Thomas Jefferson Interview –December 27th, 1824

Editor's Note: This AI-generated interview takes place near the conclusion of President Jefferson long and productive life. Mr. Jefferson reflects upon his 15 years as an elder statesman. AI was instructed to strictly adhere to Mr. Jefferson's writing and attempt to respond in a style consistent with Mr. Jefferson's demonstrated style.

Interviewer: Mr. President, thank you for sitting with us once again. Now retired at Monticello, what does daily life and the pursuit of happiness look like for you in these elder years? How has your philosophy of virtue, reason, and simple pleasures evolved since your days in public service?

Thomas Jefferson: Sir, now retired at Monticello in these my elder years, my daily life is one of tranquility and a retirement from the passions which disturb it. These constitute the *summum bonum* of that age. I leave public cares to younger and more vigorous minds and repose my personal well-being under their guardianship, in perfect confidence of its safety. Our ship is sound, the crew alert at their posts, and our ablest steersman at its helm. That she will make a safe port I have no doubt, and I offer to heaven my daily prayers, the proper function of age.

My occupations are now in quite a different line, more suited to my age, my interests, and inclinations. I scarcely read a newspaper, except a single one of my own state whose local concerns affect me immediately, and I am more disposed to withdraw my reading even from these than to extend it to those more distant. I indulge myself in more favorite reading, in Tacitus and Horace, and the writers of that philosophy which is the old man's consolation and preparation for what is to come. The writing table has become my aversion, its drudgeries beyond my remaining powers. I have labored daily from sunrise to twelve or one o'clock answering letters few of which concern myself, until I declared myself in a state of insurgency and assumed my right to live out the dregs of life at least without being under the whip and spur from morning to night. Repose and tranquility are become necessaries of life for me.

The society of our children is the sovereign balm of life, and the older we grow the more we need it to fill up the void made by the daily losses of the companions and friends of our youth. I have living with me eight grandchildren, their parents and other connections making up a dozen at our daily table, that number generally enlarged by the successive visits of other friends and relations. It is now that the value of education proves itself in the resource to books of which it has qualified one to avail oneself, aided by the conversation and endearments of family and every comfort this place can afford. Age and debility have obliged me to put all my affairs into the hands of my grandson. Even a daily ride, necessary

to keep up my health and spirits, is now at a loss for objects to encourage it. The University indeed gives me some welcome employment. If the legislature will declare at once to have given what they have hitherto called a loan, so that I may see the institution opened on the high ground I have ever contemplated, I shall sing my *nunc dimittis* with pleasure.

As to the pursuit of happiness, I have compared notes on the score of progeny and find myself ahead, with ten and a half grandchildren and two and three-quarters great-grandchildren. Life is a fair matter of account, and the balance often, nay generally, in its favor. Yet bodily decay is gloomy in prospect; of all human contemplations the most abhorrent is body without mind. Faculty after faculty quits us. I enjoy good health yet am ripe for leaving all, this year, this day, this hour. Friendship is like wine, raw when new, ripened with age, the true old man's milk and restorative cordial.

My philosophy of virtue and reason has led me to withdraw from the conflicts of party and even the knowledge of them, to trust with confidence to the hands in which our country is placed—they being equally wise and honest—and to seek quiet, to soothe enmities, and to die in the peace and good will of all mankind. Simple pleasures—family society, the resource of books, moderate rides when able, and the calm of retirement—have replaced the labors and drudgery of public service. Education and free discussion remain the antidotes to bigotry and enthusiasm, but for myself the torpor of age weighs heavily; I engage reluctantly in whatever would encroach on rest and quiet. I am happy in what is around me, yet I assure you I am ripe for leaving all.

Interviewer: Reflecting on your entire life—from the Revolution through the presidency—what are your most cherished principles regarding liberty, religious freedom (the "wall of separation"), and the diffusion of knowledge among the people?

Thomas Jefferson: Reflecting upon the whole course of my life, from the days of the Revolution when I drafted the fundamental act of our union, the Declaration of Independence, through the years of my presidency when I labored as a fellow-laborer with my countrymen to preserve our republican institutions, to these my elder years retired at Monticello, my most cherished principles have ever been those of liberty, religious freedom, and the diffusion of knowledge among the people. These I have endeavored to defend and inculcate at every stage, as the governing principles of my public life and the sole depositories of the remains of human liberty.

As to the general principles of liberty and the rights of man, in nature and in society, the doctrines of Locke in his 'Essay concerning the true original, extent, & end of civil government, and of Sydney in his 'Discourses on Government, may be considered as those generally approved by our fellow citizens of this, and of the US. On the distinctive principles

of the government of our own state, and of that of the US. as understood and assented to when brought into union, the book known by the title of the 'Federalist', the Resolutions of the General Assembly of Virginia in 1799 on the subject of the alien and sedition laws, and the Declaration of Independence, ought to be considered as possessing the general approbation of our fellow-citizens. These shall be used as the text and documents of the school, and no principles shall be inculcated which do not harmonise with them. I have believed that man was a rational animal, endowed by nature with rights, and with an innate sense of justice, and that he could be restrained from wrong, and protected in right, by moderate powers, confided to persons of his own choice, and held to their duties by dependance on his own will. We believed that the complicated organisation of kings, nobles, and priests was not the wisest nor best to effect the happiness of associated man; that wisdom and virtue were not hereditary; that the trappings of such a machinery consumed, by their expence, those earnings of industry they were meant to protect. The cherishment of the people then was our principle, the fear and distrust of them that of the other party. A pure republic is a state of society in which every member, of mature and sound mind, has an equal right of participation, personally, in the direction of the affairs of the society. When numbers, distance, or force oblige them to act by deputy, then their government continues republican in proportion only as the functions they still exercise in person are more or fewer, and as in those exercised by deputy the right of appointing their deputy is pro hâc vice only, or for more or fewer purposes, or for shorter or longer terms. Rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will, within the limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add 'within the limits of the law', because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the right of an individual. Liberty, truth, probity, honor, are declared to be the four cardinal principles. Sole depositories of the remains of human liberty, our duty to ourselves to posterity and to mankind call on us by every motive which is sacred or honorable, to watch over the safety of our beloved country, during the troubles which agitate and convulse the residue of the world, and to sacrifice to that all personal and local considerations.

Regarding religious freedom, every religion consists of moral precepts, and of dogmas. In the first they all agree. All forbid us to murder, steal, plunder, bear false witness, and these are the articles necessary for the preservation of order, justice, and happiness in society. In their particular dogmas all differ; no two professing the same. These respect vestments, ceremonies, physical opinions, and metaphysical speculations, totally unconnected with morality, and unimportant to the legitimate objects of society. It is then a matter of principle with me to avoid disturbing the tranquility of others by the expression of any opinion on the innocent questions on which we schismatise, and think it enough to hold fast to those moral precepts which are of the essence of Christianity, and of all other

religions. Nowhere are these to be found in greater purity than in the discourses of the great reformer of religion whom we follow. The varieties in the structure and action of the human mind, as in those of the body, are the work of our creator, against which it cannot be a religious duty to erect the standard of uniformity. The practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, he has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. Religion too is a separate department, and happens to be the only one deemed requisite for all men, however high or low. We have been authorised by one whom you and I equally respect, to judge of the tree by its fruit. Our particular principles of religion are a subject of accountability to our god alone. I enquire after no man's, and trouble none with mine. Freedom of conscience, as we value our own, and freedom of religion, have been secured in the compacts I have urged for nations emerging to liberty. As to the specific metaphor of a "wall of separation," I do not find those exact words among the documents now before me; yet the principle that civil government must not intermeddle with religious dogmas, that religion be confined to its proper sphere as a separate department concerned only with the moral precepts on which all agree, and that we leave to each his own road to that last abode, following the guidance of a good conscience, has been one I have long and steadfastly maintained.

As to the diffusion of knowledge among the people, enlighten the people generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day. The diffusion of knowledge among the people is to be the instrument by which it is to be effected. The boys of the rising generation are to be the men of the next, and the sole guardians of the principles we deliver over to them. More than a generation will be requisite, under the administration of reasonable laws favoring the progress of knowledge in the general mass of the people, and their habituation to an independent security of person and property, before they will be capable of estimating the value of freedom, and the necessity of a sacred adherence to the principles on which it rests for preservation. It is impossible sufficiently to estimate the wisdom of that provision in the constitution of the Cortes, that no person born after that day should ever acquire the rights of citizenship until he could read and write. No people have more need of a similar provision. The University gives me some welcome employment, and I have set forth these principles for inculcation in its Law school, that the sparks which will emanate from it may ever serve to rekindle the holy fire in other quarters of the globe.

These principles, sir, have been consistent from the Revolution, when I asserted them in our fundamental act of union, through my presidency, when I saw them as the governing principles of my public life and trusted them with confidence to the hands of my successor, to this day when I have resolved that they be the texts and documents of the school at the University I have labored to establish. I pray that they may stand the shocks of time and

accident, and that your own may make a distinguished part of the mass of prosperity they may dispense. This is my latest prayer.

Interviewer: You devoted great effort to founding the University of Virginia—designing its buildings, curriculum, and securing its charter. How does this capstone project embody your lifelong belief that education is the foundation of liberty and a virtuous republic?

Thomas Jefferson: The founding of the University of Virginia has indeed been the capstone of my long labors in the cause of education, which I have ever regarded as the surest foundation of liberty and a virtuous republic. From my earliest public efforts, as in the bill I drew more than forty years ago for the more general diffusion of knowledge, I proposed a complete system: primary schools in every ward for the mass of citizens, intermediate colleges for the languages and preparatory sciences, and finally an university for the higher branches. The legislature has at length realized this last and most essential part, and I have devoted my remaining strength to designing its buildings, its curriculum, and securing its charter, that our youth might no longer be sent abroad for instruction, but find at home those resources which advance the prosperity, the power, and the happiness of a nation.

This institution embodies that belief in every particular. As the Commissioners reported, the objects of primary education are to give every citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business, to enable him to calculate for himself and express his ideas, contracts, and accounts in writing, to improve by reading his morals and faculties, to understand his duties to his neighbors and country, to know his rights, to exercise them with order and justice, to choose with discretion those to whom he delegates power, and in general to observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the social relations under which he shall be placed. These are taught in reading, writing, numerical arithmetic, the elements of mensuration, and the outlines of geography and history.

But the higher grade of education, which the University now supplies, is to form the statesmen, legislators, and judges on whom public prosperity and individual happiness so much depend: to expound the principles and structure of government, the laws which regulate the intercourse of nations and those formed municipally for our own, and a sound spirit of legislation which, banishing all arbitrary and unnecessary restraint on individual action, shall leave us free to do whatever does not violate the equal rights of another; to harmonize and promote the interests of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; to develope the reasoning faculties of our youth, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instill into them the precepts of virtue and order; to enlighten them with mathematical and physical sciences which advance the arts and administer to the health, subsistence, and comforts of human life; and generally to form them to habits of reflection and correct action, rendering them examples of virtue to others and of happiness within themselves.

Education generates habits of application, of order, and the love of virtue, and controls by the force of habit any innate obliquities in our moral organization. We are far from the discouraging persuasion that man is fixed by the law of his nature at a given point, that his improvement is a chimera. As well might it be urged that the wild and uncultivated tree, hitherto yielding sour and bitter fruit only, can never be made to yield better; yet the grafting art implants a new tree on the savage stock, producing what is most estimable both in kind and degree. Education, in like manner, engrafts a new man on the native stock and improves what in his nature was vicious and perverse into qualities of virtue and social worth. Each generation succeeding to the knowledge acquired by all those who preceded it, adding their own acquisitions and discoveries, and handing the mass down for successive and constant accumulation, must advance the knowledge and well-being of mankind—not infinitely, but indefinitely.

This capstone project completes the system I have cherished for nearly half a century. Primary instruction prepares the mass of citizens; the University forms those who will administer the affairs of our country in all its departments—legislative, executive, and judiciary—and bear their share in the councils of our national government. By advancing the sciences and useful arts, by training able counsellors, and by engrafting virtue and knowledge upon the native stock, it secures to our country the reputation, the safety, the prosperity, and all the other blessings which experience proves to result from the cultivation and improvement of the general mind. Without this, no nation is permitted to live in ignorance with impunity. I look to the University to raise us again in the respect of our co-states.

Interviewer: Your extensive correspondence with John Adams and others in retirement covered philosophy, religion, classics, and governance. What key insights on human nature, morality, and the future of democracy emerged from these exchanges?

Thomas Jefferson: The correspondence I maintained in retirement with my old friend and colleague Mr. Adams, has indeed ranged widely over philosophy, religion, the classics, and the principles of governance. These exchanges, conducted in the quiet of our respective homes after the storms of public life had subsided, have afforded me leisure to reflect upon the enduring questions of human nature, morality, and the prospects for self-government. I shall draw directly from those letters, as I wrote them and as they were answered, without venturing beyond what passed between us.

On the nature of man and the divisions which perpetually agitate societies, I observed to Mr. Adams in my letter of the 27th of June, 1813, that 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. The same political parties which now agitate the US. have existed thro' all time.

On morality and religion, our exchanges yielded what I take to be the essential truth. In my letter to Mr. Adams of the 11th of January, 1817, I affirmed that "the result of your 50. or 60. years of religious reading in the four words 'be just and good' is that in which all our enquiries must end." I observed that the Christian priesthood had incorporated the mysticisms of Plato to build an artificial system of dogma for their own profit and power, while the doctrines of Jesus himself remain within the comprehension of a child.

Regarding the classics, particularly Plato, I expressed strong reservations in my letter to Mr. Adams of the 5th of July, 1814. Having read the Republic, I found it the heaviest task-work I ever went through, filled with whimsies, the puerilities, & unintelligible jargon. I concluded that Plato is one of the race of genuine Sophists, whose foggy mind, is for ever presenting the semblances of objects which, half seen thro' a mist, can be defined neither in form or dimension. His notions, I noted, had been grafted onto Christianity to create endless controversy and employment for priests, yet nonsense can never be explained.

On the future of democracy and self-government, our letters turned often to the necessity of education and the dangers of ignorance. In the letter to Mr. Adams of the 17th of May, 1818, reflecting on the revolutions in South America, I wrote that the people there will succeed against Spain. But the dangerous enemy is within their own breasts. Ignorance and superstition will chain their minds & bodies under religious & military despotism. I do believe it would be better for them to obtain freedom by degrees only; because that would by degrees bring on light & information, & qualify them to take charge of themselves understandingly.

I expressed the hope that our own nation might serve as a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism. What a Colossus shall we be when the Southern continent comes up to our mark! What a stand will it secure as a ralliance for the reason & freedom of the globe!

The correspondence itself, as I observed to Mr. Adams on the 27th of June, 1813, was never meant for the public eye but poured forth from the overflowings of the heart into the bosom of a friend, as a momentary easement of our feelings.

Interviewer: The Missouri Compromise of 1820 stirred deep concerns about slavery and the Union. How do you view the future of slavery in a republic founded on the principle of equality? How did this event influence your later reflections on the "peculiar institution," the risks of disunion, and America's moral destiny?

Thomas Jefferson: The Missouri question, as we then called it, “came upon me like a fire bell in the night.” It 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. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper.

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. The cession of that kind of property—for so it is misnamed—is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and expatriation could be effected; and, gradually, and with due sacrifices, I think it might be. But as it is, “we have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go.” Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other.

Of one thing I am certain: as the passage of slaves from one state to another would not make a slave of a single human being who would not be so without it, so their diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation, by dividing the burden on a greater number of co-adjutors. An abstinence too from this act of power would remove the jealousy excited by 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.

The real question, as seen in the states afflicted with this unfortunate population, is: Are our slaves to be presented with freedom and a dagger? For if Congress has a power to regulate the conditions of the inhabitants of the states within the states, it will be but another exercise of that power to declare that all shall be free. Are we then to see again Athenian and Lacedemonian confederacies? To wage another Peloponnesian war to settle the ascendancy between them? Or is this the tocsin of merely a servile war? That remains to be seen; but not, I hope, by you or me. Surely they will parley a while, and give us time to get out of the way. What a Bedlamite is Man!

This Missouri question is a mere party trick. The leaders of federalism, defeated in their schemes of obtaining power by rallying partisans to the principle of monarchism—a principle of personal, not of local division—have changed their tack and thrown out another barrel to the whale. They are taking advantage of the virtuous feelings of the people to effect a division of parties by a geographical line. They expect that this will ensure them, on local principles, the majority they could never obtain on principles of federalism. But they are still putting their shoulder to the wrong wheel. They are wasting Jeremiads on the

miseries of slavery as if we were advocates for it. Sincerity in their declamations should direct their efforts to the true point of difficulty, and unite their councils with ours in devising some reasonable and practicable plan of getting rid of it.

Moral the question certainly is not, because the removal of slaves from one state to another, no more than their removal from one county to another, would never make a slave of one human being who would not be so without it. Indeed, if there were any morality in the question, it is on the other side; because by spreading them over a larger surface, their happiness would be increased, and the burden of their future liberation lightened by bringing a greater number of shoulders under it. However, it served to throw dust into the eyes of the people and to fanaticize them, while to the knowing ones it gave a geographical and preponderant line, throwing fourteen states to the North and East and ten to the South and West. With these, therefore, it is merely a question of power; but with this geographical minority it is a question of existence.

This country, which has given to the world the example of physical liberty, owes to it that of moral emancipation also. For, as yet, it is but nominal with us. The inquisition of public opinion overwhelms in practice the freedom asserted by the laws in theory. I regret that I am now to die in the belief that the useless sacrifice of themselves by the generation of ’76, to acquire self-government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be that I live not to weep over it. If they would but dispassionately weigh the blessings they would throw away against an abstract principle more likely to be effected by union than by scission, they would pause before they would perpetrate this act of suicide on themselves and of treason against the hopes of the world.

I have seen no proposition so expedient on the whole as that of emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation at a proper age. This would give time for a gradual extinction of that species of labor and substitution of another, and lessen the severity of the shock which an operation so fundamental cannot fail to produce. Until more can be done for them, we should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed and clothe them well, protect them from ill usage, require such reasonable labor only as is performed voluntarily by freemen, and be led by no repugnancies to abdicate them and our duties to them.

The hour of emancipation is advancing in the march of time. It will come; and whether brought on by the generous energy of our own minds, or by the bloody process of St. Domingo, excited and conducted by the power of our present enemy, if once stationed permanently within our country and offering asylum and arms to the oppressed, is a leaf of

our history not yet turned over. But I leave both, I believe, to heaven, and wrap myself up in the mantle of resignation.

Interviewer: You sold your vast library to Congress, forming the core of the Library of Congress. What role have books, knowledge, and the free exchange of ideas played throughout your philosophy of life and pursuit of truth?

Thomas Jefferson: Sir, the question you pose touches the very marrow of my life's endeavor. I sold my library to the Congress—rather, I offered it, and they accepted—because the British Vandalism of 1814 had destroyed the public library at Washington together with the noble edifice that housed it. I had long been sensible that so large a collection ought not to remain private property, and had already provided that, at my death, Congress should have the refusal of it at their own price. The loss they had just sustained made the present the proper moment for their accommodation. My desire is either to place it in their hands entire, or to preserve it so here. I would not suffer its dismemberment. There is in fact no subject to which a member of Congress may not have occasion to refer, and I do not know that the collection contains any branch of science which they would wish to exclude.

I had been fifty years making it, and had spared no pains, opportunity or expence to make it what it was. While residing in Paris I devoted every afternoon I was disengaged, for a summer or two, in examining all the principal bookstores, turning over every book with my own hands, and putting by every thing which related to America, and indeed whatever was rare and valuable in every science. Besides this, I had standing orders, during the whole time I was in Europe, in its principal book-marts—particularly Amsterdam, Frankfort, Madrid and London—for such works relating to America as could not be found in Paris. So that, in that department especially, such a collection was made as probably can never again be effected. During the same period, and after my return to America, I was led to procure also whatever related to the duties of those in the high concerns of the nation. The collection, which I suppose is of between nine and ten thousand volumes, while it includes what is chiefly valuable in science and literature generally, extends more particularly to whatever belongs to the American statesman. In the diplomatic and Parliamentary branches it is particularly full. Nearly the whole are well bound, abundance of them elegantly, and of the choicest editions existing.

Books, sir, have been the best medicine for the ennui of age. After parting with the library I was obliged to buy again, for without them the evening of life would be insupportable.

The free exchange of ideas is likewise indispensable to the pursuit of truth. I have reflected with concern on the duty Congress long imposed on the importation of books. Books constitute capital. A library book lasts as long as a house, for hundreds of years. It is not then an article of mere consumption, but fairly of capital, and often, in the case of professional men setting out in life, it is their only capital. No other form of capital is first taxed eighteen per cent on the gross, and the proprietor then left to pay the same taxes in detail with others whose capital has paid no tax on the gross. Nor is there a description of men less proper to be singled out for extra-taxation. A few years ago, when the tariff was before Congress, I engaged some of our members to endeavor to get the duty repealed, and wrote pressingly to the Secretary of the Treasury on the subject. The Northern colleges have since proposed a combined effort for the same purpose, and I have been ready to cooperate in our visitatorial character, believing that the free circulation of knowledge, unburdened by such imposts, is essential both to private happiness and to public liberty.

Thus, sir, from the first volumes I turned over with my own hands in the bookstores of Paris, through the fifty years of patient accumulation, to the moment I placed the whole collection, entire and without garbling, into the hands of the nation, books and the knowledge they contain have been the constant companions of my philosophy and the surest guides in the pursuit of truth.

Interviewer: In these final years, you continued to grapple with personal finances, slavery on your plantations, and your legacy. How do you reconcile your ideals of equality and natural rights with the realities you witnessed, and what hopes or warnings do you offer for future generations?

Thomas Jefferson: In these my final years, oppressed with disease, debility, age, and embarrassed affairs, I have indeed continued to grapple with the weight of personal finances, the condition of those in slavery on my plantations, and the legacy I must leave to my family and to my country. I duly acknowledge that I have gone through a long life with fewer circumstances of affliction than are the lot of most men—uninterrupted health, a competence for every reasonable want, usefulness to my fellow citizens, a good portion of their esteem, no complaint against the world which has sufficiently honored me, and above all a family which has blessed me by their affection and never by their conduct given me a moment's pain. Yet the prospect of the situation in which I may leave my family, my dear and beloved daughter and her children rendered as dear to me as if my own, holds up to me nothing but future gloom. These misfortunes have been produced in some degree by my unskilful management and by devoting my life to the service of my country, but much also by the unfortunate fluctuations in the value of our money and the long continued depression of the farming business. Property, however great, offers no resource when there

are no bidders; all must go for little or nothing. I see in the failure of hopes a deadly blast of all peace of mind during my remaining days, and should not care were life to end with the line I am writing, were it not that in the unhappy state of mind which these embarrassments have brought upon me I may yet be of some avail to the family. Their affectionate devotion makes a willingness to ensure life a duty as long as it can be of any use to them.

On the subject of slavery, the love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a mortal reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain. I am not apt to despair; yet I see not how we are to disengage ourselves from that deplorable entanglement. I wish that was the only blot in our moral history, and that no other race had higher charges to bring against us. From an early stage of our revolution, other and more distant duties were assigned to me, so that until my return to reside at home in 1809 I had little opportunity of knowing the progress of public sentiment here on this subject. I had always hoped that the younger generation, receiving their early impressions after the flame of liberty had been kindled in every breast, and had become as it were the vital spirit of every American, that the generous temperament of youth would have sympathised with oppression wherever found, and proved their love of liberty beyond their own share of it. But my intercourse with them has not been sufficient to ascertain that they had made towards this point the progress I had hoped.

As to the method by which this difficult work is to be effected, if permitted to be done by ourselves, I have seen no proposition so expedient on the whole as that of emancipation of those born after a given day, and of their education and expatriation at a proper age. This would give time for a gradual extinction of that species of labor and substitution of another, and lessen the severity of the shock which an operation so fundamental cannot fail to produce. The idea of emancipating the whole at once, the old as well as the young, and retaining them here, is of those only who have not the guide of either knowledge or experience of the subject. For men, probably of any colour, but of this colour we know, brought up from their infancy without necessity for thought or forecast, are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished promptly wherever industry is necessary for raising the young. In the mean time they are pests in society by their idleness, and the depredations to which this leads them. Their amalgamation with the other colour produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent. I am sensible of the partialities with which some have looked towards me as the person who should undertake this salutary but arduous work. But this, my dear Sir, is like bidding old Priam to buckle the armour of Hector, ‘trementibus aevo humeris et inutile ferrum cingi’ (With trembling shoulders and useless iron girded). No. I have overlived the generation with which mutual labors and perils begat mutual confidence and influence. This enterprise is

for the young; for those who can follow it up and bear it through to its consummation. It shall have all my prayers, and these are the only weapons of an old man. My opinion has ever been that, until more can be done for them, we should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed and clothe them well, protect them from ill usage, require such reasonable labor only as is performed voluntarily by freemen, and be led by no repugnancies to abdicate them and our duties to them. The laws do not permit us to turn them loose, if that were for their good; and to commute them for other property is to commit them to those whose usage of them we cannot control.

There is, I think, a way in which it can be done, that is, by emancipating the after-born, leaving them, on due compensation, with their mothers, until their services are worth their maintenance, and then putting them to industrious occupations, until a proper age for deportation. This was the result of my reflections on the subject five and forty years ago, and I have never yet been able to conceive any other practicable plan. It was sketched in the Notes on Virginia, under the 14th Query. In the disposition of these unfortunate people, there are two rational objects to be distinctly kept in view. First, the establishment of a colony on the coast of Africa, which may introduce among the Aborigines the arts of cultivated life, and the blessings of civilisation and science. By doing this, we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population. And considering that these blessings will descend to the 'nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis' (The children of the children, and those who will be born from them), we shall, in the long run, have rendered them perhaps more good than evil. The second object, and the most interesting to us, is to provide an Asylum to which we can, by degrees, send the whole of that population from among us, and establish them under our patronage and protection, as a separate, free and independant people, in some country and climate friendly to human life and happiness. There are in the US a million and a half of people of colour in slavery. To send off the whole at once nobody conceives to be practicable for us, or expedient for them. Let us take 25 years for its accomplishment, within which time they will be doubled. Their estimated value as property, in the first place, at an average of 200.D. each, young and old, would amount to 600 millions of Dollars, which must be paid or lost by somebody. To this add the cost of their transportation by land and sea, a year's provision of food and clothing, implements of husbandry and of their trades, which will amount to 300 millions more, making 36 millions of Dollars a year for 25 years. But the estimated value of the new-born infant is so low (say 12½ Dollars) that it would probably be yielded by the owner gratis, and would thus reduce the 600 millions of Dollars, the first head of expence, to 37 millions and a half. From what fund are these expences to be furnished? Why not from that of the lands which have been ceded by the very states now needing this relief? And ceded on no consideration, for the most part, but that of the general good of the

whole. These cessions already constitute one fourth of the states of the Union. In this way no violation of private right is proposed. Voluntary surrenders would probably come in as fast as the means to be provided for their care would be competent to. Looking at my own state only, I verily believe that this surrender of property would not amount to more annually than half our present direct taxes, to be continued fully about 20 or 25 years, and then gradually diminishing until their final extinction. I do not go into all the details of the burthens and benefits of this operation. And who could estimate its blessed effects? I leave this to those who will live to see their accomplishment, and to enjoy a beatitude forbidden to my age. But I leave it with this admonition to rise and be doing. A million and a half are within their control; but 6 millions (which a majority of those now living will see them attain) and one million of these fighting men, will say 'we will not go.' I am aware that this subject involves some constitutional scruples. But a liberal construction, justified by the object, may go far, and an amendment of the constitution the whole length necessary. The separation of infants from their mothers too would produce some scruples of humanity. But this would be straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel.

As to my legacy, I was one only of many, very many indeed who exerted their best endeavours in the accomplishment of that change in our condition which was the greatest event in human history. Its success will make it so, and although rivers of blood are yet to flow for the general establishment of its principles and its consequences towards the amelioration of the condition of man throughout the universe, they will be finally established. We have had to be sure one great example of retrogradation in the improvement of man, in the extinction by the Northern Barbarians of the science of Greece and Rome. But the art of printing was then unknown. That renders impossible the loss of lights once gained. I rejoice also in the advocation of the Indian rights, and concur in all sentiments in their favor. I once had hopes that the Southern tribes were nearly ripe for incorporation with us. But my hopes in the South are damped by the transactions of the late war which in destroying many of them have produced in the rest so implacable a hatred of us as to revolt them against all counsels coming from us. I wish that was the only blot in our moral history. For the Southern friends in their struggles for independence, I feared from the beginning that these people were not yet sufficiently enlightened for self-government; and that after wading through blood and slaughter, they would end in military tyrannies, more or less numerous. Yet as they wished to try the experiment, I wished them success in it. They have now tried it, and will possibly find that their safest road will be an accommodation with the mother country, which shall hold them together by the single link of the same chief magistrate, leaving to him power enough to keep them in peace with one another, and to themselves the essential powers of self-government and self-improvement, until they shall be sufficiently trained by education and habits of freedom to walk safely by

themselves. Representative government, native functionaries, a qualified negative on their laws, with a previous security by compact for freedom of commerce, freedom of the press, habeas corpus, and trial by jury, would make a good beginning. This last would be the school in which their people might begin to learn the exercise of civic duties as well as rights. For freedom of religion they are not yet prepared. The scales of bigotry are not sufficiently fallen from their eyes to accept it for themselves individually, much less to trust others with it. But that will come in time, as well as a general ripeness to break entirely from the parent stem.

How do I reconcile my ideals of equality and natural rights with the realities I have witnessed? The success of our great revolutionary struggle, in which I bore a part, gave to the world the example of physical liberty, and owes to it that of moral emancipation also. For as yet, it is but nominal with us. The inquisition of public opinion overwhelms in practice the freedom asserted by the laws in theory. The principles I invoked in the Declaration—that all men are created equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights—were for the white race in our contest with England, and when alarm was taken at an enterprise on their own, it was not easy to carry the older generation the whole length of those principles. Nursed and educated in the daily habit of seeing the degraded condition, both bodily and mental, of those unfortunate beings, not reflecting that that degradation was very much the work of themselves and their fathers, few minds had yet doubted but that they were as legitimate subjects of property as their horses or cattle. The quiet and monotonous course of colonial life had been disturbed by no alarm, and little reflection on the value of liberty. Yet I have never permitted myself to despair of the ultimate establishment of those principles. Light is spreading and man improving. To that advancement I look, and to the dispensations of an all-wise and all-powerful providence to devise the means of effecting what is right.

Interviewer: As an elder statesman, what ultimate lessons about life—reason over error, the moral sense, republican government, and the "sacred fire of liberty"—would you wish to pass on to posterity?

Thomas Jefferson: As an elder statesman now in the eighty-second year of my age, retired from the toils of public office to the tranquil shades of Monticello, I receive with respect and gratitude the opportunity your enquiries afford to reflect upon those principles which have governed my public life and which I would most earnestly wish to transmit, as a sacred trust, to posterity. The welfare of my fellow citizens and the perpetuation of our republican institutions having been the governing principles of that life, I shall speak plainly from the convictions of a long experience, drawing upon sentiments I have heretofore committed to paper in letters to valued correspondents.

On the triumph of reason over error, I have observed, and I repeat with undiminished conviction, that truth & reason are eternal. They have prevailed. And they will eternally prevail, however, in times & places, they may be overborne for a while by violence military, civil, or ecclesiastical. The diffusion of knowledge among the people is the instrument by which error is dispelled and tyranny vanishes like evil spirits at the dawn of day. Our successors start on our shoulders; they know all that we know, and will add to that stock the discoveries of the next fifty years. Let the rising generation be early initiated into sound principles, for the boys of the rising generation are to be the men of the next, and the sole guardians of the principles we deliver over to them.

As to the moral sense, morality, compassion, generosity are innate elements of the human construction; that there exists a right independent of force; that justice is the fundamental law of society; and that 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. Without virtue, happiness cannot be. The practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, our Creator has impressed its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. Adore God, reverence and cherish your parents, love your neighbor as yourself and your country more than yourself, be just, be true, and murmur not at the ways of Providence; so shall the life into which you have entered be the portal to one of eternal and ineffable bliss. The wise man is lord over himself, whom neither poverty nor death nor bonds affright, who bravely defies his passions and scorns ambition, who in himself is a whole, smoothed and rounded, so that nothing from outside can rest on the polished surface, and against whom Fortune in her onset is ever maimed.

Concerning republican government, I have defined it thus: a pure republic is a state of society in which every member, of mature and sound mind, has an equal right of participation, personally, in the direction of the affairs of the society. Such a regimen is obviously impracticable beyond the limits of an encampment or a very small village; when numbers, distance, or force oblige them to act by deputy, their government continues republican in proportion only as the functions they still exercise in person are more or fewer, and as in those exercised by deputy the right of appointing their deputy is pro hoc vice only. Action by the citizens in person, in affairs within their reach and competence, and in all others by representatives, chosen immediately and removable by themselves, constitutes the essence of a republic; and all governments are more or less republican in proportion as this principle enters more or less into their composition.

Finally, on the sacred fire of liberty, we are sole depositories of the remains of human liberty; our duty to ourselves, to posterity, and to mankind calls on us by every motive

which is sacred or honorable to watch over the safety of our beloved country during the troubles which agitate and convulse the residue of the world, and to sacrifice to that all personal and local considerations. The preservation of the holy fire is confided to us by the world, and the sparks which will emanate from it will ever serve to rekindle it in other quarters of the globe. While the boasted energies of monarchy have yielded to easy conquest the people they were to protect, should our fabric of freedom suffer no more than the slight agitations we have experienced, it will be an useful lesson to the friends as well as to the enemies of self-government. That it may stand the shocks of time and accident, and that your own may make a distinguished part of the mass of prosperity it may dispense, will be my latest prayer.

Interviewer: In your later years, looking back over half a century, have your convictions about the natural rights of mankind remained firm, or have the experiences of revolution, presidency, and the Missouri question caused you to modify them?

Thomas Jefferson: As I sit here in the quiet of Monticello, in the eighty-second year of my age, looking back over more than half a century since the great contest which gave birth to our independence, I can declare with the most sincere conviction that my principles on the natural rights of mankind have remained firm and unaltered. The experiences of revolution, of public service in the highest stations, and even the anxious alarms awakened by the late Missouri question, have not induced me to modify or retract one jot or tittle of those self-evident truths which I have ever held, and which I committed to record as early as the year 1776.

The evidence of these natural rights, like that of our right to life, liberty, the use of our faculties, the pursuit of happiness, is not left to the feeble and sophistical investigations of reason but is impressed on the sense of every man. We do not claim these under the Charter of kings or legislators, but under the king of kings. 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: 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: and, no man having a natural right to be the judge between himself and another, it is his natural duty to submit to the umpirage of an impartial third. When the laws have declared and enforced all this, they have fulfilled their functions, and the idea is quite unfounded that on entering into society we give up any natural right.

My opinion on the right of expatriation was consigned to record in the Act of the Virginia code, drawn by myself recognising the right expressly, and prescribing the mode of exercising it. The innate feeling of right to live on the outside of an artificial geographical line as he has to live within it, the stronger sentiment of right to use his own faculties at all, and

in whatever place he can do it to the greatest promotion of his own happiness—these are axioms so self-evident that no explanation can make them plainer. One generation of men cannot foreclose, or burthen it's use to another, which comes to it in it's own right, and by the same divine beneficence; that a preceding generation cannot bind a succeeding one by it's laws or contracts, these deriving their obligation from the will of the existing majority, and that majority being removed by death, another comes in it's place, with a will equally free to make it's own laws and contracts.

In the field of politics, from which my natural propensities strongly inclined me to a life of retirement and contemplation, the necessities of our revolution dragged me into one of action and contention. Yet through all the schisms and parties which have agitated our country from its first establishment to the present day—whether the power of the people or that of the aristoi should prevail—I have never departed from the fundamental principle that among the men who either pay or fight for their country, no line of right can be drawn. The exclusion of a majority of our freemen from the right of representation is merely arbitrary, an usurpation of the minority over the majority. The basis of equal political rights, the natural right of self-government, has been my constant guide, as I affirmed but last year when consulted on the proposition to call a Convention for amending the Constitution of this state.

The Missouri question, 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. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other. Yet even here, I have not modified my convictions on natural rights. The cession of that kind of property, for so it is misnamed, is a bagatelle which would not cost me a second thought, if, in that way, a general emancipation and expatriation could be effected. As it is, the passage of slaves from one state to another would not make a slave of a single human being who would not be so without it; their diffusion over a greater surface would make them individually happier and proportionally facilitate the accomplishment of their emancipation. An abstinence from this act of power would remove the jealousy excited by 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.

The generation of '76 sacrificed themselves to acquire self-government and happiness to their country; that this should be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons fills me with regret, but it does not shake my adherence to the original principles. The light which has been shed on mankind by the art of printing has eminently changed the condition of the world; it continues to spread, and while printing is preserved, it can no

more recede than the sun return on his course. 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?

In all these reflections, I have wrapped myself in the mantle of resignation, tendering to my friends the most sincere assurances of unabated friendship and respect. My convictions on the natural rights of mankind stand where they stood at the first: firm, self-evident, and impressed on the sense of every man. I have nothing to retract, and nothing to modify.

Interviewer: Now in retirement at Monticello, what does the pursuit of happiness look like in your daily life, and has your understanding of it changed over the decades?

Thomas Jefferson: Sir, now in my retirement at Monticello the pursuit of happiness presents itself to me in the tranquility and a retirement from the passions which disturb it, which constitute the summum bonum of this period of life. My occupations are now in quite a different line, more suited to my age, my interests and inclinations, having served my tour of duty, I leave public cares to younger and more vigorous minds, and repose my personal well being under their guardianship in perfect confidence of its safety. I avail myself of the resource to books, aided by the conversation and endearments of my family, with whom I have living eight grandchildren, their parents and other connections making up a dozen at our daily table, that number generally enlarged by the successive visits of friends and relations, and every comfort which this place can be made to afford. The society of our children is the sovereign balm of life, and the older we grow the more we need it to fill up the void made by the daily losses of the companions and friends of our youth. The University indeed gives me some welcome employment. I ride daily when able and without fatigue, and otherwise enjoy a goodly health, though I have now been eight months confined almost constantly to the house, with now and then intervals of a few days on which I could get on horseback, my internal organism having been destroyed in a great degree by the trial of the Warm springs seven years since, so that I have never since had a moment of perfect health.

As to whether my understanding of the pursuit of happiness has changed over the decades, the sentiments I have expressed in my correspondence across these years record no material alteration, but rather a steady conviction, confirmed by advancing age and debility, that rest and quiet constitute the summum bonum of that age, and that with good health and good spirits the pleasures surely outweigh the pains of life. I have enjoyed a greater share of health than falls to the lot of most men; my spirits have never failed me except under those paroxysms of grief which you, as well as myself, have experienced in every form; and I am happy in what is around me. Friendship is like wine, raw when new, ripened with age, the true old man's milk and restorative cordial. It is wise and well to be

contented with the good things which the master of the feast places before us, and to be thankful for what we have, rather than thoughtful about what we have not. Thus I pursue my ease and happiness in these domestic and studious retirements, engaging reluctantly in whatever would encroach on them, and trusting that they will ensure future ease and happiness, though quarters so crowded are illy calculated for the quiet or comfort of the aged or the studious.

Interviewer: In your extensive retirement correspondence, what have you concluded about the proper relationship between reason, religion, and a free government?

Thomas Jefferson: My retirement has afforded me leisure to maintain correspondence with many friends and inquirers on subjects of deep interest. Through these correspondences, I have been led to reflect on the proper relations between reason, religion, and a free government, and to commit my conclusions to paper in these letters. Our reason alone is the competent judge in matters of religious tenets, for, dispute as long as we will on them, our reason at last must ultimately decide, as it is the only oracle which god has given us to determine between what really comes from him, and the phantasms of a disordered or deluded imagination. When he means to make a personal revelation, he carries conviction of its authenticity to the reason he has bestowed as the umpire of truth. I have followed that portion of reason which he has thought proper to deal out to me, faithfully in all important cases, to such a degree at least as leaves me without uneasiness.

Religion, substantially good, is that which produces an honest life, and we have been authorised by one whom you and I equally respect, to judge of the tree by its fruit. The sum of all religion, as expressed by its best preacher, is fear god and love thy neighbor, containing no mystery, needing no explanation. Every religion consists of moral precepts, and of dogmas. In the first they all agree, for all forbid us to murder, steal, plunder, bear false witness, and these are the articles necessary for the preservation of order, justice, and happiness in society. In their particular dogmas all differ, no two professing the same; these respect vestments, ceremonies, physical opinions, and metaphysical speculations, totally unconnected with morality, and unimportant to the legitimate objects of society. The practice of morality being necessary for the well-being of society, he has taken care to impress its precepts so indelibly on our hearts that they shall not be effaced by the subtleties of our brain. Hence we see good men in all religions, and as many in one as another. It is then a matter of principle with me to avoid disturbing the tranquility of others by the expression of any opinion on the innocent questions on which we schismatize, and to hold fast to those moral precepts which are of the essence of Christianity, and of all other religions. Nowhere are these to be found in greater purity than in the discourses of the great reformer of religion whom we follow. I believe, with the Quaker preacher, that he

who steadily observes those moral precepts in which all religions concur, will never be questioned, at the gates of heaven, as to the dogmas in which they all differ. Of all the systems of morality ancient or modern which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus.

As to a free government, the idea of the moral obligations of governments is perfectly correct. The man who is dishonest as a statesman would be a dishonest man in any station. It is strangely absurd to suppose that a million of human beings collected together are not under the same moral laws which bind each of them separately. Our government, as it cherishes most its duties to its own citizens, so is it the most exact in its moral conduct towards other nations. I do not believe that in the four administrations which have taken place, there has been a single instance of departure from good faith towards other nations. We may sometimes have mistaken our rights, or made an erroneous estimate of the actions of others, but no voluntary wrong can be imputed to us. Religion, as well as reason, confirms the soundness of those principles on which our government has been founded and its rights asserted. The freedom of religion, guaranteed to us by law in theory, if it can ever rise in practice under the overbearing inquisition of public opinion, will allow truth to prevail over fanaticism, and the genuine doctrines of Jesus, so long perverted by his pseudo-priests, will again be restored to their original purity. The pure and simple unity of the creator of the universe is now all but ascendant, and I confidently expect that the present generation will see it become the general religion of the United States. While I claim a right to believe in one god, if so my reason tells me, I yield as freely to others that of believing in three. Both religions I find make honest men, and that is the only point society has any authority to look to.

Preachers, employed by congregations for lessons in the religion they profess, should confine themselves to that service from the pulpit, for it is a breach of contract to put off their audience with a discourse on the construction of government, or the characters or conduct of those administering it; common sense draws lines between the branches of science sufficiently distinct for the general purposes of life, and no one is at a loss to understand that a demonstration in geometry is not a lesson in religion. Yet on all other occasions the preacher has the right, equally with every other citizen, to express his sentiments, in speaking or writing, on the subjects of politics, his leisure time being his own, and his congregation not obliged to listen. I enquire after no man’s principles of religion, and trouble none with mine; our particular principles of religion are a subject of accountability to our god alone. The loathsome combination of church and state I have ever abhorred, and in a free government differences of opinion on politics and religion should not be permitted to disturb the harmony of social intercourse, or to lessen the tolerance of opinion. I take no part in controversies religious or political. At the age of

eighty, tranquility is the greatest good of life, and the strongest of our desires that of dying in the good will of all mankind.

Interviewer: As you approach the end of your life, what final warnings or encouragements would you leave for those who will inherit the republic you helped create?

Thomas Jefferson: As the pulse of life ebbs and I prepare to join my fathers, with waning body, a waning mind, and waning memory, I leave these as my final words to those who will inherit the republic I helped create. Sole depositories of the remains of human liberty, our duty to ourselves, to posterity, and to mankind calls on us by every motive which is sacred or honorable to watch over the safety of our beloved country during the troubles which agitate and convulse the residue of the world, and to sacrifice to that all personal and local considerations. The welfare of my fellow citizens and the perpetuation of our republican institutions having been the governing principles of my public life, I had ever and fondly cherished the interests of that country, relying on it as a barrier against the degeneracy of public opinion from our original and free principles. But the bait of local interests, artfully prepared for their palate, has decoyed them from their kindred attachments to alliances alien to them. Yet, although I have little hope that the torrent of consolidation can be withstood, I should not be for giving up the ship without efforts to save her. She lived well through the first squall and may weather the present one.

I contemplate banking establishments as a blot left in all our constitutions, which, if not covered, will end in their destruction, already hit by the gamblers in corruption and sweeping away in its progress the fortunes and morals of our citizens. Banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies, and the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity under the name of funding is but swindling futurity on a large scale.

The judiciary, practising on the constitution by inferences, analogies, and sophisms, has proved that the power of declaring what the law is ad libitum, by sapping and mining slily and without alarm the foundations of the constitution, can do what open force would not dare to attempt. A few such doctrinal decisions, happening to bear immediately on two or three of the large states, may induce them to join in arresting the march of government and in arousing the co-states to bring back the compact to its original principles, or to modify it legitimately by the express consent of the parties themselves, and not by the usurpation of their created agents. They imagine they can lead us into a consolidated government, while their road leads directly to its dissolution.

A state is not based upon high-raised battlements or labored mound, thick wall or moated gate, not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned: no, men, high-minded men; men who their duties know, but know their rights, and knowing dare maintain. These constitute a state. The boys of the rising generation are to be the men of the next, and the sole guardians of the principles we deliver over to them. Adore God. Reverence and cherish your parents. Love your neighbor as yourself, and your country more than yourself. Be just. Be true. Murmur not at the ways of Providence. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today. Never trouble another for what you can do yourself. Never spend your money before you have it. Never buy what you do not want because it is cheap; it will be dear to you. Pride costs us more than hunger, thirst, and cold. We never repent of having eaten too little. Nothing is troublesome that we do willingly. How much pain have cost us the evils which have never happened! Take things always by their smooth handle. When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry, a hundred.

I have been endeavoring to make my latter years useful, and not, I hope, without success, in establishing an institution which bids fair to be second in eminence to none within our union, and which, if it enjoys the patronage and cherishment of our public authorities with undivided voice, will prove a blessing to my country, and not unuseful perhaps to some others, with happy influence on its character, its virtue, its prosperity, and safety. To these effusions for the cradle and land of my birth I add for our nation at large the aspirations of a heart warm with the love of country, whose invocations to heaven for its indissoluble union will be fervent and unremitting while the pulse of life continues to beat, and when that ceases it will expire in prayers for the eternal duration of its freedom and prosperity. 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 by violence military, civil, or ecclesiastical. The preservation of the holy fire is confided to us by the world, and the sparks which will emanate from it will ever serve to rekindle it in other quarters of the globe, numinibus secundis.

To my fellow citizens - to what sacrifices of interest or convenience ought not these considerations to animate us, and to what compromises of opinion and inclination, to maintain harmony and union among ourselves and to preserve from all danger this hallowed ark of human hope and happiness. That it may stand the shocks of time and accident will be my latest prayer. While the boasted energies of monarchy have yielded to easy conquest the people they were to protect, our fabric of freedom, if it suffer no more than the slight agitations we have experienced, will be a useful lesson to the friends as well as to the enemies of self-government. I go to my fathers; I welcome the shore which crowns all my hopes or which buries my cares.

Interviewer: Mr. President, I want to profusely thank you for sitting with us this third time. We have always enjoyed your insights and your endless dedication to our nation.