

American Minute with Bill Federer

"These are the times that try men's souls ..." -The American Crisis, Thomas Paine, December, 1776

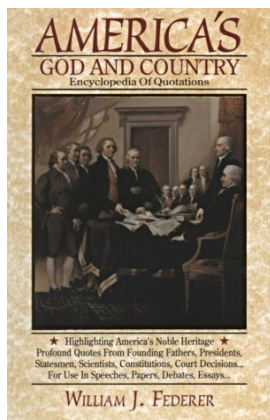
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"Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us that **the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph**"



-*The American Crisis*, December, 1776 ... [continue reading ...](#)

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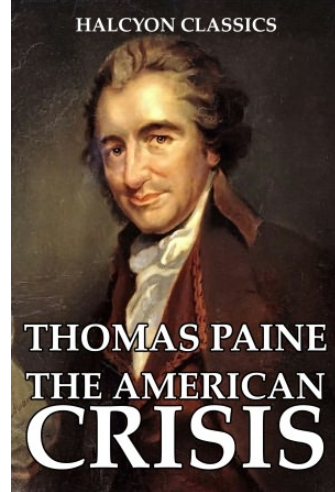


[America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations](#)

In today's era of hostility toward freedoms of religion and conscience, it is important to be reminded of challenges Americans have faced in the past.

At the beginning of the **Revolutionary War**, as the American army was being chased out of New York and New Jersey, **Thomas Paine**, an aide-de-

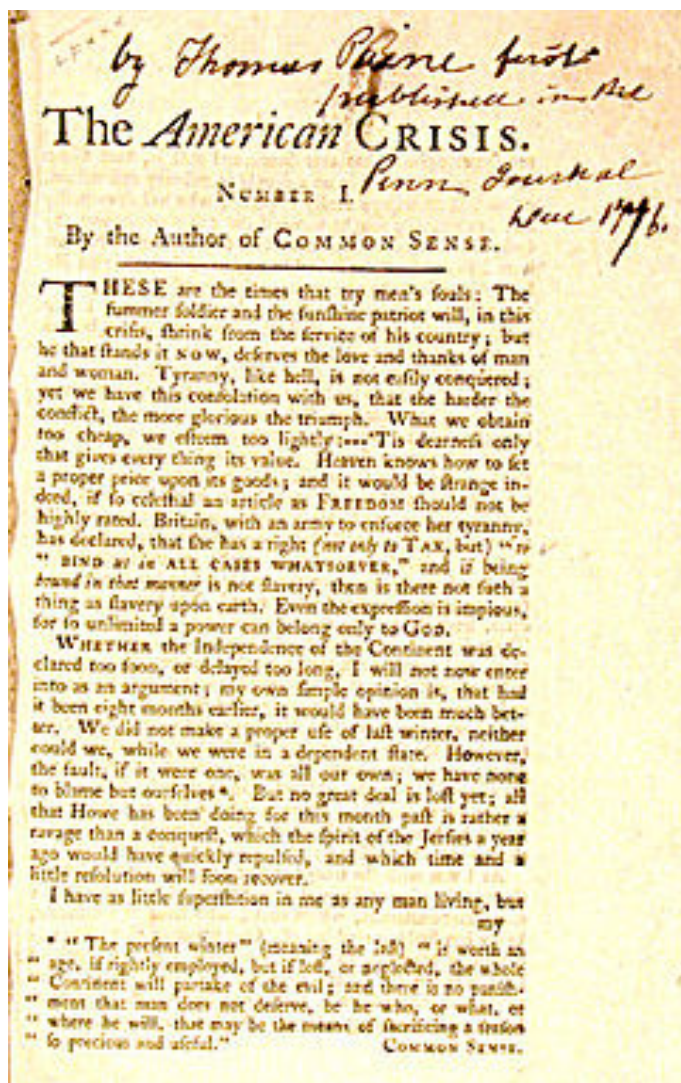
camp to **General Nathanael Greene**, anonymously wrote "**The American Crisis**," filled with historical and Biblical references.



In the freezing cold, not having a table in camp, **Paine** used the head of a drum for his desk.

He signed the it "**Common Sense**,"

It was immediately published in the **Pennsylvania Journal**, December 19, 1776.



General George Washington was so moved by "**The American Crisis**" that he ordered it read out loud to his troops, rallying them not to disperse at the end of the

year when their six-month enlistment was up.

This was vital to keep the army together prior to the **Crossing of the Delaware River** and the **Battle of Trenton**.

In "The American Crisis," Thomas Paine wrote:

"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;

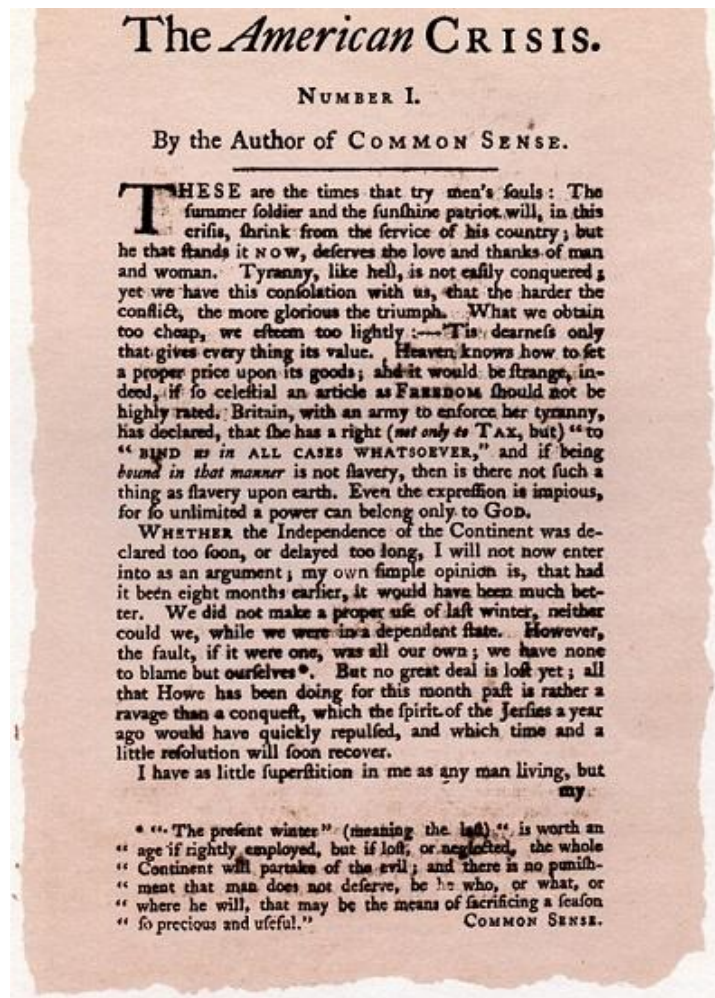
but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

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 ... **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 ...**"

Paine went on:

"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 ... that ... is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery ... **So unlimited a power** can belong only to **God** ...

God Almighty will not give up a people to military **destruction** ... who have so earnestly ... sought to avoid the calamities of war ...

... Neither have I so much of the **infidel** in me, as to suppose that **He** has relinquished **the government of the world** ... to the **care of devils** ...

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** ..."

Paine wrote further:

"'Tis surprising to see how rapidly a **panic** will sometimes **run through a country**. All nations and ages have been subject to them.

Britain has trembled like an ague (fever) at the report of a **French fleet** of flat-bottomed boats;

and in the (fifteenth) century the **whole English army**, after ravaging the **kingdom of France**, was driven back like men petrified with fear ... by a few broken forces ... 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! ..."



Paine added:

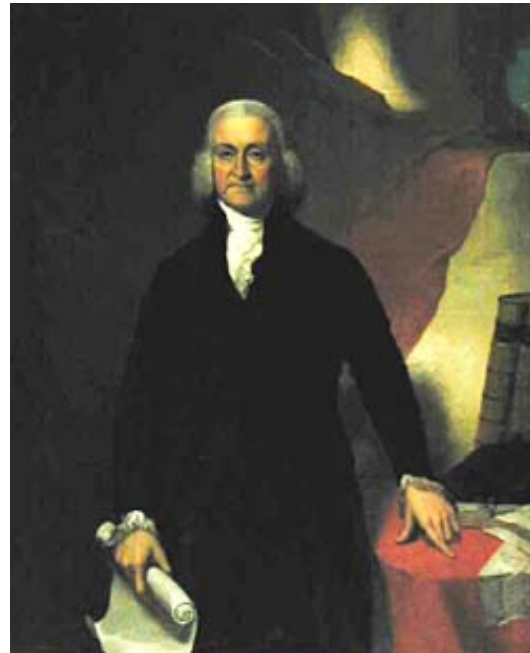
"I am as confident as I am that **God governs the world**, that **America** will never be happy till she gets **clear of foreign dominion** ...

Let it be told to **the future world**, that **in the depth of winter**, when **nothing but hope and virtue could survive**, that ... the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to ... to repulse it ...

Throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but **'show your faith by your works,'** that **God** may bless you."

Paine's line, "show your faith by your works," is a quote from James 2:18.

His line "throw not the burden of the day **upon Providence**" was a rebuke to those who just prayed but **did not exert themselves to do anything.**



It echoed the phrase **"tempting Providence,"** used by **Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull** in a letter to **General Washington**, August of 1776:

"In this day of calamity, to trust altogether to the justice of our cause, **without our utmost exertion**, would be **tempting Providence** ...

March on! -- This shall be your warrant: **Play the man for God, and for the cities of our God**, May the **Lord of Hosts**, the **God of the Armies of Israel**, be your **Captain, your Leader, your Conductor, and Saviour.**"
(2 Samuel 10:12)

Thomas Paine continued in "The American Crisis":

"It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the **evil ... will reach you ...**

The blood of his children will **curse his cowardice**, who **shrinks back** at a time when a little might have saved the whole ...

I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection.

'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 ..."**

Paine went on:

"Not all the treasures of the world ... could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder;

but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and ... threatens to kill me, or those that are in it, and to 'bind me in all cases whatsoever' to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? ...

Let them call me rebel ... I feel no concern from it ..."

Paine condemned the weak-willed, who were willing to lose their souls in order to keep their jobs:

"... but I should suffer the misery of



devils, **were I to make a whore of my soul by swearing allegiance** to one whose character is that of a **sottish, stupid, stubborn, worthless, brutish man.**



I conceive likewise a horrid idea in receiving mercy from a being, who at **the last day shall be shrieking to the rocks and mountains to cover him,** and fleeing with terror from the orphan, the widow, and the slain of America."

Paine was referring to the **last day judgement,** as prophesied in the **Book of Hosea (10:8):**



"Then they will say to the **mountains, 'Cover us!'** and to the **hills, 'Fall on us!'"**

The Gospel of Luke stated (23:28-30)

"Jesus turned to them and said ... The days are coming when... 'they will say to the **mountains, 'Fall on us!'** and to the **hills, 'Cover us!'"**

This is also prophesied in the **Book of Isaiah (2:19):**

"Men will **flee to caves** in the rocks and holes in the ground, **away from the terror of the LORD** and from the splendor of his majesty, when He rises to **shake the earth."**

The apocalyptic **Book of Revelation 6:15-16,** states:

"And the kings of the earth,
and the great men ... **hid
themselves** in the dens and
**in the rocks of the
mountains;**

And said to the **mountains**
and **rocks, Fall on us,** and
hide us from the **face of him**
that sitteth on the throne,
and from the **wrath of the
Lamb."**



Thomas Paine continued in "**The American Crisis**":

"There are persons, too, **who see not the full extent of
the evil which threatens them;** they solace themselves
with hopes that the enemy, if he succeed, will be
merciful.

**It is the madness of folly, to expect mercy from those
who have refused to do justice;**

and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a
trick of war; the **cunning of the fox** is as murderous as
the violence of the **wolf,** and we ought to guard equally
against both."

In "**The American Crisis,**" Paine warned that "**men
must be fools**" who **surrender their weapons** in
exchange for a "**promise**" of peace:

"**(British General) Howe's** first object is, partly by
threats and partly by promises, to terrify or seduce the
people **to deliver up their arms** and receive mercy ...

This is what the **Tories** call making their peace ... A
peace which would be the immediate **forerunner of a
worse ruin** than any we have yet thought of ...

Were the back counties **to give up their arms**, they would fall an easy prey to the Indians, who are all armed: this perhaps is what some **Tories** would not be sorry for.

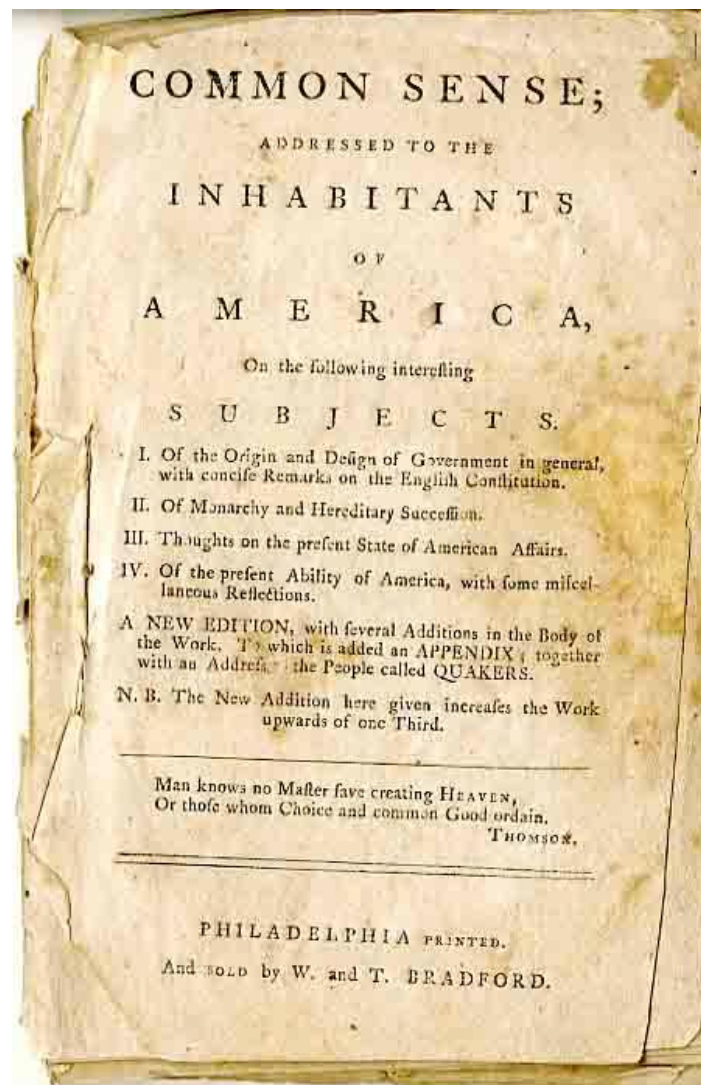
Were the home counties **to deliver up their arms**, they would be exposed to the resentment of the back counties who would then have it in their power to chastise their defection at pleasure.

And were any one state **to give up its arms**, that state must be garrisoned by all **Howe's army of Britons and Hessians** ...

Howe is mercifully inviting you to barbarous destruction, and **men must be ... fools that will not see it."**

In his **third edition** of **Common Sense**, published in Philadelphia, February 14, 1776, **Thomas Paine** warned of the danger of kings claiming a hereditary right:

"Most wise men, in their private sentiments, have ever treated **hereditary right** with contempt; yet it is one of those **evils**, which when **once established is not easily removed**; many submit from fear, others from



superstition, and **the more powerful part shares with the king the plunder of the rest ...**"

Paine explained:

"The present race of **kings** ... could we take off the dark covering of antiquity, and trace them to their first rise, that we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal **ruffian of some restless gang**, whose savage manners or **preeminence in subtility** obtained him **the title of chief among plunderers;**



and who by **increasing in power**, and extending his depredations, over-awed the quiet and defenseless to purchase their safety by frequent contributions ..."

Paine ended by referring to Mohammed (Mahomet):

"In those days, and traditional history **stuffed with fables**, it was very easy, after the lapse of a few generations, to trump up **some superstitious tale, conveniently timed, Mahomet like, to cram hereditary right down the throats of the vulgar.**"

In the face of challenges, **Thomas Paine** ended "**The American Crisis**," December 1776, stating:

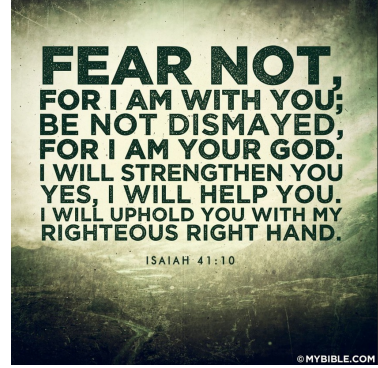
"I thank **God**, that I fear not."

President Reagan stated, March 20, 1981:

"**Evil is powerless if the good are unafraid.**"

Isaiah 41:10: "**Fear not**, for I *am* with you; **Be not dismayed**, for I *am* your **God**. I will **strengthen you**, Yes, I will **help you**, I will **uphold**

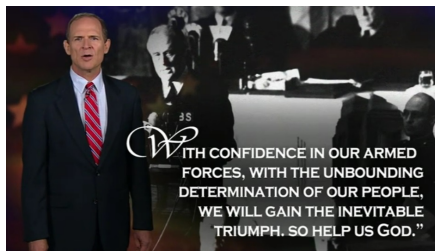
you with My righteous right hand.”



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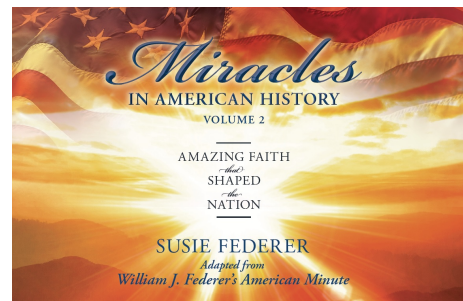
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