

Thomas Jefferson

Said . . .

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based on

The Real Thomas Jefferson

The True Story of America's Philosopher of Freedom

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Thomas Jefferson Said

Re: John Adams and
Alexander Hamilton

[1811] [John Adams was] . . . the perfect coincidence of principle and of action, in the early part of the revolution . . . although he swerved afterwards towards the principles of the English constitution.

[1817] I have heard, indeed, that my predecessor [John Adams] sometimes decided things against his council by dashing and trampling his wig on the floor. This only proves what you and I know, that he had a better heart than head.

[1811] Mr Adams was honest as a politician as well as a man; Hamilton honest as a man, but as a politician believing in the necessity of either force or corruption to govern men.

[1811] A collision of opinion arose between Mr Adams and Colonel Hamilton on the merits of the British constitution, Mr Adams giving it as his opinion that if some of its defects and abuses were corrected, it would be the most perfect constitution of government ever devised by man. Hamilton, on the contrary, asserted that with its existing vices it was the most perfect model of government that could be formed, and that the correction of its vices would render it an impracticable government. And this, you may be assured, was the real line of difference between the political principles of these two gentlemen.

[1824] John Adams was our Colossus on the floor. He was not graceful, not elegant, nor remarkably fluent, but he came out, occasionally, with a power of thought and expression that moved us from our seats.

Regarding the
Declaration of Independence

[1792] I told [President Washington] that though the people were sound, there were a numerous sect who had monarchy in contemplation; that the Secretary of the Treasury was one of these. That I had heard him say that this Constitution was a shilly-shally thing of mere milk and water, which could not last; and was only good as a step to something better. That when we reflected that he had endeavored in the convention [of 1787] to make an English constitution of it, and when failing in that we saw all of his measures tending to bring it to the same thing, it was natural for us to be jealous.

[1802] I think it an object of great importance . . . to simplify our system of finance, and bring it within the comprehension of every member of Congress. Hamilton set out on a different plan. In order that he might have the entire government of his machine, he determined so to complicate it as that neither the President nor Congress should be able to understand it, or to control him. He succeeded in doing this, not only beyond their reach, but so that he at length could not unravel it himself. He gave to the debt in the first instance, in funding it, the most artificial and mysterious form he could devise. He then molded up his appropriations of a number of scraps and remnants, many of which were nothing at all, and applied them to different objects in reversion, and remainder, until the whole system was involved in impenetrable fog; and while he was giving himself the airs of providing for the payment of the debt, he left himself free to add to it continually, as he did in fact, instead of paying for it.

[1811] Another incident took place on the same occasion [at Jefferson's Philadelphia apartment in 1791] which will further delineate Mr Hamilton's political principles. The room being hung around with a collection of the portraits of remarkable men, among them were those of Bacon, Newton, and Locke. Hamilton asked me who they were. I told him they were my trinity of the three greatest men the world had ever produced, naming them. He paused for some time. "The greatest man," said he, "that ever lived was Julius Caesar."

[1818] Hamilton was not only a monarchist, but for a monarchy bottomed on corruption.

[1818] Hamilton's financial system . . . had two objects. First, as a puzzle to exclude popular understanding and inquiry. Second, as a machine for the corruption of the [Congress]; for he avowed the opinion that man could be governed by one of two motives only, force or interest. Force, he observed, in this country was out of the question; and the interests, therefore, of the members must be laid hold of to keep the [Congress] in unison with the executive.

[1818] Hamilton was indeed a singular character. Of acute understanding, disinterested, honest and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society, and duly valuing virtue in private life, yet so bewitched and perverted by the British example as to be under thorough conviction that corruption was essential to the government of a nation.

Re: advice, observations

[1821] How easily we prescribe for others a cure for their difficulties, while we cannot cure our own.

[1808] Be very select in the society you attach yourself to; avoid taverns, drinkers, smokers, idlers, and dissipated persons generally, . . . and you will find your path more easy and tranquil.

[1789] Conscience is the only sure clue which will eternally guide a man clear of all doubts and inconsistencies.

[1808] I estimate the qualities of the mind [to be]: 1, good humor; 2, integrity; 3, industry; 4, science [knowledge].

[1786] Do not bite at the bait of pleasure till you know there is no hook beneath it.

[1792] Deal out justice without partiality or favoritism.

[1787] It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing.

[1808] No style of writing is so delightful as that which is all pith, which never omits a necessary word nor uses an unnecessary one.

[1808] Politeness is artificial good humor.

[1801] It is in the love of one's family only that heartfelt happiness is known.

[1826] Let the annual return of this day [the Fourth of July] forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them.

[1787] Remote from all other aid, we are obliged to invent and execute; to find means within ourselves, and not to lean on others.

Re: advice to his daughter,
Martha Jefferson

[1787] If ever you find yourself in difficulty and doubt how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and you will find it the easiest way of getting out of the difficulty.

[1783] If ever you are about to say anything amiss, or to do anything wrong, consider beforehand. You will feel something within you which will tell you it is wrong, and ought not to be said or done; this is your conscience, and be sure to obey it. Our Maker has given us all this faithful internal monitor.

[1783] It produces great praise to a lady to spell well.

[1783] I hope you will have good sense enough to disregard those foolish predictions that the world is to be at an end soon. The Almighty has never made known to anybody at what time He created it, nor will He tell anybody when He means to put an end to it, if ever He means to do it. As to preparations for that

event, the best way is for you to be always prepared for it. The only way to be so is never to do nor say a bad thing.

Re: advice to his grandson,
Thomas Jefferson Randolph

[1816] When tempted to do anything in secret, ask yourself if you would do it in public. If you would not, be sure it is wrong.

[1816] Above all things, and at all times, practice yourself in good humor. This, of all human qualities, is the most amiable and endearing to society.

[1816] Nothing gives one person so great advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances.

[1810] I would advise you, as an exercise, to write a letter to somebody every morning, the first thing after you get up. As most of the business of life and all our friendly communications are by way of letter, nothing is more important than to acquire a facility of developing our ideas on paper; and practice alone will give this.

Re: advice to
Thomas Jefferson Smith

[1825] Adore God. Reverence and cherish your parents. Love your neighbor as yourself, and your country more than yourself. Be just. Be true.

[1825] Ten Practical Rules of Life:

- 1- Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
- 2- Never trouble another for what you can do yourself.
- 3- Never spend your money before you have it.
- 4- Never buy what you do not want because it is cheap.
- 5- Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst, and cold.
- 6- We never repent of having eaten too little.
- 7- Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly.
- 8- How much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened.

9- Take things always by their smooth handle.

10- When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, an hundred.

Re: America, United
States,
Union, secession

[1816] While we are securing the rights of ourselves and our posterity, we are pointing out the way to struggling nations who wish, like us, to emerge from their tyrannies also.

[1793] America is now, I think, the only country of tranquility, and should be the asylum of all those who wish to avoid the scenes which have crushed our friends in Paris.

[1811] The last hope of human liberty in this world rests on us.

[1821] Even should the cloud of barbarism and despotism again obscure the science and liberties of Europe, this country remains to preserve and restore light and liberty to them. In short, the flames kindled on the 4th of July, 1776, have spread over too much of the globe to be extinguished by the feeble engines of despotism.

[1786] I suppose the settlement of our continent is of the most remote antiquity. The similitude between its inhabitants and those of the eastern parts of Asia renders it probable that ours are descended from them, or they from ours. The latter is my opinion.

[1792] I can scarcely contemplate a more incalculable evil than the breaking of the Union into two or more parts.

[1801] If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve this Union or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it.

[1786] There is not a country on earth where there is greater tranquility; where the laws are milder, or better obeyed.

[1811] The eyes of the virtuous all over the earth are turned with anxiety on us as the only depositories of the sacred fire of liberty.

[1810] Our difficulties are indeed great if we consider ourselves alone. But when viewed in comparison to those of Europe, they are the joys of Paradise. . . . Indeed, ours is a bed of roses. And the system of government which shall keep us afloat amidst the wreck of the world will be immortalized in history.

[1815] Not in our day, but at no distant one, we may shake a rod over the heads of all [the European nations] which may make the stoutest of them tremble. But I hope our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us that the less we use our power, the greater will it be.

[1825] Separate from our companions only when the sole alternatives left are the dissolution of our union with them or submission to a government without limitation of powers. Between these two evils, when we must make a choice, there can be no hesitation.

[1825] They [Virginians] would, indeed, consider such a rupture [secession] as among the greatest calamities which could befall them; but not the greatest. There is yet one greater – submission to a government of unlimited powers. It is only when the hope of avoiding this shall become absolutely desperate that further forbearance could not be indulged.

[1826] It is but too evident that the branches of our [federal] government . . . are in combination to usurp the powers of the domestic branch, all . . . reserved to the states, and [to] consolidate themselves into a single government without limitation of powers. . . . What is to be done? Shall we give up the ship? No, by heavens, while a hand remains able to keep the deck. Shall we, with the hot-headed Georgian,

stand at once to our arms? Not yet, nor until the evil, the only greater one than separation, shall be all upon us – that of living under a government of discretion. Between these alternatives there can be no hesitation. But, again, what are we to do? . . . We had better, at present, rest awhile on our oars and see which way the tide will set in Congress and in the state legislatures.

[1816] We are destined to be a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism.

Re: American Revolution

[1818] It would . . . be as difficult to say at what moment the Revolution began, and what incident set it in motion, as to fix the moment that the embryo becomes an animal, or the act which gives him a beginning.

[1824] Throughout the whole of the Revolution, Virginia and the four New England states acted together; indeed they made the Revolution. Their five votes were always to be counted on; but they had to pick up the remaining two for a majority when and where they could.

Re: Aristocracy

[1813] There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents . . . There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents, for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed men for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say that that form of government is the best which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural *aristoi* into the offices of government? The artificial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendancy.

Re: banks, banking

[1814] I am an enemy to all banks discounting bills or notes for anything but coin.

[1813] Let us have banks; but let them be such as are alone to be found in any country on earth except Great Britain.

[1813] It is said that our paper is as good as silver, because we may have silver for it at the bank where it issues. This is not true. One, two, or three persons might have it; but a general application would soon exhaust their vaults, and leave a ruinous proportion of their paper in its intrinsic worthless form. It is a fallacious pretense.

[1816] Like a dropsical man calling out for water, water, our deluded citizens are clamoring for more banks, more banks. The American mind is now in that state of fever which the world has so often seen in the history of other nations. We are under the bank bubble, as England was under the South Sea bubble, France under the Mississippi bubble, and as every nation is liable to be under whatever bubble, design, or delusion may puff up in moments when [they are] off their guard. We are now taught to believe that legerdemain tricks upon paper can produce as solid wealth as hard labor in the earth. It is vain for common sense to urge that nothing can produce but nothing; that it is an idle dream to believe in a philosopher's stone which is to turn everything into gold, and to redeem man from the original sentence of his Maker, "In the sweat of his brow shall he eat his bread."

Re: capital punishment

[1821] The punishment of death should be abolished except for treason and murder.

[1809] The life of the citizen is never to be endangered but as the last melancholy effort for the maintenance of order and obedience to the laws.

Re: charity

[1810] We are doubtless bound to contribute a certain portion of our income to the support of charitable and other useful public institutions. But it is a part of our duty also to apply our contributions in the most effectual way we can.

[1810] If each portion of the state . . . will apply its aids and its attentions exclusively to those nearest around them, all will be better taken care of.

[1812] Private charities, as well as contributions to public purposes in proportion to everyone's circumstances, are certainly among the duties we owe to society.

Re: citizens, immigrants

[1793] The persons and property of our citizens are entitled to the protection of our government in all places where they may lawfully go.

[1801] Born in other countries, yet believing you could be happy in this, our laws acknowledge, as they should do, your right to join us in society, conforming . . . to our established rules. That these rules shall be as equal as prudential considerations will admit will certainly be the aim of our legislatures, general and particular.

[1803] Every attempt of Great Britain to enforce her principle of "once a subject, always a subject" beyond the case of *her own subjects* ought to be repelled.

[1816] Every society has a right to fix the fundamental principles of its association, and to say to all individuals that if they contemplate pursuits beyond the limits of these principles, and involving dangers which the society chooses to avoid, they must go somewhere else for their exercise; . . . We may exclude them from our territory as we do persons infected with disease.

[1793] Our country is open to all men to come and go peaceably when they choose.

Re: colonies,
separation from Britain

[1774] America was conquered and her settlements made and firmly established at the expense of individuals, and not of the British public. . . . For themselves they fought, for themselves they conquered, and for themselves alone they have right to hold. No shilling was ever issued from the public treasuries of his Majesty or his ancestors for their assistance till of very late times, after the colonies had become established on a firm and permanent footing.

[1774] The British Parliament has no right to exercise authority over us.

[1774] It is neither our wish nor our interest to separate from [Great Britain]. . . . Let them name their terms, but let them be just.

[1775] We have exhausted every mode of application which our invention could suggest as proper and promising. We have decently remonstrated with Parliament; they have added new injuries to the old. We have wearied our King with applications; he has not deigned to answer us. We have appealed to the native honor and justice of the British nation; their efforts in our favor have been hitherto ineffectual. What, then, remains to be done?

[1775] There is not in the British empire a man who more cordially loves a union with Great Britain than I do. But by the God that made me, I will cease to exist before I yield to a connection on such terms as the British Parliament propose, and in this, I think I speak the sentiments of America.

[1782] In July 1775, a separation from Great Britain and establishment of republican government had never yet entered into any person's mind. . . . In April 1776, . . . independence and the establishment of a new form of government were not even yet the objects of the people at large. One extract from the pamphlet called

Common Sense had appeared in the Virginia papers in February, and copies of the pamphlet itself had got in a few hands. But the idea had not been opened to the mass of the people in April, much less can it be said that they had made up their minds in its favor.

[1821] Before the commencement of hostilities, I never had heard a whisper of disposition to separate from Great Britain. And after that, its possibility was contemplated with affliction by all.

[1790] It is impossible the world should continue long insensible to so evident a truth as that the right to have commerce and intercourse with our neighbors is a natural right.

Re: commerce

[1799] Commerce with all nations, alliance with none, should be our motto.

[1809] I trust the good sense of our country will see that its greatest prosperity depends on a due balance between agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.

[1801] Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and navigation, the four pillars of our prosperity, are the most thriving when left most free to individual enterprise.

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Re: common sense

[1786] I can never fear that things will go far wrong where common sense has fair play.

[1787] No race of kings has ever presented above one man of common sense in twenty generations.

[1800] I have great confidence in the common sense of mankind in general.

[1812] Common sense [is] the foundation of all authorities, of the laws themselves, and of their construction.

[1787] I am persuaded myself that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. . . .

Re: Congress, legislature

[1784] Congress is a good school for our young statesmen. It gives them impressions friendly to the federal government instead of those adverse, which too often take place in persons confined to the policies of their state.

[1792] I told [President Washington] . . . that it was a fact, as certainly known as that he and I were then conversing, that particular members of the [Congress], while those laws [assumption, funding, etc] were on the carpet, had feathered their nests with paper, had then voted for the laws, and constantly since lent all the energy of their talents, and instrumentality of their offices, to the establishment and enlargement of this system.

[1792] I told [President Washington] there was great difference between the little accidental schemes of self-interest, which would take place in every body of men and influence their votes, and a regular system for forming a corps of interested persons who should be steadily at the orders of the Treasury Department.

[1792] This corrupt squadron, deciding the voice of the [Congress], have manifested their dispositions to get rid of the limitations imposed by the Constitution on the general legislature, limitations on the faith of which the states acceded to that instrument . . . Withdrawn such a distance from the eye of their constituents, and these so dispersed as to be inaccessible to public information, and particularly to that of the conduct of their own representatives, they will form the most corrupt government on earth if the means of their corruption be not prevented.

[1793] I told [President Washington] . . . my wish was to see both houses of Congress cleansed of all persons interested in the bank or public stocks; and that a pure legislature being given us, I should always be ready to acquiesce under their determinations, even if contrary to my own opinions; for . . . I subscribe to the principle that the will of the majority, honestly expressed, should give law.

[1821] It is really more questionable than may at first be thought whether Bonaparte's dumb legislature, which said nothing and did much, may not be preferable to one which talks much and does nothing. I served with General Washington in the legislature of Virginia before the Revolution and, during it, with Dr Franklin in Congress. I never heard either of them speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point which was to decide the question. They laid their shoulders to the great points, knowing that the little ones would follow of themselves.

[1789] The people . . . are not qualified to legislate. With us, therefore, they only choose the legislators.

[1816] Reduce the legislature to a convenient number for full but orderly discussion.

[1813] The term of office to our Senate, like that of the judges, is too long for my approbation.

Re: Constitution, amendments

[1786] To make us one nation as to foreign concerns, and keep us distinct in domestic ones, gives the outline of the proper division of powers between the [federal] and [state] governments.

[1787] My general plan would be to make the states one as to everything connected with foreign nations, and several as to everything purely domestic.

[1787] My idea is that we should be made one nation in every case concerning foreign affairs, and separate ones in whatever is merely domestic.

[1787] I like much [about the proposed Constitution]. . . . I will now tell you what I do not like. First, the omission of a bill of rights . . . Let me add that a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth. . . . The second feature I dislike, and strongly dislike, is the abandonment in every instance of the principle of rotation in office, and most particularly in the case of the President. Reason and experience tell us that the first magistrate will always be reelected if he may be reelected. He is then an officer for life.

[1788] I wish with all my soul that the nine first conventions may accept the new Constitution, because this will secure to us the good it contains, which I think great and important. But I equally wish that the four latest conventions, whichever they may be, may refuse to accede to it till a declaration of rights be annexed.

[1788] Besides other objections of less moment, she [the state of Virginia] will insist on annexing a bill of rights to the new Constitution, [that is] a bill wherein the government shall declare that, 1, religion shall be free; 2, printing presses free; 3, trials by jury preserved in all cases; 4, no monopolies in commerce; 5, no standing army, . . . and that this annexation may be made by Congress and the assemblies without calling a convention, which might endanger the most valuable parts of the system.

[1788] At first I wished that when nine states should have accepted the Constitution, so as to ensure us what is good in it, the other four might hold off till the want of a bill of rights, at least, might be supplied. But I am now convinced that the plan of Massachusetts is the best, that is to accept and to amend afterwards. . . . It will be more difficult, if we lose this instrument, to recover what is good in it than to correct what is bad after we shall have adopted it.

[1789] The Constitution is unquestionably the wisest ever yet presented to men.

[1791] I consider the foundation of the Constitution as laid on this ground: that "all powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states or to the people." . . . To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the powers of Congress is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition.

[1812] Whether our Constitution has hit on the exact degree of control necessary is yet under experiment.

[1823] The capital and leading object of the Constitution was to leave with the states all authorities which respected their own citizens only, and to transfer to the United States those which respected citizens of foreign or other states; to make us several as to ourselves, but one as to all others. . . . Can it be believed that under the jealousies prevailing against the general government at the adoption of the Constitution, the states meant to surrender the authority of preserving order, of enforcing moral duties and restraining vice, within their own territory? . . . Can any good be affected by taking from the states the moral rule of their citizens and subordinating it to the general authority, or to one of their corporations, which may justify forcing the meaning of words, hunting after possible constructions, and hanging inference on inference, from heaven to earth, like Jacob's ladder? Such an intention was impossible, and such a licentiousness of construction and inference, if exercised by both governments, as may be done with equal right, would equally authorize both to claim all power, general and particular, and break up the foundations of the Union. Laws are made for men of ordinary understanding, and should therefore be construed by the ordinary rules of common sense. Their meaning is not to be sought for in metaphysical subtleties, which may make anything mean everything or nothing, at pleasure. . . . The states supposed that by their Tenth Amendment they had secured themselves against constructive powers. They were not . . . yet . . . aware of the slipperiness of the eels of the law. I ask for no straining of words against the general government, nor yet against the states. I

believe the states can best govern our home concerns, and the general government our foreign ones. I wish, therefore, to see maintained that wholesome distribution of powers established by the Constitution for the limitation of both; and never to see all offices transferred to Washington, where, further withdrawn from the eyes of the people, they may more secretly be bought and sold as at market.

[1791] [By] the . . . general phrase . . . "to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying into execution the enumerated powers," . . . the Constitution allows only the means which are "necessary," not those which are merely "convenient" for effecting the enumerated powers. If such a latitude of construction be allowed to this phrase as to give any non-enumerated power, it will go to every one, for there is not one which ingenuity may not torture into a convenience in some instance or other, to some one of so long a list of enumerated powers. It would swallow up all the delegated powers and reduce the whole to one power. Therefore it was that the Constitution restrained them to the necessary means, that is to say, to those means without which the grant of power would be nugatory.

[1798] Whensoever the general government assumes undelegated powers, its acts are unauthoritative, void, and of no force.

[1798] Where powers are assumed which have not been delegated, a nullification of the act is the rightful remedy.

[1798] It would be a dangerous delusion were a confidence in the men of our choice to silence our fears for the safety of our rights. . . . Confidence is everywhere the parent of despotism. Free government is founded in jealousy, and not in confidence. . . . Our Constitution has accordingly fixed the limits to which, and no further, our confidence may go. . . . In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.

[1823] On every question of construction, [let us] carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates, and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text, or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed.

[1809] No constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self-government.

[1803] When an instrument admits two constructions, the one safe, the other dangerous, the one precise, the other indefinite, I prefer that which is safe and precise. I had rather ask an enlargement of power from the nation, where it is found necessary, than to assume it by a construction which would make our powers boundless.

[1819] My construction of the Constitution is . . . that each department [of the federal government] is truly independent of the others, and has an equal right to decide for itself what is the meaning of the Constitution in the cases submitted to its action, and especially where it is to act ultimately and without appeal.

[1821] The peculiar happiness of our blessed system is that in differences of opinion between these different sets of servants [in the three departments of the federal government], the appeal is to neither, but to their employers [the people], peaceably assembled by their representatives in convention.

[1823] To preserve the republican form and principles of our Constitution and cleave to the salutary distribution of powers which that has established . . . are the two sheet anchors of our Union. If driven from either, we shall be in danger of foundering.

[1823] I hope the choice [of the next President] will fall on some real republican, who will continue the administration on the express principles of the Constitution, unadulterated by constructions reducing it to a blank to be filled with what everyone pleases, and what never was intended.

[1816] Some men look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did to be beyond amendment. . . . I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with, because, when [these are] once known, we accommodate ourselves to them and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know also that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.

[1791] To consider the latter phrase [the welfare clause], not as describing the purpose of the first, but as giving a distinct and independent power to do any act they please which might be for the good of the Union, would render all the preceding and subsequent enumerations of power completely useless. It would reduce the whole instrument to a single phrase, that of instituting a Congress with power to do whatever would be for the good of the United States; and as they would be the sole judges of the good or evil, it would be also a power to do whatever evil they please.

[1792] The Constitution says, "Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts, etc, provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States." . . . I suppose its meaning to be that Congress may collect taxes for the purpose of providing for the general welfare, in those cases wherein the Constitution empowers them to act for the general welfare. To suppose that it was meant to give them a distinct, substantive power to do any

act which might tend to the general welfare is to render all the enumerations useless, and to make their powers unlimited.

[1825] The plain sense and obvious meaning were that they might levy the taxes necessary to provide for the general welfare by the various acts of power therein specified and delegated to them, and by no others.

[1803] Our peculiar security is in the possession of a written Constitution. Let us not make it a blank paper by construction. I say the same as to the opinion of those who consider the grant of the treaty-making power as boundless. If it is, then we have no Constitution.

[1803] Nothing is more likely than that their enumeration of powers is defective. This is the ordinary case of all human works. Let us go on, then, perfecting it by adding, by way of amendment to the Constitution, those powers which time and trial show are still wanting.

[1787] A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no just government should refuse or rest on inference.

Re: Constitutional Convention

[1787] The convention holding at Philadelphia . . . consists of the ablest men in America.

[1787] A more able assembly never sat in America.

[1818] The want of some authority which should procure justice to the public creditors, and an observance of treaties with foreign nations, produced . . . the call of a convention of the states at Annapolis. Although, at this meeting, a difference of opinion was evident on the question of a republican or kingly government, yet so general through the states was the sentiment in favor of the former that the friends of the latter confined themselves to a course of obstruction only, and delay, to

everything proposed. They hoped that, nothing being done, and all things going from bad to worse, a kingly government might be usurped, and submitted to by the people as better than anarchy and wars, internal and external, the certain consequences of the present want of a general government.

The effect of their maneuvers, with the defective attendance of deputies from the states, resulted in the measure of calling a more general convention, to be held at Philadelphia. At this, the same party exhibited the same practices, and with the same views of preventing a government of concord, which they foresaw would be republican, and of forcing through anarchy their way to monarchy. But the mass of that convention was too honest, too wise, and too steady to be baffled or misled by their maneuvers.

One of these was a form of government proposed by Colonel [Alexander] Hamilton, which would have been in fact a compromise between the two parties of royalism and republicanism. According to this, the executive and one branch of the legislature were to be during good behavior, [that is] for life, and the governors of the states were to be named by these two prominent organs. This, however, was rejected, on which Hamilton left the convention, as desperate, and never returned again until near its conclusion.

Re: crime

[1786] In forming a scale of crimes and punishments, two considerations have principal weight: 1, the atrocity of the crime; 2, the peculiar circumstances of a country which furnish greater temptations to commit it, or greater facilities for escaping detection. . . . In some countries of Europe, stealing fruit from trees is punished capitally. . . .

Re: Declaration of Independence

[1821] The clause . . . reprobating the enslaving the inhabitants of Africa was struck out in complaisance to South Carolina and Georgia, who had never attempted to restrain the importation of slaves, and who, on the contrary, still wished to continue it. Our northern brethren also, I believe, felt a little tender under those censures; for though their people had very few slaves themselves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them

to others.

[1825] With respect to our rights, and the acts of the British government contravening those rights, there was but one opinion on this side of the water. All American Whigs thought alike on these subjects. When forced, therefore, to resort to arms for redress, an appeal to the tribunal of the world was deemed proper for our justification. This was the object of the Declaration of Independence. Not to find out new principles or new arguments never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before, but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we [were] compelled to take. Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion. All its authority rests, then, on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed

in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc.

Re: disagreement, disputes

[1808] In stating prudential rules for our government in society, I must not omit the important one of never entering into dispute or argument with another. . . . It was one of the rules which, above all others, made Doctor Franklin the most amiable of men in society, "never to contradict anybody." If he was urged to announce an opinion, he did it rather by asking questions, as if for information, or by suggesting doubts.

When I hear another express an opinion which is not mine, I say to myself, he has a right to his opinion, as I to mine; why should I question it? His error does me no injury, and shall I become a Don Quixote, to bring all men by force of argument to one opinion? If a fact be misstated, it is probable he is gratified by a belief of it, and I have no right to deprive him of the gratification. If he wants information he will ask it, and then I will give it in measured terms; but if he still believes his own story, and

shows a desire to dispute the fact with me, I hear him and say nothing. It is his affair, not mine, if he prefers error.

[1808] In public life, a man whose political principles have any decided character, and who has energy enough to give them effect, must always expect to encounter political hostility from those of adverse principles.

Re: duty

[1797] Renounce your domestic comforts for a few months, and reflect that to be a good husband and good father at this moment, you must be also a good citizen.

[1802] Man . . . has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

[1809] If it be found that I have done my duty, as other faithful citizens have done, it is all the merit I claim.

[1816] Every man is under the natural duty of contributing to the necessities of the society; and this is all the laws should enforce on him.

[1805] We are firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that with nations, as with individuals, our interests, soundly calculated, will ever be found inseparable from our moral duties; and history bears witness to the fact that a just nation is trusted on its word.

Re: earth

[1789] I suppose to be self-evident, that the earth belongs in usufruct to the living; that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. The portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be, and reverts to the society. . . . The earth belongs always to the living generation. They may manage it, then, and what proceeds from it, as they please during their usufruct.

[1813] The soil is the gift of God to the living.

Re: education, knowledge,
ignorance

[1779] Laws will be wisely formed and honestly administered in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the public

happiness that those persons whom nature hath endowed with genius and virtue should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive, and able to guard, the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens; and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth, or other accidental condition or circumstance.

[1816] If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.

[1806] It should not be proposed to take [the] ordinary branches [of education] out of the hands of private enterprise, which manages so much better all the concerns to which it is equal.

[1813] We must . . . make military instruction a regular part of collegiate education. We can never be safe till this is done.

[1814] There is one provision [in the new constitution of Spain] which will immortalize its inventors. It is that which, after a certain epoch, disfranchises every citizen who cannot read and write. This is new, and is the fruitful germ of the improvement of everything good and the correction of everything imperfect in the present constitution. This will give you an enlightened people, and an energetic public opinion which will control and enchain the aristocratic spirit of the government.

[1816] In the constitution of Spain, as proposed by the late Cortes, there was a principle entirely new to me, . . . that no person born after that day should ever acquire the rights of citizenship until he could read and write. It is impossible

sufficiently to estimate the wisdom of this provision. Of all those which have been thought of for securing fidelity in the administration of the government, constant ralliance to the principles of the Constitution, and progressive amendments with the progressive advances of the human mind, or changes in human affairs, it is the most effectual. Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.

[1814] Our post-Revolutionary youth are born under happier stars than you and I were. They acquire all learning in their mother's womb, and bring it into the world ready-made. The information of books is no longer necessary; and all knowledge which is not innate is in contempt, or neglect at least. Every folly must run its round; and so, I suppose, must that of self-learning, and self-sufficiency; of rejecting the knowledge acquired in past ages, and starting on the new ground of intuition. (410)

[1816] Enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day.

[1818] If the condition of man is to be progressively ameliorated, as we fondly hope and believe, [education] is to be the chief instrument in effecting it.

[1820] Education is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power.

[1807] I am not a friend to placing young men in populous cities [for their education], because they acquire there habits and partialities which do not contribute to the happiness of their afterlife.

[1786] Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance, establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils [of misgovernment], and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose [public education] is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.

[1812] If science produces no better fruits than tyranny, murder, rapine, and destitution of national morality, I would rather wish our country to be ignorant, honest, and estimable, as our neighboring savages are.

[1786] The most important bill in our whole [Virginia] code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness.

[1799] It is impossible for a man who takes a survey of what is already known not to see what an immensity in every branch of science yet remains to be discovered.

[1799] I join you . . . in branding as cowardly the idea that the human mind is incapable of further advances. This is precisely the doctrine which the present despots of the earth are inculcating . . . but thank heaven the American mind is already too much opened to listen to these impostures.

[1799] To preserve the freedom of the human mind . . . and freedom of the press, every spirit should be ready to devote itself to martyrdom, for as long as we may think as we will, and speak as we think, the condition of man will proceed in improvement.

[1807] The field of knowledge is the common property of mankind, and any discoveries we can make in it will be for the benefit of . . . every other nation as well as our own.

[1822] In our university [of Virginia] . . . there is no professorship of divinity. A handle has been made of this to disseminate an idea that this is an institution, not merely of no religion, but against all religion.

[1820] Here [at the University of Virginia] we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it.

Re: embargo

[1808] The alternative was between that and war, and in fact it is the last card we have to play short of war.

[1808] This embargo law is certainly the most embarrassing one we have ever had to execute. I did not expect a crop of so sudden and rank growth of fraud and open opposition by force could have grown up in the United States.

Re: Europe

[1785] Intrigues of love occupy the younger, and [intrigues] of ambition the elder part of the great. Conjugal love having no existence among them, domestic happiness, of which that is the basis, is utterly unknown. . . . In science, the mass of the people are two centuries behind ours; their literati, half a dozen years before us. . . . I have never yet seen a man drunk in France, even among the lowest of the people. . . . Were I to proceed to tell you how much I enjoy their architecture, sculpture, painting, music, I should want words. It is in these arts they shine. The last of them, particularly, is an enjoyment, the deprivation of which, with us, cannot be calculated.

[1786] Ignorance, superstition, poverty, and oppression of body and mind, in every form, are so firmly settled on the mass of the people that their redemption from them can never be hoped. . . . Ours could not have been so fairly placed under the control of the common sense of the people had they not been separated from their parent stock, and kept from contamination, either from them or the other people of the old world, by the intervention of so wide an ocean. To know the worth of this, one must see the want of it here.

[1821] The appeal to the rights of man which had been made in the United States was taken up by France first of the European nations. From her the spirit has spread over those of the south. The tyrants of the north have allied against it, but it is irresistible.

[1823] A first attempt to recover the right of self-government may fail; so may a second, a third, etc. But as a younger and more instructed race comes on, the sentiment becomes more and more intuitive, and a fourth, a fifth, or some subsequent one of the ever-renewed attempts will ultimately succeed. In France, the first effort was defeated by Robespierre, the second by Bonaparte, the third by Louis XVIII and his holy allies; another is yet to come, and all Europe, Russia excepted, has caught the spirit, and all will attain representative government, more or less perfect. . . . To attain all this, however, rivers of blood must yet flow, and years of desolation pass over; yet the object is worth rivers of blood and years of desolation. For what inheritance so valuable can man leave to his posterity? You and I shall look down from another world on these glorious achievements to man, which will add to the joys even of heaven.

[1785] An American coming to Europe for education loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness. I had entertained only doubts on this head before I came to Europe; what I see and hear since I came here proves more than I had even suspected.

[1785] I am savage enough to prefer the woods, the wilds, and the independence of Monticello to all the brilliant pleasures of this gay capital [Paris].

[1786] The city of London, though handsomer than Paris, is not so handsome as Philadelphia.

[1785] To come here [France] . . . will make you adore your own country, its soil, its climate, its equality, liberty, laws, people, and manners. My God! how little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy. . . . While we shall see multiplied instances of Europeans going to live in America, I will venture to say no man now living will ever see an instance of an American removing to settle in Europe, and continuing there.

[1787] I observe women and children [in France] carrying heavy burdens and laboring with the hoe. This is an unequivocal indication of extreme poverty. Men, in a civilized country, never expose their wives and children to labor above their force and sex as long as their own labor can protect them from it.

Re: exercise

[1785] Give about two [hours] every day to exercise, for health must not be sacrificed to learning. A strong body makes the mind strong. As to the species of exercise, I advise the gun. While this gives a moderate exercise to the body, it gives boldness, enterprise, and independence to the mind. . . . Let your gun, therefore, be the constant companion of your walks. . . . Walking is the best possible exercise. . . . Rise at a fixed and an early hour, and go to bed at a fixed and early hour also.

[1786] Of all exercises, walking is the best. . . . No one knows, till he tries, how easily a habit of walking is acquired. . . . I have known some great walkers, and had particular accounts of many more, and I never knew or heard of one who was not healthy and long-lived.

[1787] You are not to consider yourself as unemployed while taking exercise. That is necessary for your health, and health is the first of all objects.

[1790] Exercise and recreation are as necessary as reading; I will say rather more necessary, because health is worth more than learning.

Re: farmers

[1785] Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds. As long, therefore, as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else.

Re: federal aid

[1796] Have you considered all the consequences of your proposition respecting post roads? I view it as a source of boundless patronage to the executive, jobbing to members of Congress and their friends, and a bottomless abyss of public money. You will begin by only appropriating the surplus of the post office revenues; but the other revenues will soon be called into their aid, and it will be a source of eternal scramble among the members, who can get the most money wasted in their state; and they will always get most who are meanest. We have thought, hitherto, that the roads of a state could not be so well administered even by the state legislatures as by the magistracy of the county, on the spot. How will they be when a member of New Hampshire is to mark out a road for Georgia? Does the power to establish post roads, given you by the Constitution, mean that you shall make the roads, or only select from those already made, those on which there shall be a post? If the term be equivocal (and I really do not think it so), which is the safest construction?

Re: Federalist Party

[1803] I have spoken of the Federalists as if they were a homogeneous body, but this is not the truth. Under that name lurks the heretical sect of monarchists. . . . As to the real Federalists, I take them to my bosom as brothers. I view them as honest men, friends to the present Constitution.

[1804] Both of our political parties, at least the honest part of them, agree conscientiously in the same object -- the public good; but they differ essentially in what they deem the means of promoting that good. . . . One fears most the ignorance of the people; the other, the selfishness of rulers . . .

[1809] The Federalists wished for everything which would approach our new government to a monarchy; the Republicans to preserve it essentially republican. This was the true origin of the division, and remains still the essential principle of difference between the two parties.

[1823] To recover . . . in practice the powers which the nation had refused, and to warp to their own wishes those actually given, was the steady object of the Federalist party. Ours, on the contrary, was to maintain the will of the majority of the convention, and of the people themselves. . . . The original objects of the Federalists were, first, to warp our government more to the form and principles of monarchy, and, second, to weaken the barriers of the state governments as coordinate powers. In the first they have been so completely foiled by the universal spirit of the nation that they have abandoned the enterprise, shrunk from the odium of their old appellation, taken to themselves a participation of ours, and under the pseudo-Republican mask are now aiming at their second object; and, strengthened by unsuspecting or apostate recruits from our ranks, are advancing fast towards an ascendancy.

[1822] The name of Federalist was extinguished in the battle of New Orleans; and those who wear it now call themselves Republicans. Like the fox pursued by the dogs, they take shelter in the midst of the sheep. They see that monarchism is a hopeless wish in this country, and are rallying anew to the next best point, a consolidated government. They are therefore endeavoring to break down the barriers of the state rights, provided by the Constitution against a consolidation.

[1825] Consolidation becomes the fourth chapter of the next book of their history. But this opens with a vast accession of strength from their younger recruits, who, having nothing in them of the feelings or principles of '76, now look to a single and splendid government of an aristocracy, founded on banking institutions and moneyed incorporations, under the guise and cloak of their favored branches of manufactures, commerce, and navigation, riding and ruling over the plundered ploughman and beggered yeomanry. This will be to them a next-best blessing to the monarchy of their first aim, and perhaps the surest stepping stone to it.

[1826] I regard one of my public services as the most important, in its consequences, of any transaction in any portion of my life, to wit, the head I personally made against the Federalist principles and proceedings during the

administration of Mr [John] Adams. Their usurpations and violations of the Constitution at that period, and their majority in both houses of Congress, were so great, so decided, and so daring that after combating their aggressions inch by inch without being able in the least to check their career, the Republican leaders thought it would be best for them to give up their useless efforts there, go home, get into their respective legislatures, embody whatever of resistance they could be formed into, and, if ineffectual, to perish there as in the last ditch. All, therefore, retired, leaving Mr Gallatin alone in the House of Representatives, and myself in the Senate, where I then presided as Vice President. Remaining at our posts, and bidding defiance to the brow-beatings and insults by which they endeavored to drive us off also, we kept the mass of Republicans in phalanx together until the legislatures could be brought up to the charge; and nothing on earth is more certain than that if myself particularly, placed by my office of Vice President at the head of the Republicans, had given way and withdrawn from my post, the Republicans throughout the Union would have given up in despair, and the cause would have been lost forever. By holding on, we obtained time for the legislatures to come up with their weight; and those of Virginia and Kentucky particularly, but more especially the former, by their celebrated resolutions, saved the Constitution at its last gasp.

Re: foreign affairs

[1793] We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded, that every one may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases, and change these forms at its own will.

[1793] It is an eternal truth that acquiescence under insult is not the way to escape war.

[1799] I am for free commerce with all nations, political connection with none, and little or no diplomatic establishment.

[1799] Commerce with all nations, alliance with none, should be our motto.

[1803] Let it be our endeavor . . . to merit the character of a just nation.

Re: France,
the French Revolution

[1785] France . . . is the wealthiest but worst governed country on earth.

[1785] It is difficult to conceive how so good a people, with so good a king, so well-disposed rulers in general, so genial a climate, so fertile a soil, should be rendered so ineffectual for producing human happiness by one single curse -- that of a bad form of government. . . . Of twenty millions of people supposed to be in France, I am of opinion there are nineteen millions more wretched, more accursed in every circumstance of human existence, than the most conspicuously wretched individual of the whole United States.

[1786] If anybody thinks that kings, nobles, or priests are good conservators of the public happiness, send him here. It is the best school in the universe to cure him of that folly.

[1787] Nothing should be spared on our part to attach this country to us. It is the only one on which we can rely for support under every event. Its inhabitants love us more, I think, than they do any other nation on earth.

[1818] Every American owes her [gratitude], as our sole ally during the War of Independence.

[1821] A more benevolent people I have never known, nor greater warmth and devotedness in their select friendships. Their kindness and accommodation to strangers is unparalleled, and the hospitality of Paris is beyond anything I had conceived to be practicable in a large city. . . . The politeness of the general manners [and] the ease and vivacity of their conversation give a charm to their society to be found nowhere else.

[1788] The French nation has been awakened by our Revolution. They feel their strength, they are enlightened, their lights are spreading, and they will not retrograde.

[1818] Like the rest of mankind, [President Washington] was disgusted with [the] atrocities of the French Revolution.

Re: Benjamin Franklin

[1790] Dr Franklin [was] long the ornament of our country and, I may say, of the world.

[1791] There appeared to me more respect and veneration attached to the character of Dr Franklin in France than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native.

[1798] Dr Franklin [was] the greatest man and ornament of the age and country in which he lived.

[1791] The succession to Doctor Franklin at the court of France was an excellent school of humility. On being presented to anyone as the minister of America, the commonplace question used in such cases was, . . . "It is you, sir, who replace Doctor Franklin?" I generally answered, "No one can replace him, sir, I am only his successor."

[1803] I proposed to General Washington that the executive department should wear mourning. He declined it, because he said he should not know where to draw the line if he once began that ceremony. . . . I told him the world had drawn so broad a line between himself and Dr Franklin on the one side, and the residue of mankind on the other, that we might wear mourning for them and the question still remains new and undecided as to all others. He thought it best, however, to avoid it.

Re: friends, friendship

[1790] All we can do is to make the best of our friends, love and cherish what is good in them, and keep out of the way of what is bad.

[1800] I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, [or] in philosophy as cause for withdrawing from a friend.

[1824] Difference of opinion was never, with me, a motive of separation from a friend. In the trying times of Federalism, I never left a friend. Many left me, [and] have since returned and been received with open arms.

Re: gambling

[1826] If we consider games of chance immoral, then every pursuit of human industry is immoral; for there is not a single one that is not subject to chance. . . . The greatest of all gamblers is the farmer . . . Far from being immoral, they [games of chance] are indispensable to the existence of man; and everyone has a natural right to choose for his pursuit such one of them as he thinks most likely to furnish him subsistence. But there are some which produce nothing, and endanger the well-being of the individuals engaged in them, or of others depending on them. Such are games with cards, dice, billiards, etc. And although the pursuit of them is a matter of natural right, yet society, perceiving the irresistible bent of some of its members to pursue them, and the ruin produced by them to the families depending on these individuals, consider it as a case of insanity, . . . step in to protect the family and the party himself, as in other cases of insanity, infancy, imbecility, etc., and suppress the pursuit altogether, and the natural right of following it.

[1787] The wealth acquired by speculation and plunder is fugacious in its nature and fills society with the spirit of gambling.

[1810] Having myself made it a rule never to engage in a lottery or any other adventure of mere chance, I can with the less candor or effect urge it on others.

Re: government

[1774] The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest.

[1789] [The people] are not qualified to exercise themselves the executive department, but they are qualified to name the person who shall exercise it. . . . They are not qualified to legislate. . . . therefore, they only choose the legislators. They are not qualified to judge questions of law, but they are very capable of judging questions of fact.

[1790] Every man, and every body of men on earth, possesses the right of self-government. They receive it with their being from the hand of nature. Individuals exercise it by their single will; collections of men by that of their majority, for the law of the majority is the natural law of every society of men.

[1795] It is to secure our rights that we resort to government at all.

[1796] I have no ambition to govern men. It is a painful and thankless office.

[1798] It is jealousy, and not confidence, which prescribes limited constitutions to bind down those whom we are obliged to trust with power.

[1799] I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple.

[1824] I think we have more machinery of government than is necessary, too many parasites living on the labor of the industrious.

[1810] The freedom and happiness of man . . . [are] the sole objects of all legitimate government.

[1816] Our legislators are not sufficiently apprised of the rightful limits of their power; that their true office is to declare and enforce only our natural rights and duties, and to take none of them from us.

[1816] The equal rights of man and the happiness of every individual are now acknowledged to be the only legitimate objects of government.

[1821] Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread.

[1790] It is necessary to give as well as take in a government like ours.

[1802] If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretense of taking care of them, they must become happy.

[1787] I have no fear but that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master. Could the contrary of this be proved, I should conclude either that there is no God or that he is a malevolent being.

[1800] It behooves our citizens to be on their guard, to be firm in their principles, and full of confidence in themselves. We are able to preserve our self-government if we will but think so.

[1802] Nor are we acting for ourselves alone, but for the whole human race. The event of our experiment is to show whether man can be trusted with self-government. The eyes of suffering humanity are fixed on us with anxiety as their only hope.

[1817] If [a society is] merely a voluntary association, the submission of its members will be merely voluntary also, as no act of coercion would be permitted by the general law.

[1799] I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple.

[1816] What has destroyed liberty and the rights of man in every government which has ever existed under the sun? The generalizing and concentrating all cares and powers into one body, no matter whether of the autocrats of Russia or France, or of the aristocrats of a Venetian senate.

[1786] There never will be money in the treasury till the confederacy shows its teeth. The states must see the rod; perhaps it must be felt by some of them. I am persuaded all of them would rejoice to see every one obliged to furnish its contributions. It is not the difficulty of furnishing them which beggars the treasury, but the fear that others will not furnish as much. Every rational citizen must wish to see an effective instrument of coercion.

[1787] It has been so often said as to be generally believed, that Congress have no power by the [Articles of] Confederation to enforce anything; for example, contributions of money. It was not necessary to give them that power expressly; they have it by the law of nature. When two parties make a compact, there results to each a power of compelling the other to execute it.

[1787] To make us one nation as to foreign concerns, and keep us distinct in domestic ones, gives the outline of the proper division of powers between the general and particular governments. . . . Some peaceable means should be contrived for the federal head to force compliance on the part of the states.

[1793] We, I hope, shall adhere to our republican government, and keep it to its original principles by narrowly watching it.

[1798] The several states composing the United States of America are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to their general government; . . . Whensoever the general government assumes undelegated powers, its acts are unauthoritative, void, and of no force. . . . The government created by this compact was not made the exclusive or final judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself, since that would have made its discretion, and not the Constitution, the measure of its powers;

but . . . as in all other cases of compact among powers having no common judge, each party has an equal right to judge for itself, as well of the infractions as of the mode and measure of redress.

[1798] The construction applied by the general government (as is evidenced by sundry of their proceedings) to those parts of the Constitution of the United States which delegate to Congress a power "to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States," and "to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the powers vested by the Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof," goes to the destruction of all limits prescribed to their power by the Constitution. . . . Words meant by the instrument to be subsidiary only to the execution of limited powers ought not to be so construed as themselves to give unlimited powers, nor a part to be so taken as to destroy the whole residue of that instrument.

[1798] Every state has a natural right in cases not within the compact . . . to nullify of their own authority all assumptions of power by others within their limits. . . . Without this right, they would be under the dominion, absolute and unlimited, of whosoever might exercise this right of judgment for them.

[1798] I wish it were possible to obtain a single amendment to our Constitution. I would be willing to depend on that alone for the reduction of the administration of our government to the genuine principles of its Constitution; I mean an additional article taking from the federal government the power of borrowing.

[1799] I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple, applying all the possible savings of the public revenue to the discharge of the national debt; and not for a multiplication of officers and salaries merely to make partisans, and for increasing by every device the public debt.

[1800] Let the general government be reduced to foreign concerns only, and let our affairs be disentangled from those of all other nations, except as to commerce, . . . and our general government may be reduced to a very simple organization, and a very inexpensive one; a few plain duties to be performed by a few servants.

[1801] What . . . is necessary to make us a happy and prosperous people? . . . A wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.

[1800] And I do verily believe that if the principle were to prevail of a common law being in force in the United States (which principle possesses the general government at once of all the powers of the state governments, and reduces us to a single consolidated government), it would become the most corrupt government on the earth. . . . The true theory of our Constitution is surely the wisest and best, that the states are independent as to everything within themselves, and united as to everything respecting foreign nations.

[1821] When all government, domestic and foreign, in little as in great things, shall be drawn to Washington as the center of all power, it will render powerless the checks provided of one government on another, and will become as venal and oppressive as the government from which we separated.

[1822] If ever this vast country is brought under a single government, it will be one of the most extensive corruption, indifferent and incapable of a wholesome care over so wide a spread of surface. This will not be borne, and you will have to choose between reformation and revolution. If I know the spirit of this country, the one or the other is inevitable.

[1801] It is proper that you should understand what I deem the essential principles of our government, and consequently those which

From his First Inaugural Address]

ought to shape its administration. . . . Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none; the support of the state governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwark against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the general government in its whole Constitutional vigor, as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and safety abroad; a jealous care of the right of election by the people -- a mild and safe corrective of abuses, which are lopped by the sword of revolution where peaceable remedies are unprovided; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority -- the vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal but to force, the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism; a well-disciplined militia -- our best reliance in peace and for the first moments of war, till regulars may relieve them; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense, that labor may be lightly burdened; the honest payment of our debts and sacred preservation of the public faith; encouragement of agriculture, and of commerce as its handmaid; the diffusion of information, and the arraignment of all abuses at the bar of public reason; freedom of religion; freedom of the press; freedom of person under the protection of the *habeas corpus*; and trial by juries impartially selected. These principles . . . should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civil instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety.

[1802] To cultivate peace and maintain commerce and navigation in all their lawful enterprises; to foster our fisheries and nurseries of navigation and for the nurture of man, and protect the manufactures adapted to our circumstances; to preserve the faith of the nation by an

From his Second
Annual Message to
Congress

exact discharge of its debts and contracts, expend the public money with the same care and economy we would practice with our own, and impose on our citizens no unnecessary burden; to keep in all things within the pale of our Constitutional powers, and cherish the federal union as the only rock of our safety -- these are the landmarks by which we are to guide ourselves in all our proceedings. By continuing to make these our rule of action, we shall endear to our countrymen the true principles of their Constitution, and promote a union of sentiment and of action equally auspicious to their happiness and safety.

[1821] It is a fatal heresy to suppose that either our state governments are superior to the federal, or the federal to the states. . . . as independent, in fact, as different nations.

[1824] To the state governments are reserved all legislation and administration in affairs which concern their own citizens only, and to the federal government is given whatever concerns foreigners, or the citizens of other states; these functions alone being made federal. The one is the domestic, the other the foreign branch of the same government; neither having control over the other, but within its own department.

[1821] Our government is now taking so steady a course as to show by what road it will pass to destruction, to wit, by consolidation first, and then corruption. . . . The engine of consolidation will be the federal judiciary, the two other branches the corrupting and corrupted instruments.

[1792] The catholic principle of republicanism is that every people may establish what form of government they please, and change it as they please, the will of the nation being the only thing essential.

[1801] Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others?

From his First Inaugural

[1801] The late chapter of our history furnishes . . . a new proof of the falsehood of Montesquieu's doctrine, that a republic can be preserved only in a small territory. The reverse is the truth. Had our territory been even a third only of what it is, we were gone.

[1815] A republican government is slow to move, yet when once in motion its momentum becomes irresistible.

[1821] It is a misnomer to call a government republican in which a branch of the supreme power is independent of the nation.

[1816] The full experiment of a government democratical but representative was and is still reserved for us. . . . The introduction of this new principle of representative democracy has rendered useless almost everything written before on the structure of government.

[1817] Men are disposed to live honestly if the means of doing so are open to them.

[1817] My theory has always been that if we are to dream, the flatteries of hope are as cheap [as], and pleasanter than, the gloom of despair.

[1821] It is, indeed, of little consequence who govern us, if they sincerely and zealously cherish the principles of union and republicanism.

[1817] Ignorance and bigotry, like other insanities, are incapable of self-government.

[1785] I think it is a duty in those entrusted with the administration of [public] affairs to conform themselves to the decided choice of their constituents.

[1820] I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education. This is the true corrective of abuses of Constitutional power.

[1779] Laws will be wisely formed and honestly administered in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest.

[1796] I love to see honest and honorable men at the helm, men who will not bend their politics to their purses, nor pursue measures by which they may profit, and then profit by their measures.

[1801] The right of our fellow citizens to represent to the public functionaries their opinion on proceedings interesting to them is unquestionably a Constitutional right, often useful, sometimes necessary, and will always be respectfully acknowledged by me.

[1792] I hold it to be one of the distinguishing excellences of elective over hereditary successions that the talents which nature has provided in sufficient proportion should be selected by the society for the government of their affairs, rather than that this should be transmitted through the loins of knaves and fools, passing from the debauches of the table to those of the bed.

Re:
happiness

[1782] Happiness . . . does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed [us], but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.

[1788] Health, learning, and virtue will insure your happiness.

[1790] The happiest moments of my life have been the few which I have passed at home in the bosom of my family.

[1808] The happiness of mankind is best promoted by the useful pursuits of peace.

[1787] Without health there is no happiness.

[1785] Your character of Patrick Henry is precisely agreeable to the idea I had

Re: Patrick Henry

formed of him. I take him to be of unmeasured ambition

to James Madison

[1789] Henry is the avowed foe of the new Constitution. He stands higher in public estimation [in Virginia] than he ever did, yet he was so often in the minority in the present assembly that he has quitted it, never more to return unless an opportunity offers to overturn the new Constitution.

[1799] As to the effect of Mr Henry's name among the people, I have found it crumbled like a dried leaf the moment they became satisfied of his apostasy.

[1821] He was the laziest man in reading I ever knew.

Re: history

[1814] Hence history becomes fable instead of fact. The great outlines may be true, but the incidents and coloring are according to the faith or fancy of the writer.

Re: honesty, truth

[1785] If ever you find yourself environed with difficulties and perplexing circumstances, out of which you are at a loss how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and be assured that that will extricate you the best out of the worst situations.

[1785] Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of the labyrinth in the easiest manner possible.

[1785] This falsehood of the tongue leads to that of the heart, and in time depraves all its good dispositions.

[1800] I have not observed men's honesty to increase with their riches.

[1776?] Truth will do well enough if left to shift for herself.

[1782] It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself.

[1785] It is of great importance to set a resolution, not to be shaken, never to tell an untruth. There is no vice so mean, so pitiful, so contemptible; and he who permits himself to tell a lie once finds it much easier to do a second and third time, till at length it becomes habitual; he tells lies without attending to it, and truths without the world's believing him.

[1813] By oft repeating an untruth men come to believe it themselves.

Re: impeachment

[1820] Having found from experience that impeachment is an impracticable thing, a mere scarecrow, they [the judiciary] consider themselves secure for life.

[1821] In the general government, in this instance, we have gone even beyond the English caution by requiring a vote of two-thirds in one of the houses for removing a judge, a vote so impossible, where any defense is made before men of ordinary prejudices and passions, that our judges are effectually independent of the nation. But this ought not to be.

[1823] The first remedy is the best, that of appointing for a term of years only, with a capacity of reappointment if their conduct has been approved.

[1825] Experience has proved that impeachment in our forms is completely inefficient.

Re: Indians

[1776] They are a useless, expensive, ungovernable ally.

[1786] The want of attention to the Indians' rights is a principal source of dishonor to the American character.

[1786] The two principles on which our conduct towards the Indians should be founded are justice and fear. After the injuries we have done them, they cannot love us, which leaves us no alternative but that of fear to keep them from attacking us. But justice is what we should never lose sight of, and in time it may recover their esteem.

[1803] I am myself alive to the obtaining lands from the Indians by all honest and peaceable means.

[1802] Made by the same Great Spirit, and living in the same land with our brothers, the red men, we consider ourselves as of the same family; we wish to live with them as one people, and to cherish their interests as our own.

[1803] In leading them thus to agriculture, to manufactures, and civilization, in bringing together their and our settlements, and in preparing them ultimately to participate in the benefits of our government, I trust and believe we are acting for their greatest good.

[1803] Our system is to live in perpetual peace with the Indians, to cultivate an affectionate attachment from them by everything just and liberal which we can do for them within the bounds of reason, and by giving them effectual protection against wrongs from our own people.

[1803] The ultimate point of rest and happiness for them is to let our settlements and theirs meet and blend together, to intermix and become one people, incorporating themselves with us as citizens of the United States.

[1803] In the whole course of this it is essential to cultivate their love.

[1808] I shall rejoice to see the day when the red men, our neighbors, become truly one people with us, enjoying all the rights and privileges we do, and living in plenty and peace as we do, without anyone to make them afraid, to injure their persons, or to take their property without being punished for it according to fixed laws.

[1807] Both duty and interest, then, enjoin that we should extend to them the blessings of civilized life, and prepare their minds for becoming useful members of the American family.

[1809] The plan of civilizing the Indians is undoubtedly a great improvement on the ancient and totally ineffectual one of beginning with religious missionaries. Our experience has shown that this must be the last step of the process.

[1782] I never yet saw a native American begging in the streets or highways.

Re: inheritance

[1792] The federal government is incompetent to legislate on the subject of inheritances.

[1821] Equal partition of inheritances . . . [is] the best of all agrarian laws.

Re: inventions, inventors, copyright

[1786] When I was in England, I formed a portable copying press on the principle of the large one they make here [in Paris] for copying letters. I had a model made there, and it has answered perfectly. A workman here has made several from that model.

[1805] That of two pens, with which I am now writing, is best, and is so perfect that I have laid aside the copying press for a twelvemonth past, and write always with the polygraph.

[1806] It [the polygraph] is for copying with one pen while you write with the other . . . as a secretary which copies for us what we write without the power of revealing it.

[1813] It is a fact, as far as I am informed, that England was, until we copied her, the only country on earth which ever, by a general law, gave a legal right to the exclusive use of an idea. In some countries it is sometimes done in a great case, and by a special and personal act, but generally speaking, other nations have thought that these monopolies produce more embarrassment than advantage to society; and it may be observed that the nations which refuse monopolies of inventions are as fruitful as England in new and useful devices.

Re: Andrew Jackson

[1824] I feel much alarmed at the prospect of seeing General Jackson [elected as] President. He is one of the most unfit men I know of for such a place. He has had very little respect for laws or constitutions, and is, in fact, an able military chief. His passions are terrible. When I was president of the Senate he was a Senator, and he could never speak on account of the rashness of his feelings. I have seen him attempt it repeatedly, and as often choke with rage. His passions are no doubt cooler now; he has been much tried since I knew him, but he is a dangerous man.

Re: John Jay

[1800] Jay [has been] nominated Chief Justice. We were afraid of something worse.

Re: Thomas Jefferson

[1788] I had rather be shut up in a very modest cottage with my books, my family, and a few old friends, dining on simple bacon and letting the world roll on as it liked, than to occupy the most splendid post which any human power can give.

[1816] I have not been in the habit of mysterious reserve on any subject, . . . while in public service, especially. I thought the public entitled to frankness, and intimately to know whom they employed.

[1789] My great wish is to go on in a strict but silent performance of my duty, to avoid attracting notice, and to keep my name out of newspapers, because I find the pain of a little censure, even when it is unfounded, is more acute than the pleasure of much praise.

[1793] When I first entered on the stage of public life (now twenty-four years ago), I came to a resolution never to . . . wear any other character than that of a farmer.

[1811] No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth.

[1826] To keep a Virginia estate together requires in the owner both skill and attention. Skill I never had, and attention I could not have, and really, when I reflect on all circumstances, my wonder is that I should have been so long as sixty years in reaching the result to which I am now reduced.

[1799] The first object of my heart is my own country. In that is embarked my family, my fortune, and my own existence.

[1808] I can conscientiously declare that, as to myself, I wish that not only no act but no thought of mine should be unknown.

[1808] I had the good fortune to become acquainted very early with some characters of very high standing, and to feel the incessant wish that I could ever become what they were.

[1809] Never did a prisoner released from his chains feel such relief as I shall in shaking off the shackles of power. Nature intended me for the tranquil pursuits of science by rendering them my supreme delight. But the enormities of the times in which I have lived have forced me to take a part in resisting them, and to commit myself on the boisterous ocean of political passions.

[1810] My mornings are devoted to correspondence. From breakfast to dinner I am in my shops, my garden, or on horseback among my farms; from dinner to dark I give to society and recreation with my neighbors and friends, and from candlelight to early bedtime I read.

[1811] The few hours I can pass in my cabinet are devoured by correspondences; not those with my intimate friends, with whom I delight to interchange sentiments, but with others who, writing to me on concerns of their own in which I have had an agency, or from motives of mere respect and approbation, are entitled to be answered with respect and a return of good will.

[1815] I have for fifty years bathed my feet in cold water every morning, and having been remarkably exempted from colds (not having had one in every seven years of my life on an average), I have supposed it might be ascribed to that practice.

[1816] I . . . have made a wee little book . . . which I call the Philosophy of Jesus; it is a paradigma of his doctrines, made by cutting the texts out of the [New Testament] and arranging them on the pages of a blank book, in a certain order of time or subject. A more beautiful or precious morsel of ethics I have never seen; it is a document in proof that I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus, very different from the Platonists. . . . They draw all their characteristic dogmas from what its Author never said nor saw. They have compounded from the heathen mysteries a system beyond the comprehension of man, of which the great Reformer of the vicious ethics and deism of the Jews, were He to return on earth, would not recognize one feature.

[1819] I have lived temperately, eating little animal food, and that not as an aliment so much as a condiment for the vegetables which constitute my principal diet. I double, however, the doctor's glass and a half of wine, and even treble it with a friend; but halve its effects by drinking the weak wines only. The ardent wines I cannot drink, nor do I use ardent spirits in any form. Malt liquors and cider are my table drinks, and my breakfast is of tea and coffee.

[1819] A stiff wrist, the consequence of an early dislocation, makes writing both slow and painful.

[1819] Whether I retire to bed early or late, I rise with the sun.

[1819] My hearing is distinct in particular conversation, but confused when several voices cross each other, which unfits me for the society of the table.

[1819] A fever of more than twenty-four hours I have not had above two or three times in my life. A periodical headache has afflicted me occasionally, once perhaps in six or eight years, for two or three weeks at a time, which now seems to have left me; and except on a late occasion of indisposition, I enjoy good health; too feeble, indeed, to walk much, but riding without fatigue six or eight miles a day, and sometimes thirty or forty.

[1821] It is true, as you say, that we have differed in political opinions; but I can say with equal truth that I never suffered a political to become a personal

to Timothy Pickering

difference. I have been left on this ground by some friends whom I dearly loved, but I was never the first to separate. With some others of politics different from mine, I have continued in the warmest friendship to this day, and to all, and to yourself particularly, I have ever done moral justice.

[1821?] I have sometimes asked myself whether my country is the better for my having lived at all. I do not know that it is. [Those things which] I have been the instrument of doing . . . would have been done by others; some of them, perhaps, a little better.

[1826] Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and father of the University of Virginia.

TJ wrote his own epitaph.
These are the three things
he wanted to be remembered for.

[1816] You ask if I would agree to live my seventy, or rather seventy-three, years over again. To which I say, yea, I think, with you, that it is a good world on the whole, that it has been framed on a principle of benevolence, and more pleasure than pain dealt out to us.

to John Adams

[1802] From 1793 to 1797 I remained closely at home, saw none but those who came there, and at length became very sensible of the ill effect it had upon my own mind, and of its direct and irresistible tendency to render me unfit for society and uneasy when necessarily engaged in it.

[1794] Instead of writing ten or twelve letters a day, which I have been in the habit of doing as a thing in

to George Washington

course, I put off answering my letters now, farmer-like, till a rainy day, and then find them sometimes postponed by other necessary occupations.

[1807] The constant pressure of business has forced me to follow the practice of not answering letters which do not necessarily require it.

[1817] From sunrise to one or two o'clock, and often from dinner to dark, I am drudging at the writing table. And all this to answer letters into which neither interest nor inclination on my part enters; and often from persons whose names I have never before heard. Yet, writing civilly, it is hard to refuse them civil answers. This is the burden of my life, a very grievous one indeed, and one which I must get rid of.

[1822] I happened to turn to my letter list some time ago, and a curiosity was excited to count those received in a single year. It was the year before the last. I found the

to John Adams

number to be one thousand two hundred and sixty-seven, many of them requiring answers of elaborate research, and all to be answered with due attention and consideration. Take an average of this number for a week or a day, and I will repeat the question . . . is this life? At best it is but the life of a mill-horse, who sees no end to his circle but in death. To such a life, that of a cabbage is paradise.

[1785] Nothing [makes] me more happy than to render any service in my power, of whatever description.

[1815] If in the course of my life, it has been in any degree useful to the cause of humanity, the fact itself bears its full reward.

Re: judges, judiciary,
Judicial Branch,
Supreme Court

[1776] The judges . . . should always be men of learning and experience in the laws, of exemplary morals, great patience, calmness, and attention; their minds should not be distracted with jarring interests.

[1821] Contrary to all correct example, [the judges] are in the habit of going out of the question before them, to throw an anchor ahead and grapple further hold for future advances of power.

[1823] On every question of construction, [let us] carry ourselves back to the time when the Constitution was adopted, recollect the spirit manifested in the debates, and instead of trying what meaning may be squeezed out of the text, or invented against it, conform to the probable one in which it was passed.

[1804] You seem to think it devolved on the judges to decide on the validity of the sedition law. But nothing in the Constitution has given them a right to decide for the executive, more than to the executive to decide for them. Both magistrates are equally independent in the sphere of action assigned to them. . . . The opinion which gives to the judges the right to decide what laws are Constitutional and what not, not only for themselves in their own sphere of action, but for the legislature and executive also in their spheres, would make the judiciary a despotic branch.

to Abigail Adams

[1807] I have long wished for a proper occasion to have the gratuitous opinion in *Marbury v Madison* brought before the public, and denounced as not law.

[1819] We find the judiciary, on every occasion, still driving us into consolidation. [I deny] the right they usurp of exclusively explaining the Constitution.

[1820] You seem . . . to consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all Constitutional questions; a very dangerous doctrine indeed, and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy.

[1821] The great object of my fear is the federal judiciary. That body, like gravity, ever acting with noiseless foot and unalarming advance, gaining ground step by step and holding what it gains, is engulfing insidiously the state governments into the jaws of that which feeds them.

[1821] The germ of dissolution of our federal government is in the constitution of the federal judiciary; an irresponsible body (for impeachment is scarcely a scarecrow), working like gravity by night and by day, gaining a little today and a little tomorrow, and advancing its noiseless step like a thief over the field of jurisdiction, until all shall be usurped from the states, and the government of all be consolidated into one.

[1823] There is no danger I apprehend so much as the consolidation of our government by the noiseless, and therefore unalarming, instrumentality of the Supreme Court.

[1820] The judiciary of the United States is the subtle corps of sappers and miners constantly working underground to undermine the foundations of our confederated fabric. They are construing our Constitution from a coordination of a general [federal] and special [state] government to a general and supreme one alone. This will lay all things at their feet. . . . Having found from experience that impeachment is an impracticable thing, a mere scarecrow, they consider themselves secure for life; they skulk from responsibility to public opinion. . . . A judiciary independent of a king or executive alone is a good thing, but independence of the will of the nation is a solecism, at least in a republican government.

[1823] At the establishment of our constitutions, the judiciary bodies were supposed to be the most helpless and harmless members of the government. Experience, however, soon showed in what way they were to become the most dangerous; that the insufficiency of the means provided for their removal gave them a freehold and irresponsibility in office; that their decisions, seeming to concern individual suitors only, pass silent and unheeded by the public at large; that these decisions nevertheless become law by precedent, sapping by little and little the foundations of the Constitution, and working its change by construction, before anyone has perceived that that invisible and helpless worm has been busily employed in consuming its substance. In truth, man is not made to be trusted for life if secured against all liability to account.

[1821] I deem it indispensable to the continuance of this government that they [judges] should be submitted to some practical and impartial control; and that this, to be impartial, must be compounded of a mixture of state and federal authorities. . . . I do not charge the judges with willful and ill-intentioned error; but honest error must be arrested where its toleration leads to public ruin.

[1822] Let the future appointments of judges be for four or six years, and renewable by the President and Senate.

[1820] It is a very dangerous doctrine to consider the judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions. It is one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy.

[1823] The Chief Justice [John Marshall] says: "There must be an ultimate arbiter somewhere." True, there must; but does that prove it is either party? The ultimate arbiter is the people of the Union.

[1821] The judiciary branch is the instrument which, working like gravity without intermission, is to press us at last into one consolidated mass. . . . If Congress fails to shield the states from dangers so palpable and so imminent, the states must shield themselves and meet the invader foot to foot.

[1821] There are two measures which, if not taken, we are undone. First, to check these unconstitutional invasions of state rights by the federal judiciary. How? Not by impeachment in the first instance, but by a strong protestation of both houses of Congress that such and such doctrines advanced by the Supreme Court are contrary to the Constitution; and if afterwards they relapse into the same heresies, impeach and set the whole adrift. For what was the government divided into three branches, but that each should watch over the others and oppose their usurpations?

Re: jury

[1789] The people are not qualified to judge questions of law, but they are very capable of judging questions of fact. In the form of juries, therefore, they determine all matters of fact, leaving to the permanent judges to decide the law resulting from those facts. But we all know that permanent judges are liable to be tempted by bribery; that they are misled by favor, by relationship, by a spirit of party, by a devotion to the executive or legislative power; . . . It is in the power, therefore, of the juries, if they think permanent judges are under any bias whatever in any cause, to take on themselves to judge the law as well as the fact. . . . Were I called upon to decide whether the people had best be omitted in the legislative or judiciary department, I would say it is better to leave them out of the legislative. The execution of the laws is more important than the making of them.

Re: justice

[1785] Before the Revolution, a judgment could not be obtained under eight years in the Supreme Court [of Virginia] . . . In that of the chancery, from twelve to twenty years were requisite. . . . This reformation was among the first works of the legislature after our independence. A judgment can now be obtained in the Supreme Court in one year at the common law, and in about three years in the chancery.

[1803] What is done for one must be done for everyone in equal degree.

[1816] I believe that justice is the fundamental law of society.

[1792] It is reasonable that everyone who asks justice should do justice.

Re: labor, laborers

[1774] Our ancestors . . . who migrated hither were laborers, not lawyers.

[1788] I made a point of paying my workmen in preference to all other claimants. I never parted with one without settling with him, and giving him either his money or my note. Every person that ever worked for me can attest this, and that I always paid their notes pretty soon.

[1792] My first wish is that the [colored] laborers may be well treated.

[1814] The wealthy . . . and those at their ease know nothing of what the Europeans call luxury. They have only somewhat more of the comforts and decencies of life than those who furnish them. Can any condition of life be more desirable than this?

[1814] Nor in the class of laborers do I mean to withhold from the comparison that portion whose color has condemned them, in certain parts of our Union, to subjection to the will of others. Even these are better fed in these states, warmer clothed, and labor less than the journeymen or day laborers of England. They have the comfort too, of numerous families, in the midst of whom they live without want, or fear of it; a solace which few of the laborers of England possess. They are subject, it is true, to bodily coercion, but are not the hundreds of thousands of British soldiers and seamen subject to the same, without seeing, at the end of their career, when age and accident shall have rendered them unequal to labor, the certainty, which the other has, that he will never want? And has not the British seaman, as much as the African, been reduced to this bondage by force, in flagrant

violation of his own consent, and of his natural right in his own person? And with the laborers of England generally, does not the moral coercion of want subject their will as despotically to that of their employer, as the physical constraint does the soldier, the seaman, or the slave?

But do not mistake me. I am not advocating slavery. I am not justifying the wrongs we have committed on a foreign people, by the example of another nation committing equal wrongs on their own subjects. On the contrary, there is nothing I would not sacrifice to a practicable plan of abolishing every vestige of this moral and political depravity. But I am, at present, comparing the condition and degree of suffering to which oppression has reduced the man of one color, with the condition and degree of suffering to which oppression has reduced the man of another color; equally condemning both.

[1803] When, by a blind concourse, particular occupations are ruinously overcharged and others left in want of hands, the national authorities can do much towards restoring the equilibrium.

[1826] Everyone has a natural right to choose that [vocation in life] which he thinks most likely to give him comfortable subsistence.

[1792] Never fear the worst of business. A man who qualifies himself well for his calling never fails of employment in it.

[1810] Now men are born scholars, lawyers, doctors; in our day this was confined to poets.

Re: Marquis de Lafayette

[1787] He has a great deal of sound genius. . . . His foible is a canine appetite for popularity and fame; but he will get above this.

[1824] His deeds in the peace which followed that war are perhaps not known to you, but I can attest them. When I was stationed in his country [France] for the purpose of cementing its friendship with ours and of advancing our mutual interests, this friend of both was my most powerful auxiliary and advocate. He made our cause his own, as in truth it was that of his native country also. His influence and connections there were great. All doors of all departments were open to him at all times, to me only formally and at appointed times. In truth I only held the nail; he drove it. Honor him, then, as your benefactor in peace as well as in war.

Re: law, laws, lawyers

[1808] The true key for the construction of everything doubtful in a law is the intention of the lawmakers.

[1810] The question you propose, whether circumstances do not sometimes occur which make it a duty in officers of high trust to assume authorities beyond the law, is easy of solution in principle, but sometimes embarrassing in practice. A strict observance of the written laws is doubtless one of the high duties of a good citizen, but it is not the highest. The laws of necessity, of self-preservation, of saving our country when in danger, are of higher obligation. To lose our country by a scrupulous adherence to written law would be to lose the law itself, with life, liberty, property, and all those who are enjoying them with us; thus absurdly sacrificing the end to the means. . . . The line of discrimination between cases may be difficult; but the good officer is bound to draw it at his own peril, and throw himself on the justice of his country and the rectitude of his motives.

[1821] To save the Republic . . . is the first and supreme law.

[1825] Of all the countries on earth of which I have any knowledge, the style of the acts of the British Parliament is the most barbarous, uncouth, and unintelligible. . . . Where they found their model I know not. Neither ancient nor modern codes, nor even their own early statutes, furnish any such example. And, like faithful apes, we copy it faithfully.

[1779] It is not only vain but wicked in a legislator to frame laws in opposition to the laws of nature, and to arm them with the terror of death. This is truly creating crimes in order to punish them.

[1787] Carry on the study of the law with that of politics and history. Every political measure will forever have an intimate connection with the laws of the land, and he who knows nothing of these will always be perplexed and often foiled by adversaries having the advantage of that knowledge over him.

[1787] It is a source of infinite comfort to reflect that . . . we [lawyers] have a resource in ourselves from which we may be able to derive an honorable subsistence.

[1790] It is superiority of knowledge which can alone lift you [lawyers] above the heads of your competitors and ensure you success.

[1810] The opinion seems to be that [Sir William] Blackstone is to us what the Koran is to the Muhammadans; that everything which is necessary is in him, and what is not in him is not necessary.

[1810] Law is quite overdone. It is fallen to the ground, and a man must have great powers to raise himself in it to either honor or profit. The mob of the profession get as little money and less respect that they would by digging the earth.

[1821] If the present Congress errs in too much talking, how can it be otherwise in a body to which the people send one hundred and fifty lawyers, whose trade it is to question everything, yield nothing, and talk by the hour? That one hundred and fifty lawyers should do business together ought not to be expected.

[1786] Manslaughter is the killing a man with design but in a sudden gust of passion, and where the killer has not had time to cool. The first offense is not punished capitally, but the second is. This is the law of England and of all the American states, and is not now a new proposition.

[1794] The excise law is an infernal one. The first error was to admit it by the Constitution; the second, to act on that admission; the third and last will be to make it the instrument of dismembering the Union, and setting us all afloat to choose which part of it we will adhere to.

[1798] These [Alien and Sedition Acts] and successive acts of the same character, unless arrested at the threshold, necessarily drive these states into revolution and blood.

[1788] Why suspend the habeas corpus in insurrections and rebellions?

[1788] Examine the history of England. See how few of the cases of the suspension of the habeas corpus law have been worthy of that suspension.

Re: libel, slander

[1789] Printers shall be liable to legal prosecution for printing and publishing false facts, injurious to the party prosecuting; but they shall be under no other restraint.

[1804] In general, the state laws appear to have made the presses responsible for slander as far as is consistent with its useful freedom. In those states where they do not admit even the truth of allegations to protect the printer, they have gone too far.

[1798] At a very early period of my life I determined never to put a sentence into any newspaper. I have religiously adhered to the resolution through my life, and have great reason to be contented with it. Were I to undertake to answer the calumnies of the newspapers, it would be more than all my own time and that of twenty aides could effect. For while I should be answering one, twenty new ones would be

invented. I have thought it better to trust to the justice of my countrymen, that they would judge me by what they see of my conduct on the stage where they have placed me, and what they knew of me before . . .

[1800] From the moment that a portion of my fellow citizens looked towards me with a view to one of their highest offices, the floodgates of calumny have been opened upon me . . . I know that I might have filled the courts of the United States with actions for these slanders, and have ruined perhaps many persons who are not innocent. But this would be no equivalent to the loss of character. I leave them, therefore, to the reproof of their own consciences.

[1805] It seems to be fixed that falsehood and calumny are to be their [the Federalist Party] ordinary engines of opposition; engines which will not be entirely without effect. . . . If we suffer ourselves to be frightened from our post by mere lying, surely the enemy will use that weapon.

[1805] The patriot, like the Christian, must learn that to bear revilings and persecutions is a part of his duty; and in proportion as the trial is severe, firmness under it becomes more requisite and praiseworthy.

[1807] Slanderers I have thought it best to leave to the scourge of public opinion.

[1822] I am not afraid to trust to the justice and good sense of my fellow citizens on future as on former attempts to lessen me in their esteem.

[1824] But although I decline all newspaper controversy, yet when falsehoods have been advanced within the knowledge of no one so much as myself I have sometimes deposited a contradiction in the hands of a friend.

[1816] The man who fears no truths has nothing to fear from lies.

Re: liberty

[1774] The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time; the hand of force may destroy but cannot disjoin them.

[1787] The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.

[1787] What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that the people preserve the spirit of resistance?

[1787] Say . . . whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government or information to the people. This last is the most certain and the most legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. Enable them to see that it is their interest to preserve peace and order, and they will preserve them. And it requires no very high degree of education to convince them of this. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.

[1788] The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground.

[1789] Liberty . . . is the great parent of science and of virtue, and . . . a nation will be great in both, always in proportion as it is free.

[1790] The ground of liberty is to be gained by inches, and we must be contented to secure what we can get, from time to time, and eternally press forward for what is yet to get. It takes time to persuade men to do even what is for their own good.

[1790] We are not to expect to be translated from despotism to liberty in a feather bed.

[1795] The ball of liberty is now so well in motion that it will roll round the globe.

[1816] If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.

[1817] That we should wish to see the people of other countries free is as natural, and at least as justifiable, as that one king should wish to see the kings of other countries maintained in their despotism.

[1791] I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than those attending too small a degree of it.

Re: Louisiana Purchase

[1803] I think it will be safer not to permit the enlargement of the Union but by amendment of the Constitution.

[1803] I suppose they must then appeal to the nation for an additional article to the Constitution, approving and confirming an act which the nation had not previously authorized. The Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union.

[1803] I pretend to no right to bind you; you may disavow me, and I must get out of the scrape as I can; I thought it my duty to risk myself for you.

Re: James Madison

[1810] To the purest principles of republican patriotism, [Madison] adds a wisdom and foresight second to no man on earth.

[1790] The will of the majority, the natural law of every society, is the only sure

Re: majority, minority

guardian of the rights of man. Perhaps even this may sometimes err. But its errors are honest, solitary, and short-lived.

[1801] Bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable, that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression.

[1809] Where the law of the majority ceases to be acknowledged, there government ends; the law of the strongest takes its place, and life and property are his who can take them.

[1816] The majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime, abuses its strength, and, by acting on the law of the strongest, breaks up the foundations of society.

Re: *Marbury v Madison*

[1807] I observe that the case of *Marbury v Madison* has been cited [in the trial of Aaron Burr], and I think it material to stop at the threshold the citing that case as authority, and to have it denied to be law.

Re: John Marshall

[1795] He has been hitherto able to do more mischief acting under the mask of republicanism than he will be able to do throwing it plainly off.

[1820] [He is] a crafty Chief Judge, who sophisticates the law to his mind by the turn of his own reasoning.

Re: George Mason

[1825] The fact is unquestionable that the Bill of Rights and the constitution of Virginia were drawn originally by George Mason, one of our really great men, and of the first order of greatness.

Re: monarchy, kings

[1787] I am astonished at some people's considering a kingly government as a refuge [from the evils of the confederation]. Advise such to read the fable of the frogs who solicited Jupiter for a king. If that does not put them to rights, send them to Europe to see something of the trappings of monarchy, and I will undertake that very man shall go back thoroughly cured.

[1787] With all the defects of our constitution[s], whether [federal] or [state], the comparison of our governments with those of Europe is like a comparison of heaven and hell. England, like the earth, may be allowed to take the intermediate station.

[1788] I was much an enemy to monarchies before I came to Europe. I am ten thousand times more so since I have seen what they are.

to George Washington

[1789] I know there are some among us who would now establish a monarchy. But they are inconsiderable in number and weight of character.

to James Madison

[1792] [President Washington said] that as to the idea of transforming this government into a monarchy, he did not believe there were ten men in the United States, whose opinions were worth attention, who entertained such a thought. I told him there were many more than he imagined. . . . I told him that though the people were sound, there were a numerous sect who had monarchy in contemplation; that the Secretary of the Treasury [Alexander Hamilton] was one of these; that I had heard him say that this Constitution was a shilly-shally thing of mere milk and water, which could not last, and was only good as a step to something better.

[1786] There is no king who, with sufficient force, is not always ready to make himself absolute.

[1788] There is not a crowned head in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him to be elected a vestryman by the people of any parish in America.

[1810] Louis the XVI was a fool, of my own knowledge. The King of Spain was a fool, and of Naples the same. The King of Sardinia was a fool. The Queen of Portugal, . . . an idiot by nature. And so was the King of Denmark. The King of Prussia, successor to the great Frederick, was a mere hog in body as well as in mind. Gustavus of Sweden and Joseph of Austria were really crazy, and George of England, you know, was in a straight waistcoat. There remained, then none but old Catherine, who had been too lately picked up to have lost her common sense. In this state Bonaparte found Europe, and it was this state of its rulers which lost it with scarce a struggle.

[1821] He [Louis XVI] had not a wish but for the good of the nation; . . . but his mind was weakness itself.

[1821] I have ever believed that had there been no Queen [Marie Antoinette], there would have been no revolution.

[1803] To appoint a monarchist to conduct the affairs of a republic is like appointing an atheist to the priesthood.

[1813] The question of preference between monarchy and republicanism, which has so long divided mankind elsewhere, threatens a permanent division here.

Re: money, finances,
economy, credit, debt

[1813] It would be best that our medium should be so proportioned to our produce as to be on a par with that of the countries with which we trade, and whose medium is in a sound state.

[1813] Specie is the most perfect medium, because it will preserve its own level; . . . [Paper money] is liable to be abused, has been, is, and forever will be abused, in every country in which it is permitted.

[1797] These foreign and false citizens . . . are advancing fast to a monopoly of our banks and public funds, thereby placing our finances under their control.

[1824] [Jean Baptiste] Say will be surprised to find that forty years after the development of sound financial principles by Adam Smith and the economists, and a dozen years after he has given them to us in a corrected, dense, and lucid form, there should be so much ignorance of them in our country.

[1788] Though I am an enemy to the using our credit but under absolute necessity, yet the possessing a good credit I consider as indispensable in the present system of carrying on war.

[1792] I told [President Washington] all that was ever necessary to establish our credit was an efficient government and an honest one, declaring it would sacredly pay our debts, laying taxes for this purpose and applying them to it.

[1813] It is a wise rule, and should be fundamental in a government disposed to cherish its credit, and at the same time to restrain the use of it within the limits of its faculties, "never to borrow a dollar without laying a tax in the same instant for paying the interest annually, and the principal within a given term; and to consider that tax as pledged to the creditors on the public faith." . . . But what limits, it will be asked, does this prescribe to their powers? What is to hinder them from creating a perpetual debt? The laws of nature, I answer. The earth belongs to the living, not to the dead. The will and the power of man expire with his life, by nature's law.

[1787] The maxim of buying nothing but what we [have] money in our pockets to pay for . . . lays the broadest foundation for happiness.

[1787] Never [buy] anything which you have not money in your pocket to pay for. Be assured that it gives much more pain to the mind to be in debt than to do without any article whatever which we may seem to want.

[1820] It is incumbent on every generation to pay its own debts as it goes; a principle which, if acted on, would save one-half the wars of the world.

[1813] If the debt which the banking companies owe be a blessing to anybody, it is to themselves alone, who are realizing a solid interest of 8 or 10 percent on it.

[1799] I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple, applying all the possible savings of the public revenue to the discharge of the national debt.

[1802] To expend the public money with the same care and economy [that] we would practice with our own . . . [is one of] the landmarks by which we are to guide ourselves in all our proceedings.

[1816] We must make our election between economy and liberty or profusion and servitude.

[1796] I do not at all wonder at the condition in which the finances of the United States are found. [Alexander] Hamilton's object from the beginning was to throw them into forms which should be utterly undecipherable. I ever said he did not understand their condition himself, nor was [he] able to give a clear view of the excess of our debts, beyond our credits, nor whether we were diminishing or increasing the debt. . . . The accounts of the United States ought to be, and may be, made as simple as those of a common farmer, and capable of being understood by common farmers.

[1802] I think it an object of great importance . . . to simplify our system of finance, and bring it within the comprehension of every member of Congress. . . . We might hope to see the finances of the Union as clear and intelligible as a merchant's books, so that every member of Congress, and every man of any mind in the Union, should be able to comprehend them, to investigate abuses, and consequently to control them.

[1813] It is a palpable falsehood to say we can have specie for our paper whenever demanded.

[1815] Yet there is no hope of relief from the legislatures who have immediate control over this subject [the value of property]. As little seems to be known of the principles of political economy as if nothing had ever been written or practiced on the subject.

Re: James Monroe,
Monroe Doctrine

[1808] He is a man whose soul might be turned wrong side outwards without discovering a blemish to the world.

[1808] I have ever viewed Mr Madison and yourself as two principal pillars of my happiness.

to James Monroe

[1813] America has a hemisphere to itself. It must have its separate system of interests, which must not be subordinated to those of Europe.

[1820] I hope . . . [to see] all American nations . . . coalescing in an American system of policy, totally independent of and unconnected with that of Europe.

[1820] Nothing is so important as that America shall separate herself from the systems of Europe and establish one of her own. Our circumstances, our pursuits, our interests are distinct; the principles of our policy should be so also.

Re: Baron Charles de Montesquieu

[1811] I had, with the world, deemed Montesquieu's work of much merit, but saw in it, with every thinking man, so much of paradox, of false principle, and misapplied fact, as to render its value equivocal on the whole.

Re: moral law, moral sense, morality

[1793] Man has been subjected by his Creator [to the moral law] . . . of which his feelings, or conscience as it is sometimes called, are the evidence with which his Creator has furnished him.

[1787] Man was destined for society. His morality, therefore, was to be formed to this object. He was endowed with a sense of right and wrong, merely relative to this. This sense is as much a part of his nature as the sense of hearing, seeing, feeling; it is the true foundation of morality.

[1787] State a moral case to a plowman and a professor. The former will decide it as well and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules.

[1816] Nature hath implanted in our breasts a love of others, a sense of duty to them, a moral instinct.

[1814] The want or imperfection of the moral sense in some men, like the want or imperfection of the senses of sight and hearing in others, is no proof that it is a general characteristic of the species.

[1814] When [the moral sense] is wanting, we endeavor to supply the defect by education; by appeals to reason and calculation.

[1809] Reading, reflection, and time have convinced me that the interests of society require the observation of those moral precepts only in which all religions agree (for all forbid us to murder, steal, plunder, or bear false witness), and that we should not intermeddle with the particular dogmas in which all religions differ, and which are totally unconnected with morality.

[1809] We all agree in the obligation of the moral precepts of Jesus, and nowhere will they be found delivered in greater purity than in his discourses.

[1814] There never was a more pure and sublime system of morality delivered to man than is to be found in the four Evangelists.

Re: music

[1778] If there is a gratification which I envy any people in this world, it is to your country [France] its music.

[1782] In music [the blacks] are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time.

[1818] Music is invaluable where a person has an ear. Where [he has] not, it should not be attempted.

[1790] I think, with others, that nations are to be governed according to their own interest, but I am convinced that it is their interest in the long run to be grateful, . . . honorable and generous always.

[1792] A nation, as a society, forms a moral person, and every member of it is personally responsible for his society.

[1793] It is true that nations are to be judges for themselves, since no one nation has a right to sit in judgment over another.

[1807] Blessed is that nation whose silent course of happiness furnishes nothing for history to say. This is what I ambition for my own country.

[1808] A character of good faith is of as much value to a nation as to an individual.

Re: negroes

[1782] They are at least as brave [as white men], and more adventuresome. But this may perhaps proceed from a want of forethought, which prevents their seeing a danger till it be present. When present, they do not go through it with more coolness or steadiness than the whites.

[1782] That disposition to theft with which they have been branded must be ascribed to their situation, and not to any depravity of the moral sense. . . . We find among them numerous instances of the most rigid integrity, and as many as among their better instructed masters of benevolence, gratitude, and unshaken fidelity.

Re: neutrality

[1788] We should take no part in European quarrels, but cultivate peace and commerce with all.

to George

[1801] The wrongs which two nations endeavor to inflict on each other must not infringe on the rights or conveniences of those remaining at peace.

Re: newspapers

[1787] Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

[1801] A coalition of sentiments is not for the interest of the printers. They . . . live by the zeal they can kindle and the schisms they can create. It is contest of opinion in politics . . . which makes us take great interest in them, and bestow our money liberally on those who furnish aliment to our appetite. . . . The printers can never leave us in a state of perfect rest and union of opinion. They would be no longer useful, and would have to go to the plow.

[1807] To your request of my opinion of the manner in which a newspaper should be conducted so as to be most useful, I should answer, “by restraining it to true facts and sound principles only.” Yet I fear such a paper would find few subscribers.

[1807] Nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle.

[1807] Perhaps an editor might begin a reformation in some such way as this: Divide his paper into four chapters, heading the 1st, Truths; 2nd, Probabilities; 3rd, Possibilities; 4th, Lies.

[1814] I deplore . . . the putrid state into which our newspapers have passed, and the malignity, the vulgarity, and mendacious spirit of those who write for them.

[1816] Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.

[1823] The press . . . is . . . the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man and improving him as a rational, moral, and social being.

Re: ocean

[1808] The ocean, . . . like the air, is the common birthright of mankind.

[1811] The intention which the British now formally avow of taking possession of the ocean as their exclusive domain, and of suffering no commerce on it but through their ports, makes it the interest of all mankind to contribute their efforts to bring such usurpations to an end.

Re: old age

[1815] Nothing is more incumbent on the old than to know when they should get out of the way and relinquish to younger successors the honors they can no longer earn , and the duties they can no longer perform.

[1821] Man, like the fruit he eats, has his period of ripeness. Like that, too, if he continues longer hanging to the stem, it is but a useless and unsightly appendage.

Re: opinion, public confidence

[1789] I never submitted the whole system of my opinions to the creed of any party of men whatever, in religion, in philosophy, in politics, or in anything else where I was capable of thinking for myself. . . . If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all.

[1801] In every country where man is free to think and to speak, differences of opinion will arise, . . . but these differences, when permitted as in this happy country to purify themselves by free discussion, are but as passing clouds.

[1810] I have never thought that a difference in political, any more than in religious, opinions should disturb the friendly intercourse of society.

[1801] If we do not learn to sacrifice small differences of opinion, we can never act together.

[1811] To the principles of union I sacrifice all minor differences of opinion. These, like differences of face , are a law of our nature and should be viewed with the same tolerance.

[1824] It is not wisdom alone, but public confidence in that wisdom, which can support an administration.

[1791] The opinion of the public, even when it is wrong, ought to be respected to a certain degree.

[1801] It is rare that the public sentiment decides immorally or unwisely.

[1790] I see the necessity of sacrificing our opinions sometimes to the opinions of others for the sake of harmony.

Re: Thomas Paine

[1821] *Common Sense* was, for a while, believed to have been written by Dr Franklin and published under the borrowed name of Paine.

Re: patriotism

[1799] The first object of my heart is my own country. In that is embarked my family, my fortune, and my own existence.

[1811] Let the love of our country soar above all minor passions.

[1811] My affections are first for my own country, and then, generally, for all mankind.

Re: patronage

[1801] Bad men will sometimes get in [the Presidency], and with such an immense patronage may make great progress in corrupting the public mind and principles.

[1801] The elective principle becomes nothing if it may be smothered by the enormous patronage of the [federal] government.

[1782] It should be our endeavor to cultivate the peace and friendship of every nation, even of that which has injured us most [ie England], when we shall have carried our point against her.

Re: peace

[1788] The power of making war often prevents it, and . . . would give efficacy to our desire of peace.

to George Washington

[1807] Wars and contentions, indeed, fill the pages of history. . . . But more blessed is that nation whose silent course of happiness furnishes nothing for history to say.

Re: people

[1782] Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories.

[1819] No government can continue good, but under the control of the people.

[1782] Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless. . . . They will be forgotten, . . . and their rights disregarded. They will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to effect a due respect for their rights.

[1782] It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in vigor.

[1787] The good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army.

[1787] To inform the minds of the people and to follow their will is the chief duty of those placed at their head.

[1789] Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government.

[1793] I consider the people who constitute a society or nation as the source of all authority in that nation.

[1821] All authority belongs to the people.

[1801] The lesson we have had [ie from Federalist excesses] will probably be useful to the people at large by showing to them how capable they are of being made the instruments of their own bondage.

[1809] My confidence . . . in my countrymen generally leaves me without much fear for the future.

[1819] Independence can be trusted nowhere but with the people in mass.

[1802] Let us deserve well of our country by making her interests the end of all our plans, and not our own pomp, patronage, and irresponsibility.

[1816] I believe . . . that morality, compassion, [and] generosity are innate elements of the human constitution.

[1799] I am among those who think well of the human character generally.

[1776?] God Himself will not save men against their wills.

Re: right of petition

[1807] Citizens, whether individually or in bodies corporate or associated, have a right to apply directly to any department of their government.

[1808] The people have a right to petition, but not to use that right to cover calumniating insinuations.


[1814] He is one of the race of genuine sophists who has escaped the oblivion of his brethren, first by the eloquence of his diction, but chiefly by the adoption and incorporation of his whimsies into the body of artificial Christianity.

Re: Plato

[1814] It is fortunate for us that Platonic republicanism has not obtained the same favor as Platonic Christianity.

[1814] Socrates had reason, indeed, to complain of the misrepresentations of Plato, for in truth his dialogues are libels on Socrates.

[1820] No writer, ancient or modern, has bewildered the world with more ignis fatui than this renowned philosopher, in ethics, in politics, and physics.

[1813] Men have differed in opinion, and been divided into parties by these
 opinions, from the first origin of societies, and in all governments where they have been permitted freely to think and to speak.

[1822] What do you think of the state of parties at this time? An opinion prevails that there is no longer any distinction, that the Republicans and Federalists are completely amalgamated; but it is not so. The amalgamation is of name only, not of principle. All, indeed, call themselves by the name of Republicans because that of the Federalists was extinguished in the battle of New Orleans. But the truth is that, finding that monarchy is a desperate wish in this country, they [the old Federalists] rally to the point which they think next best, a consolidated government. Their aim is now, therefore, to break down the rights reserved by the Constitution in the states as a bulwark against that consolidation, the fear of which produced the whole of the opposition to the Constitution at its birth. Hence new Republicans in Congress preaching the doctrines of the old Federalists, and the new nicknames of “Ultras” and “Radicals”. But I trust they will fail under the new, as the old, name, and that the friends of the real Constitution and Union will prevail against consolidation as they have done against monarchism. I scarcely know myself which is most to be deprecated, a consolidation or dissolution of the states. The horrors of both are beyond the reach of human foresight.

[1824] I am no believer in the amalgamation of parties, nor do I consider it as either desirable or useful for the public.

[1824] Men by their constitutions are naturally divided into two parties: 1: Those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into the hands of the higher classes. 2: Those who identify themselves with the people, have confidence in them, [and] cherish and consider them as the most honest and safe, although not the most wise, depository of the public interests. In every country these

two parties exist, and in every one where they are free to think, speak, and write, they will declare themselves. . . . By whatever name you please, they are the same parties still, and pursue the same object.

[1794] I think it is Montaigne who has said that ignorance is the softest pillow on which a man can rest his head. I am sure it is true as to everything political.

[1798] Politics and party hatreds destroy the happiness of every being here [in Philadelphia].

[1806] Political interest can never be separated in the long run from moral right.

[1824] Speeches measured by the hour die with the hour.

[1821] I never suffered a political to become a personal difference.

[1823] The steady object [of the Republican party] . . . was to maintain the will of the majority of the [Constitutional] convention, and of the people themselves.

[1788] All the world is now politically mad. Men, women, [and] children [in France] talk nothing else, and you know that naturally they talk much, loud, and warm. Society is spoiled by it, at least for those who, like myself, are but lookers on. You, too, [in America] have had your political fever. But our good ladies, I trust, have been too wise to wrinkle their foreheads with politics. They are contented to soothe and calm the minds of their husbands returning ruffled from political debate.

[1797] I have seen enough of political honors to know that they are but splendid torments.

Re: post office

[1797] The interruption of letters is becoming so notorious that I am forming a resolution of declining correspondence with my friends through the channels of the post office altogether.

[1799] A want of confidence in the post office deters me from writing to my friends on the subject of politics.

Re: power

[1782] With money we will get men, said Caesar, and with men we will get money.

[1785] In a free country, every power is dangerous which is not bound up by general rules.

[1811] I have never been able to conceive how any rational being could propose happiness to himself from the exercise of power over others.

Re: president, executive

[1796] No man will ever bring out of that office the reputation which carries him into it.

[1797] The helm of a free government is always arduous.

[1797] The second office of the government [Vice President] is honorable and easy; the first is but a splendid misery.

[1788] I dislike strongly [in the new Constitution] the perpetual reeligibility of the President. This, I fear, will make that an office for life, first, and then hereditary.

[1810] In times of peace the people look most to their representatives; but in war, to the executive solely.

[1811] When our present government was first established we had many doubts on this question [of single vs plural executives], and many leanings towards a supreme executive council. It happened that at that time the experiment of such a one was commenced in France, while a single executive was under trial here. We watched the motions and effects of these two rival plans. . . . The experiment in France failed

after a short course . . . We had tried a similar experiment in 1784 by establishing a committee of the states . . . They fell immediately into schisms and dissensions, which became at length so inveterate as to render all cooperation among them impractical; they dissolved themselves.

[1793] No ground of support for the executive will ever be so sure as a complete knowledge of their proceedings by the people.

Re: principles

[1777] An adherence to fundamental principles is the most likely way to save both time and disagreement [between legislative bodies].

[1816] Lay down true principles and adhere to them inflexibly.

[1819] In the maintenance of . . . [our] principles . . . I verily believe the future happiness of our country essentially depends.

[1816] A departure from principle in one instance becomes a precedent for a second, that second for a third, and so on.

Re: property

[1785] Whenever there [are] in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right.

[1793] The persons and property of our citizens are entitled to the protection of our government in all places where they may lawfully go.

[1812] Every man has a right to seize and retake by force his own property, taken from him by another by force or fraud.

Re: reason

[1782] Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error.

[1791] I hope that we have not labored in vain, and that our experiment will still prove that men can be governed by reason.

[1810] Truth and reason are eternal. They have prevailed. And they will eternally prevail; however, in times and places they may be overborne for a while.

[1822] Man, once surrendering his reason, has no remaining guard against absurdities the most monstrous, and like a ship without rudder is the sport of every wind.

Re: rebellion,
insurrection, resistance

[1787] I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical.

[1787] [No] degree of power in the hands of government [will] prevent insurrections.

[1787] The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions that I wish it to be always kept alive. It will often be exercised when wrong, but better so than not to be exercised at all.

[1807] When patience has begotten false estimates of its motives, when wrongs are pressed because it is believed they will be borne, resistance becomes morality.

[1787] Can history produce an instance of rebellion so honorably conducted? I say nothing of its motives. They were founded in ignorance not wickedness. God forbid we should ever be twenty years without such a rebellion. The people cannot be all, and always, well informed. The part which is wrong will be discontented in proportion to the importance of the

re: Shay's Rebellion

facts they misconceive. If they remain quiet under such misconceptions it is a lethargy, the forerunner of death to the public liberty.

Re: reform

[1816] I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with, because, when once [these are] known, we accommodate ourselves to them, and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know also that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.

Re: religion, Christianity

[1776?] I may recover health by medicines I am compelled to take against my own judgment, but I cannot be saved by a worship I disbelieve and abhor.

[1787] Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because if there be one, He must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear.

[1787] You must lay aside all prejudice on both sides, and neither believe nor reject anything because any other persons, or description of persons, have rejected or believed it. Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but uprightness of the decision.

[1808] Certainly no power to prescribe any religious exercise, or to assume any authority in religious discipline, has been delegated to the general government. It must then rest with the states, as far as it can be in any human authority.

[1813] If thinking men would have the courage to think for themselves, and to speak what they think, it would be found they do not differ in religious opinions as much as is supposed.

[1816] I have ever judged of the religion of others by their lives, . . . for it is in our lives, and not from our words, that our religion must be read.

[1819] I am of a sect by myself, as far as I know.

[1823] An atheist . . . I can never be.

[1782] It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my legs.

[1776?] It is unlawful in the ordinary course of things, or in a private house, to murder a child. It should not be permitted any sect, then, to sacrifice children. It is ordinarily lawful (or temporarily lawful) to kill calves and lambs. They may, therefore, be religiously sacrificed.

[1788] The declaration that religious faith shall be unpunished does not give impunity to criminal acts dictated by religious error.

[1782] The way to silence religious disputes is to take no notice of them.

[1802] I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature [Congress] should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building a wall of separation between church and state.

[1776?] It is the refusing toleration to those of a different opinion which has produced all the bustles and wars on account of religion.

[1803] My views . . . are the result of a life of inquiry and reflection, and very different from that anti-Christian system imputed to me by those who know nothing of my opinions. To the corruptions of Christianity I am, indeed, opposed; but not to

the genuine precepts of Jesus himself. I am a Christian, in the only sense in which he wished anyone to be -- sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to himself every human excellence, and believing he never claimed any other.

[1816] I am a *real Christian*, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus -- very different from the Platonists, who call *me* infidel and *themselves* Christians, and preachers of the gospel, while they draw all their characteristic dogmas from what its Author never said nor saw. They have compounded from the heathen mysteries a system beyond the comprehension of man, of which the great Reformer of the vicious ethics and deism of the Jews, were He to return on earth, would not recognize one feature.

[1813] We must reduce our volume to the simple evangelists [and] select, even from them, the very words only of Jesus. . . . There will be found remaining the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has ever been offered to man. I have performed this operation for my own use by cutting verse by verse out of the printed book, and arranging the matter which is evidently his, and which is as easily distinguishable as diamonds in a dunghill. The result is an octavo of forty-six pages of pure and unsophisticated doctrines such as were professed and acted on by the unlettered Apostles, the Apostolic Fathers, and the Christians of the first century.

[1814] The Christian priesthood, finding the doctrines of Christ leveled to every understanding and too plain to need explanation, saw in the mysticism of Plato materials with which they might build up an artificial system which might, from its indistinctness, admit everlasting controversy, give employment for their order, and introduce it to profit, power, and preeminence. The doctrines which flowed from the lips of Jesus himself are within the comprehension of a child; but thousands of volumes have not yet explained the Platonisms engrafted on them; and for this obvious reason, that nonsense can never be explained.

[1821] No one sees with greater pleasure than myself the progress of reason in its advances towards rational Christianity. When we shall have done away the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic, that three are one and one is three; when we shall have knocked down the artificial scaffolding reared to mask from view the simple structure of Jesus; when, in short, we shall have unlearned everything which has been taught since His day, and got back to the pure and simple doctrines He inculcated, we shall then be truly and worthily His disciples; and my opinion is that if nothing had ever been added to what flowed purely from His lips, the whole world would at this day have been Christian. . . . The religion-builders have so distorted and deformed the doctrines of Jesus, so muffled them in mysticisms, fancies, and falsehoods, have caricatured them into forms so monstrous and inconceivable, as to shock reasonable thinkers, to revolt them against the whole, and drive them rashly to pronounce its Founder an imposter.

[1822] The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of man:

1. That there is one only God, and He is all perfect.
2. That there is a future state of rewards and punishments.
3. That to love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself, is the sum of religion.

[1820] I hold the precepts of Jesus, as delivered by Himself, to be the most pure, benevolent, and sublime which have ever been preached to man. I adhere to the principles of the first age, and consider all subsequent innovations as corruptions of His religion, having no foundation in what came from Him.

[1822] Happy in the prospect of a restoration of primitive Christianity, I must leave to younger athletes to encounter and lop off the false branches which have been engrafted into it by the mythologists of the middle and modern ages.

[1801] I offer my sincere prayers to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, that He may long preserve our country in freedom and prosperity.

[1801] The laws of nature have withheld from us the means of physical knowledge of the country of spirits, and revelation has, for reasons unknown to us, chosen to leave us in the dark as we were.

[1809] I sincerely supplicate that overruling Providence which governs the destinies of men and nations to dispense His choicest blessings on . . . our beloved country.

[1803] His [Jesus'] system of morality was the most benevolent and sublime probably that has been ever taught, and consequently more perfect than those of any of the ancient philosophers . . . [He was] the most innocent, the most benevolent, the most eloquent and sublime character that ever has been exhibited to man.

[1803] I concur with the author of a recent sermon in considering the moral precepts of Jesus as more pure, correct, and sublime than those of the ancient philosophers; yet I do not concur with him in the mode of proving it. He thinks it necessary to libel and decry the doctrines of the philosophers, but a man must be blinded, indeed, by prejudice who can deny them a great degree of merit. I give them their just due.

[1803] [Jesus'] system of morals, . . . if filled up in the style and spirit of the rich fragments he left us, would be the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man.

[1803] His [Jesus'] parentage was obscure; his condition poor; his education null; his natural endowments great; his life correct and innocent; he was meek, benevolent, patient, firm, disinterested, and of the sublimest eloquence . . . According to the ordinary fate of those who attempt to enlighten and reform mankind, he fell an early victim to the jealousy and combination of the altar and the throne, at about thirty three years of age.

[1822] The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend all to the happiness of man: 1- That there is one only God, and He all perfect. 2- That there is a future state of rewards and punishments. 3- That to love God with all they heart, and they neighbor as thyself, is the sum of religion . . . Had the doctrines of Jesus been preached always as pure as they came from his lips, the whole civilized world would now have been Christian.

[1782] The Giver of life . . . gave it for happiness and not for wretchedness.

[1820] When I meet with a proposition beyond finite comprehension, I abandon it as I do a weight which human strength cannot lift, and I think ignorance in these cases is truly the softest pillow on which I can lay my head.

Re: revolution,
Revolutionary War

[1823] The generation which commences a revolution rarely completes it.

[1778] I think that upon the whole [our loss during the war] has been about one-half the number lost by the British; in some instances more, but in others less. This difference is ascribed to our superiority in taking aim when we fire, every soldier in our army having been intimate with his gun from his infancy.

[1792] Great Britain, too, did not consider it as an ordinary war, but a rebellion; she did not conduct it according to the rules of war established by the law of nations, but according to her acts of Parliament.

[1813] The war of the Revolution will be sanctioned by the approbation of posterity through all future ages.

[1813] If ever there was a holy war, it was that which saved our liberties and gave us independence.

Re: right and wrong

[1774] The great principles of right and wrong are legible to every reader; to pursue them requires not the aid of many counselors.

[1808] [We] love peace, yet spurn at a tame submission to wrong.

[1814] It is the melancholy law of human societies to be compelled sometimes to choose a great evil in order to ward off a greater.

[1822] Our part . . . is to pursue with steadiness what is right, turning neither to right nor left for the intrigues or popular delusions of the day, assured that the public approbation will in the end be with us.

Re: rights, natural rights,
equal rights

[1782] Our rulers can have no authority over [our] natural rights, only as we have submitted to them.

[1790] Every man, and every body of men on earth, possesses the right of self-government.

[1790] All natural rights may be abridged or modified in their exercise by law.

[1813] Laws . . . abridging the natural right of the citizen should be restrained by rigorous constructions within their narrowest limits.

[1816] The idea is quite unfounded that on entering into society we give up any natural right.

[1789] There are rights which it is useless to surrender to the government, and which governments have yet always been found to invade. These are the rights of thinking, and publishing our thoughts by speaking or writing, the right of free commerce, the right of personal freedom.

[1782] The time for fixing every essential right on a legal basis is while our rulers are honest and ourselves united.

[1795] It is to secure our rights that we resort to government at all.

[1816] The mass of the citizens is the safest depository of their own rights.

[1816] No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another; and this is all from which the laws ought to restrain him.

[1823] The equal rights of man and the happiness of every individual are now acknowledged to be the only legitimate objects of government. Modern times have the signal advantage, too, of having discovered the only device by which these rights can be secured, to wit, government by the people.

[1821] Our emigration from England to this country gave her no more rights over us than the emigrations of the Danes and Saxons gave to the present authorities of the mother country over England.

[1819] The Declaration of Independence [is] the declaratory charter of our rights, and of the rights of man.

[1824] Nothing . . . is unchangeable but the inherent and unalienable rights of man.

[1797] A right of free correspondence between citizen and citizen on their joint interests, whether public or private, and under whatsoever laws these interests arise . . . is a natural right.

Re: science

[1795] Freedom [is] the first-born daughter of science [knowledge].

[1810] The main objects of all science [are] the freedom and happiness of man.

[1821] Science is more important in a republican than in any other government.

[1821] Science is important in the preservation of our republican government, and . . . it is also essential to its protection against foreign power.

Re: separation of powers

[1791] I wish to preserve the line drawn by the federal Constitution between the [federal] and [state] governments as it stands at present, and to take every prudent means of preventing either from stepping over it.

[1823] I believe the states can best govern our home concerns, and the general government our foreign ones. I wish, therefore, to see maintained that wholesome distribution of powers established by the Constitution for the limitation of both; and never to see all offices transferred to Washington, where, further withdrawn from the eyes of the people, they may more secretly be bought and sold as at market.

[1791] The encroachments of the state governments will tend to an excess of liberty, which will correct itself, . . . while those of the general government will tend to monarchy, which will fortify itself from day to day instead of working its own cure.

[1800] The states are independent as to everything within themselves, and united as to everything respecting foreign affairs.

[1801] To the united nation belong our external and mutual relations; to each state severally the care of our persons, our property, our reputation and religious freedom.

[1816] Let the national government be entrusted with the defense of the nation, and its foreign and federal relations; the state governments with the civil rights, laws, police, and administration of what concerns the state generally; the counties with the local concerns of the counties; and each ward direct the interests within itself.

[1821] It is not by the consolidation or concentration of powers, but by their distribution that good government is effected. Were not this great country already divided into states, that division must be made.

[1821] It is by this partition of cares, descending in gradation from general to particular, that the mass of human affairs may be best managed for the good and prosperity of all.

[1816] Where every man is a sharer in the direction of his ward republic, or of some of the higher ones, and feels that he is a participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year, but every day; when there shall not be a man in the state who will not be a member of some one of its councils, great or small, he will let the heart be torn out of his body sooner than his power be wrested from him by a Caesar or a Bonaparte.

[1816] The article nearest my heart is the division of counties into wards. These will be pure and elementary republics.

[1816] In this way we shall be as republican as a large society can be, and secure the continuance of purity in our government by the salutary, peaceable, and regular control of the people.

Re: slavery

[1814] There is nothing I would not sacrifice to a practicable plan of abolishing every vestige of this moral and political depravity.

[1820] I can say with conscious truth that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach in any practicable way.

[1821] Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free.

[1825] At the age of eighty-two, with one foot in the grave and the other uplifted to follow it, I do not permit myself to take part in any new enterprises, even . . . [the abolition of slavery], . . . which has been through life that of my greatest anxieties. The march of events has not been such as to render its completion practicable within the limits of time allotted to me; and I leave its accomplishment as the work of another generation. . . . The abolition of the evil is not impossible; it ought never, therefore, to be despaired of. Every plan should be adopted, every experiment tried.

[1786] What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man, who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose!

[1787] This abomination must have an end. And there is a superior bench reserved in heaven for those who hasten it.

[1814] The hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time.

[1820] The Missouri question, . . . like a fire-bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union. It is hushed, indeed, for the moment. But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. . . . I can say with conscious truth that there is not a man on earth who would sacrifice more than I would to relieve us from this heavy reproach [slavery] in any practicable way. . . . We have the wolf by the ears, and we can neither hold him nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other. . . . the undertaking of Congress to regulate the condition of the different descriptions of men composing a state. This certainly is the exclusive right of every state, which nothing in the Constitution has taken from them and given to the general government.

Re: Socrates

[1813] He was too wise to believe, and too honest to pretend, that he had real and familiar converse with a superior and invisible being. He probably considered the suggestions of his conscience, or reason, as revelations or inspirations from the Supreme Mind, bestowed, on important occasions, by a special superintending Providence.

Re: states

[1807] Many are the exercises of power reserved to the states wherein uniformity of proceeding would be advantageous to all. Such are quarantines, health laws, regulations of the press, banking institutions, training militia, etc.

[1811] The true barriers of our liberty in this country are our state governments.

[1823] The extent of our country was so great, and its former division into distinct states so established, that we thought it better to confederate as to foreign affairs only.

[1798] The several states composing the United States of America are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to their general government. . . . The government created by this compact was not made the exclusive or final judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself, since that would have made its discretion, and not the Constitution, the measure of its powers.

[1821] It is a fatal heresy to suppose that either our state governments are superior to the federal, or the federal to the states. The people, to whom all authority belongs, have divided the powers of government into two distinct departments, the leading characters of which are foreign and domestic, . . . as independent, in fact, as different nations.

[1825] I see . . . with the deepest affliction the rapid strides with which the federal branch of our government is advancing towards the usurpation of all the rights reserved to the states.

Re: suffrage

[1800] I believe we may lessen the danger of buying and selling votes by making the number of voters too great for any means of purchase.

[1816] Let every man who fights or pays [taxes] exercise his just and equal right in the election of the legislature.

Re: taxes

[1789] Impost is a duty paid on an imported article in the moment of its importation, and of course it is collected in the seaports only.

Excise is a duty on any article, whether imported or raised at home, and paid in the hands of the consumer or retailer; consequently it is collected through the whole country. These are the true definitions of these words as used in England and on the greater part of the United States.

[1823] Taxes on consumption, like those on capital or income, to be just, must be uniform.

[1801] Sound principles will not justify our taxing the industry of our fellow citizens to accumulate treasure for wars to happen we know not when, and which might not perhaps happen but from the temptations offered by that treasure.

[1805] Our wish . . . is that the public efforts may be directed honestly to the public good, that . . . equality of rights [be] maintained, and that state of property, equal or unequal, which results in every man from his own industry or that of his fathers.

[1816] To take from one because it is thought that his own industry and that of his fathers has acquired too much, in order to spare to others who, or whose fathers, have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle

of association, “the guarantee to everyone of a free exercise of his industry, and the fruits acquired by it”.

[1819] The government which steps out of the ranks of the ordinary articles of consumption to select and lay under disproportionate burdens a particular one, because it is a comfort, pleasing to the taste, or necessary to health, and will therefore be bought, is in that particular, a tyranny.

Re: treason

[1792] Treason, when real, merits the highest punishment. But most codes extend their definitions of treason to acts not really against one’s country. They do not distinguish between acts against the government and acts against the oppressions of the government. The latter are virtues, yet have furnished more victims to the executioner than the former. Real treasons are rare, oppressions frequent.

[1811] Exile [is] the most rational of all punishments for meditated treason.

Re: treaties

[1792] On the breach of any article of a treaty by the one party, the other has its election to declare it dissolved in all its articles.

[1819] When the British treaty [negotiated during my presidency] arrived without any provision against the impressment of our seamen, I determined not to ratify it. The Senate thought I should ask their advice. . . . The Constitution had made their advice necessary to confirm a treaty, but not to reject it. This has been blamed by some, but I have never doubted its soundness.

Re: vice

[1816] Although I do not, with some enthusiasts, believe that the human condition will ever advance to such a state of perfection as that there shall no longer be pain or vice in the world, yet I believe it susceptible of much improvement, and most of all in matters of government and religion; and that the diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected.

[1826] In this case [of compulsive gamblers], as in those of insanity, idiocy, infancy, etc, it is the duty of society to take [such people] under its protection, even against their own acts, and to restrain their right of choice of these pursuits by suppressing them entirely.

[1822] I have received and read with thankfulness and pleasure your denunciation of the abuses of tobacco and wine. Yet, however sound in its principles, I expect it will be but a sermon to the wind. You will find it is . . . difficult to inculcate these sanative precepts on the sensualities of the present day.

Re: virtue

[1771] When any original act of charity or of gratitude, for instance, is presented either to our sight or imagination, we are deeply impressed with its beauty and feel a strong desire in ourselves of doing charitable and grateful acts also.

[1785] From the practice of the purest virtue you may be assured you will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life, and in the moment of death.

[1816] Without virtue, happiness cannot be.

[1816] Virtue does not consist in the act we do, but in the end it is to effect.

[1816] What is good may be one thing in one society and its contrary in another.

[1823] Virtue is not hereditary.

[1816] I believe . . . that [justice] is instinct and innate, that the moral sense is as much a part of our constitution as that of feeling, seeing, or hearing. . . . Every human mind feels pleasure in doing good to another. . . . The essence of virtue is in doing good to others.

[1816] I . . . place economy among the first and most important of republican virtues.

[1785] Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give the earth itself and all it contains rather than do an immoral act. . . . From the practice of the purest virtue, you may be assured you will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life, and in the moment of death.

Re: war, military strength

[1785] I think it to our interest to punish the first insult, because an insult unpunished is the parent of many others.

[1795] It is an eternal truth that acquiescence under insult is not the way to escape war.

[1785] The most successful war seldom pays for its losses.

[1788] The power of making war often prevents it, and . . . would give efficacy to our desire of peace.

to George Washington

[1790] Whatever enables us to go to war secures our peace.

[1793] We confide in our strength without boasting of it; we respect that of others without fearing it.

[1794] I have seen enough of one war never to wish to see another.

to John Adams

[1794] War . . . is as much a punishment to the punisher as to the sufferer.

[1797] I abhor war and view it as the greatest scourge of mankind.

[1801] I do not believe war the most certain means of enforcing principles. Those peaceable coercions which are in the power of every nation, if undertaken in concert and in time of peace, are more likely to produce the desired effect.

[1807] If nations go to war for every degree of injury, there would never be peace on earth.

[1813] The insulated state in which nature has placed the American continent should so far avail it that no spark of war kindled in the other quarters of the globe should be wafted across the wide oceans which separate us from them.

[1785] Weakness provokes insult and injury, while a condition to punish often prevents them.

[1791] If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American, it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest.

[1774] Fear is the only restraining motive which may hold the hand of a tyrant.

[1815] Our militia are heroes when they have heroes to lead them on.

Re: Washington, DC

[1790] I doubt much whether the obligation to build the houses at a given distance from the street contributes to its beauty. It produces a disgusting monotony; all persons make this complaint against Philadelphia. The contrary practice varies the appearance and is much more convenient to the inhabitants.

[1784] The remoteness of the Falls of Potomac from the influence of any overgrown commercial city recommends [that place for the] permanent seat of Congress.

[1790] The lots [should] be sold in breadths of fifty feet; their depths to extend to the diagonal of the square.

[1790] I should propose the streets to be at right angles, as in Philadelphia, and that no street be narrower than one hundred feet, with footways of fifteen feet.

[1793] The President is . . . extremely affected by the attacks made and kept up on him in the public papers. I think he feels those things more than any person I ever yet met with. I am sincerely sorry to see them.

Re: George Washington

[1795] He errs as other men do, but errs with integrity.

[1809 or later] Washington's fame will go on increasing until the brightest constellation in yonder heavens shall be called by his name.

[1813] The only point on which he and I ever differed in opinion was that I had more confidence than he had in the natural integrity and discretion of the people, and in the safety and extent to which they might trust themselves with a control over their government.

[1814] He was, indeed, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man.

[1814] Never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great.

[1814] He has often declared to me that he considered our new Constitution as an experiment on the practicability of republican government, and with what dose of liberty man could be trusted for his own good; that he was determined the experiment should have a fair trial, and would lose the last drop of his blood in support of it.

[1824] The Federalists, pretending to be the exclusive friends of General Washington, have ever done what they could to sink his character by hanging theirs on it.

[1824] He knew my suspicions that [Alexander] Hamilton had other views, and he wished to quiet my jealousies on this subject.

[1824] General Washington, after the retirement of his first Cabinet and the composition of his second, entirely Federalist, and at the head of which was Mr [Timothy] Pickering himself, had no opportunity of hearing both sides of any question.

Re: women

[1782] It is civilization alone which replaces women in the enjoyment of their natural equality.

[1788] American women have the good sense to value domestic happiness above all other, and the art to cultivate it beyond all other. There is no part of the earth where so much of this is enjoyed as in America.

[1824] However nature may by mental or physical disqualifications have marked infants and the weaker sex for the protection rather than the direction of government, yet among the men who either pay or fight for their country no line of right can be drawn.