and its championing of reason as the path to truth. Although controversial, it remains a pivotal work that helped shape the trajectory of modern thought about religion, politics, and human rights.

Thomas Paine Age Of Reason

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thomas paine age of reason: The Age of Reason Thomas Paine, 2023-12-05 A major actor in the American Revolution, the English intellectual Thomas Paine (1737-1809) is best remembered for his pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776), which advocated American independence from Britain. Although accorded honorary French citizenship in 1792 for his republican *Rights of Man*, Paine was later imprisoned and narrowly escaped the guillotine. It was around this time that he started to write *The Age of Reason*, originally published in two parts between 1794 and 1795. In Part 1, Paine outlines his personal religious views and attacks institutional faith as a human invention, while Part 2 analyses the Bible and highlights its contradictions. The work was met with great hostility in Britain and denounced as espousing atheism, while in America it led to a short-lived revival of deism but was also much reviled. This reissue includes both parts and affords valuable insight into radical freethinking during the age of revolutions. MISSIONS AND REVELATION Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet; as if the way to God was not open to every man alike. Each of those churches shows certain books, which they call revelation, or the Word of God. The Jews say that their Word of God was given by God to Moses face to face; the Christians say, that their Word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their Word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from heaven. Each of those churches accuses the other of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all. As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some observations on the word revelation. Revelation when applied to religion, means something communicated immediately from God to man.

thomas paine age of reason: Age of Reason Thomas Paine, 2014-03-01 *Age of Reason, The Definitive Edition*, includes Paine's original two volumes of *Age of Reason*, plus his third volume which remained unreleased until 1807. President Thomas Jefferson convinced Paine not to publish his third volume in 1802, as Paine originally intended, out of fear of the backlash it may cause. Now, thanks to this edition of Paine's *Age of Reason*, the modern reader can enjoy Paine's three-volume original work in one distinguished manuscript.

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advocating for the dismantling of oppressive systems and the empowerment of individuals. Enduring Influence: Recognize the lasting impact of Paine's ideas on political and intellectual discourse, as The Age of Reason continues to inspire generations of thinkers, serving as a catalyst for social change, and offering a timeless call to embrace reason, knowledge, and the pursuit of truth. The Age of Reason by Thomas Paine; Eric Sutton: The Age of Reason, skillfully translated by Eric Sutton, is a seminal work by Thomas Paine that challenges religious dogma and advocates for rational thinking and individual freedom. Paine, a leading figure of the Enlightenment, presents a compelling case for skepticism and critical inquiry, questioning traditional religious beliefs and advocating for a more rational approach to understanding the world. Through persuasive arguments and sharp analysis, he examines the inconsistencies and contradictions within religious doctrines, promoting the idea that reason should be the guiding principle in matters of faith. The Age of Reason remains a thought-provoking and influential treatise that continues to ignite intellectual debates and inspire individuals to question long-held beliefs.

thomas paine age of reason: *The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* Thomas Paine, 1896

thomas paine age of reason: *The Age of Reason - Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* Thomas Paine, 2008-05 Many of the earliest books, particularly those dating back to the 1900s and before, are now extremely scarce and increasingly expensive. We are republishing these classic works in affordable, high quality, modern editions, using the original text and artwork.

thomas paine age of reason: *The Age of Reason* Thomas Paine, 2014-10-02 This book contains the complete AGE OF REASON by Thomas Paine including an introduction to Origins of Freemasonry and the much censored criticism of Christianity. About his own religious beliefs, Paine wrote in *The Age of Reason*: I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church. All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit. Thomas Paine (February 9, 1737 [O.S. January 29, 1736] – June 8, 1809) was an American and English political activist, philosopher, political theorist and revolutionary. As the author of the two most influential pamphlets at the start of the American Revolution, he inspired the Patriots in 1776 to declare independence from Britain. His ideas reflected Enlightenment-era rhetoric of transnational human rights. He has been called a corsetmaker by trade, a journalist by profession, and a propagandist by inclination. In December 1793, he was arrested and imprisoned in Paris, then released in 1794. He became notorious because of his pamphlet *The Age of Reason* (1793–94), in which he advocated deism, promoted reason and free thought, and argued against institutionalized religion in general and Christian doctrine in particular. He also wrote the pamphlet *Agrarian Justice* (1795), discussing the origins of property, and introduced the concept of a guaranteed minimum income. In 1802, he returned to the U.S. where he died on June 8, 1809. Only six people attended his funeral as he had been ostracized for his ridicule of Christianity.

thomas paine age of reason: *The Age of Reason - Thomas Paine (Writings of Thomas Paine)* Thomas Paine, 2022-05-16 *The Age of Reason; Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* is a work by English and American political activist Thomas Paine, arguing for the philosophical position of deism. It follows in the tradition of 18th-century British deism, and challenges institutionalized religion and the legitimacy of the Bible. It was published in three parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807. In Part I, Paine outlines his major arguments and personal creed. In Parts II and III he analyzes specific portions of the Bible in order to demonstrate that it is not the revealed word of God. Most of Paine's arguments had long been available to the educated elite, but by presenting them in an engaging and irreverent style, he made deism appealing and accessible to a mass audience.

thomas paine age of reason: *The Age of Reason* Thomas Paine, 2016-06-14 *The Age of*

Reason; Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology is an influential work written by English and American political activist Thomas Paine. It follows in the tradition of eighteenth-century British deism, and challenges institutionalized religion and the legitimacy of the Bible. Originally distributed as unbound pamphlets, it was published in three parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807. It was a best-seller in the United States, where it caused a short-lived deistic revival. British audiences, however, fearing increased political radicalism as a result of the French Revolution, received it with more hostility. The Age of Reason presents common deistic arguments; for example, it highlights what Paine saw as corruption of the Christian Church and criticizes its efforts to acquire political power. Paine advocates reason in the place of revelation, leading him to reject miracles and to view the Bible as an ordinary piece of literature rather than as a divinely inspired text. It promotes natural religion and argues for the existence of a creator-God.

thomas paine age of reason: Age of Reason Thomas Paine, 2000-04-06 The Age of Reason COMPLETE VERSION Parts 1 and 2 By the British and American revolutionary Thomas Paine The Age of Reason; Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology is a pamphlet, written by a British and American revolutionary Thomas Paine, that challenges institutionalized religion and the legitimacy of the Bible, the central text of Christianity. Published in three parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807, it was a bestseller in the United States, where it caused a short-lived deistic revival. British audiences, however, fearing increased political radicalism as a result of the French Revolution, received it with more hostility. The Age of Reason presents common deistic arguments; for example, it highlights what Paine saw as corruption of the Christian Church and criticizes its efforts to acquire political power. Paine advocates reason in the place of revelation, leading him to reject miracles and to view the Bible as an ordinary piece of literature rather than as a divinely inspired text. It promotes natural religion and argues for the existence of a creator-God. Most of Paine's arguments had long been available to the educated elite, but by presenting them in an engaging and irreverent style, he made deism appealing and accessible to a mass audience. The book was also inexpensive, putting it within the reach of a large number of buyers. Fearing the spread of what they viewed as potentially revolutionary ideas, the British government prosecuted printers and booksellers who tried to publish and distribute it. Nevertheless, Paine's work inspired and guided many freethinkers.

thomas paine age of reason: The Age of Reason Thomas Paine, 2017-04-20 The Age of Reason; Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology is a work written by English and American political activist Thomas Paine. It follows in the tradition of eighteenth-century British deism, and challenges institutionalized religion and the legitimacy of the Bible. Originally distributed as unbound pamphlets, it was published in three parts in 1794, 1795, and 1807. It was a best-seller in the United States, where it caused a short-lived deistic revival. British audiences, however, fearing increased political radicalism as a result of the French Revolution, received it with more hostility. The Age of Reason presents common deistic arguments; for example, it highlights what Paine saw as corruption of the Christian Church and criticizes its efforts to acquire political power. Paine advocates reason in the place of revelation, leading him to reject miracles and to view the Bible as an ordinary piece of literature rather than as a divinely inspired text. It promotes natural religion and argues for the existence of a creator-God.

thomas paine age of reason: The Age of Reason Thomas Paine, 2010-09 Before his arrest and imprisonment in France, knowing that he would probably be arrested and executed, Paine, following in the tradition of early eighteenth-century British deism, wrote the first part of The Age of Reason, an assault on organized revealed religion combining a compilation of inconsistencies he found in the Bible with his own advocacy of deism, calling for free rational inquiry into all subjects, especially religion. The Age of Reason critique on institutionalized religion resulted in only a brief upsurge in deistic thought in America, but would later result in Paine being derided by the public and abandoned by his friends.

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pamphlets.--v. 5. Open letters. Dissertations.--v. 6. Rights of man.--v. 7. Rights of man, concluded. Miscellaneous essays.--v. 8. The age of reason.--v. 9. Theological discussions.--v. 10. Miscellany. Songs and rhymes. Index.

thomas paine age of reason: The age of reason Thomas Paine, 1925

thomas paine age of reason: The Age of Reason - Thomas Paine Thomas Paine, 2007-11 I put the following work under your protection. It contains my opinion upon Religion. You will do me the justice to remember, that I have always strenuously supported the Right of every man to his opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies to another this right, makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it. The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is Reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall. Your affectionate friend and fellow citizen, Thomas Paine.

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Bible's words against itself. Paine examines the book as a work of literature and nothing more, testing its consistency and finding it wanting. He also tests its historical accuracy and determines the book was not inspired by the divine. Paine turns his discussion toward religion and the state, highlighting the lust for power that grips institutions and its priests, pointing out the Church's oppression of scientific...

thomas paine age of reason: Thomas Paine's the Age of Reason - Part Three Robert Shear, 2014-07-03 What would Tom Paine think now, if he knew the events of the past two hundred years? Would he still be a Deist if he knew about Evolution, the Big Bang and discoveries in geology and the neurosciences? What would he think of the Book of Mormon, New Age spirituality and the rise of religious fundamentalism? How would he view our current conflicts over birth control, abortion, gay marriage and events in the Middle East? Thomas Paine's The Age of Reason - Part Three has won praise from Paine experts both for its authentic voice and for answers to these questions that are logical extensions of Paine's past works. This imagined update to the classic work is presented from Paine's perspective and in his familiar style. He reviews two centuries of progress in science and human rights and the evolving role of religion in American society, reflecting on the implications of these changes for his own views about God and Nature. His critical commentary on current affairs will be stimulating and thought-provoking to those who know his prior works as well as to those having their first encounter with America's original critic of organized religion. Concluding with his current advice to the American people, Paine issues a call to action urging us to enter a new Age of Enlightenment with sweeping changes to the role of religion in our public and private affairs. Thomas Paine and The Age of Reason All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit. These words are still shocking to even the most committed of religious critics in the 21st century. The more so they were written by one of America's most visionary Founders - the man whose Common Sense inspired his countrymen to accept that separation from England was inevitable, that the time for Revolution was upon them. Paine's pamphlets on The Crisis so bolstered spirits that General Washington ordered them read to the troops. Their opening words: These are the times that try men's souls became a battle cry of the American Revolution, inspiring the outnumbered patriots to victory over superior British forces. It was later said that Independence had been achieved equally by the sword of Washington and the pen of Paine. When the French Revolution came under attack, it was Thomas Paine whose spirited defense, Rights of Man, was most widely embraced - and condemned. His new manifesto labeled seditious in England, Paine received a hero's welcome in France and was given a seat in the National Convention called to write a democratic constitution for that country. But not for long. Under pressure from royalists across Europe, the French Revolution faltered, its leaders turning against one another. Fearing his own end was near, Paine prepared what he had planned to be his final work: The Age of Reason. In this pamphlet he attacked the foundation of the churches with a detailed assault on the credibility and morality of the Bible, offering instead a simple moral code based on belief in a benevolent God who reveals himself not in dreams, visions or holy books but in the intricate designs of Nature. The book was attacked from all sides, its author labeled Infidel. One of America's most famous writers, he could never again find a publisher for his work. Thomas Paine died in 1809 with none of the honors appropriate to his contributions to our modern world. Denied a place in a Quaker cemetery, only six persons attended the burial on his farm in New Rochelle, NY. There stands no monument to him in Washington, DC. His unpublished autobiography and collected works, including the original manuscript for Part Three of The Age of Reason were lost in a fire, along with the rest of his papers. Of his surviving works, The Age of Reason remains the most controversial, and the most widely quo

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