

date though ascribed to him; for to me there seems too great a quantity and variety of ceremonies and prayers to be directed at once by one man. In the Romish church they have increased gradually in a course of ages to their present bulk. Those who added new ones from time to time found it necessary to give them authority by pretences of their antiquity. The books of Moses, indeed, if all written by him, which some doubt, are an exception to this observation."⁴⁵

That year the Board of Ordnance asked Franklin how the powder magazines at Purfleet might be protected from lightning. He visited them on 28 May and recommended lightning rods,⁴⁶ which by his advice had been erected on St. Paul's three years before.⁴⁷ The matter was taken to the Royal Society, which appointed a committee to investigate. Franklin, who was on the committee (with Henry Cavendish, William Watson, John Robertson, and Benjamin Wilson), drew up the report on 21 August and wrote a long paper in explanation.⁴⁸ Wilson, the electrician who had painted Franklin's portrait, dissented from the committee majority. They proposed pointed rods, which he thought would "solicit" the lightning and draw it into the magazines. Blunt rods would be better. Pointed rods were used, but Wilson published adverse, angry pamphlets. Franklin refused to answer them. The controversy had an incredible consequence. After the Revolution had begun the powder magazines were struck by lightning, though not damaged. George III at once sided with Wilson and ordered blunt conductors for the magazines and for his own palace, as if to spite the rebel Franklin. Because Pringle would not sustain the king in this prejudice he was forced to resign as president of the Royal Society and dismissed from his post as royal physician.

On 19 September Franklin wrote to Priestley, who could not quite make up his mind whether to become Shelburne's librarian. Such cases of indecision, Franklin said, "are difficult chiefly because while we have them under consideration all the reasons pro and con are not present to the mind at the same time; but sometimes one set present themselves and at other times another, the first being out of sight. . . . To get over this, my way is to divide half a sheet of paper by a line into two columns; writing over the one 'Pro' and over the other 'Con.' Then during three or four days'

consideration I put down the different motives against the measure. . . . one view I endeavor where I find two, on both out. If I find a strike out the three. . . . three reasons pro I strike at length where the balance accordingly. And, though with the precision of considered separately me, I think I can judge step; and in fact I have equation in what manner

By December Franklin was in France. Franklin Dubourg, who had written *Reflections and Experiments* for his edition. The philosophy, with letters he discussed. Colonial appeared in the letter. *Wealth* was translated became *le pauvre H*. Franklin's two remaining public first in France along with his account revived by the sun. invent a method of that they may be reformed, having a very America a hundred death the being immortal friends, till that time of my dear country. *Œuvres de M. Franklin* Franklin wrote about they have prefixed