

Excerpts from Thomas Paine's *The Crisis*

“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....”

“I have a little superstition in me as any man living, but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who had so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent....”

“I call not upon a few, but upon all...lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, come forth to meet and to repulse it...”

“Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief break into my house, burn and destroy my property, and kill or threaten 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?...”

“This is our situation, and who will may know it. By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils — a ravaged country — a depopulated city — habitations without safety, and slavery without hope.... Look on this picture and weep over it!”

—*The Crisis, No. 1, December 23, 1776*

“He than is not a supporter of the independent States of America...is, in the American sense of the word, A TORY; and the instant that he endeavors to bring his toryism into practice, he becomes A TRAITOR.”

“America, till now, could never be called a free country, because her legislation depended on the will of a man three thousand miles distant, whose interest was in opposition to ours, and who, by a single “no,” could forbid what law he pleased.”

“[A]fter the coolest reflections on the matter, this must be allowed, that Britain was too jealous of America to govern it justly; too ignorant of it to govern it well; and too far distant from it to govern it at all.”

—*The Crisis, No. 3, April 19, 1777*

“We know the cause which we are engaged in... We are not moved by the gloomy smile of a worthless king, but by the ardent glow of generous patriotism. We fight not to enslave, but to set a country free, and to make room upon the earth for honest men to live in.”

—*The Crisis, No. 4, September 12, 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. She invaded no land...hired no mercenaries...She wanted nothing from [England], and was indebted for nothing to you: and thus circumstanced, her defence is honorable and her prosperity is certain.”

—*The Crisis, No. 5, March 21, 1778*