

Age of Reason by Thomas Paine / Dedication / 1794

TO MY FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

I PUT the following work under your protection. It **contains my opinions upon Religion**. You will do me the justice to remember, that I **have always strenuously supported the Right of every Man to his own 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

As several of my colleagues and others of my fellow-citizens of France have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.

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

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe in many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

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.**

What is that we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion? Nothing that is useful to man, and everything that is dishonorable to his maker. What is it the Bible teaches us?- rapine, cruelty, and murder. **What is it the Testament teaches us?- to believe that the Almighty committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married, and the belief of this debauchery is called faith.**

[Luxembourg, 8th Pluviose, / Second Year of the French Republic, one and indivisible. / January 27, O. S. 1794.]



Age of Reason ...

The Age of Reason was an eighteenth-century movement which followed hard after the mysticism, religion, and superstition of the Middle Ages. The Age of Reason represented a genesis in the way man viewed himself, the pursuit of knowledge, and the universe.

The Age of Reason need not necessarily be viewed as a high point in the history of man. Man began to embrace an exaggerated belief in the perfection of humanity based on reason and clear thinking; they happily abandoned reliance on biblical truth and lost their fear of God. Leaving the medieval extremes of mysticism and superstition they swung to the other extremes of reason and rationality, overlooking the subtle shades of grey in between.

For the previous seventeen hundred years the perfection of man was only to be obtained through grace after death. The Protestant revolt to the Catholic Church and subsequent 'holy wars' had done nothing to change the accepted underlying beliefs of society: revelation was the source of ultimate truth and could only be received as a communication from God. This was the basis of Christianity. Now, in this new age, man felt obligated to follow his own intellect, not 'revealed' truth. Earth and emphasis on nature became the new dogma; miracles, prophecy, and religious rites were mere superstitions.

The Age of Reason was fraught with attacks on basic Christian beliefs, rejection of God and denial of miracles. In an attempt to divorce himself from the mysticism of the Middle Ages, man during the Age of Reason, applauded intellect and disdained spirit. God was believed to be unknowable, if He existed at all, and certainly there was no need for divine communication or revelation. Nature was revelation enough, showing all that needed to be known of God. Man was now free to postulate his own theories of existence and ideas about earth and its relation to the sun.

[<http://www.allabouthistory.org/age-of-reason.htm>]

- (Genesis 3:5 NCV)
God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, **you will learn about good and evil and you will be like God!**



- (Genesis 3:22a NCV)
Then the Lord God said, "**Humans have become like one of us; they know good and evil.**"