

**The TRUTH about THOMAS JEFFERSON –  
from original Documents of American History**  
Excerpted from, *Signers of the Declaration of  
Independence*, © 2012  
by  
**Dr. Catherine Millard**

**Frequently asked Questions:**

**1. Where was Thomas Jefferson educated?**

From the *Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson*, dated January 6, 1821, we read,

... “He (my father) placed me at the English school at five years of age; and at the Latin at age nine, where I continued until his death. My teacher, *Mr. Douglas, a clergyman from Scotland*, with the rudiments of the Latin and Greek languages, taught me the French; and on the death of my father, I went to *the Reverend Mr. Maury, a correct classical scholar*, with whom I continued two years; and then, to wit, in the Spring of 1760, went to *William and Mary College*, where I continued two years. It was my great good fortune, and what probably fixed the destinies of my life, that *Dr. William Small of Scotland*, was then Professor of Mathematics, a man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, and an enlarged and liberal mind. He, most happily for me, became soon attached to me, and made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school; and from his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science, and of the system of things in which we are placed. Fortunately, the philosophical chair became vacant soon after my arrival at college, and he was appointed to fill it *per interim*: and he was the first who ever gave, in that college, regular lectures in Ethics, Rhetoric and Belles Lettres. He returned to Europe in 1762, having previously filled up the measure of his goodness to me, by procuring for me, from his most intimate friend, *George Wythe*, a reception as a student of law, under his direction, and introduced me to the acquaintance and familiar table of Governor Fauquier, the ablest man who had ever filled that office. With him, and at his table, Dr. Small and Mr. Wythe, his *amici omnium horarum* (friends of all hours), and myself, formed a *partie quaree*, and to the habitual conversations on these occasions I owed much instruction. Mr. Wythe continued to be my faithful and beloved mentor in youth, and my most affectionate friend through life. In 1767, he led me into the practice of law at the bar of the general court, at which I continued until the Revolution shut up the courts of justice.

In 1769, I became a member of the legislature by the choice of the county in which I live, and so continued until it was closed by the Revolution. *I made one effort in that body for the permission of the emancipation of slaves, which was rejected: and indeed, during the regal government, nothing liberal could expect success...*” (Author’s bold italics)

## 2. Who was Dr. William Small?

**Dr. William Small** (1734-1775) was a Teacher, Mentor and Scientist. In 1758 he was recruited for the position of Professor of Mathematics at William and Mary College, and tutored **Thomas Jefferson** (1760-1762). Returning to England in 1764, he became, through the help of **Benjamin Franklin** and others, physician and scientific advisor to Matthew Boulton, a successful industrialist. Dr. Small, Matthew Boulton and Erasmus Darwin founded the famed *Birmingham Lunar Society*, paving the way for Britain's industrialization towards the end of the 1700's. His meeting with James Watt resulted in a joint effort – the steam engine.

## 3. Who was George Wythe?

**George Wythe** (1726-1806) was an American patriot. He was a member of the Second Continental Congress and a *signer of the Declaration of Independence*. He also designed the Seal and Motto of Virginia, the latter being, "Sic Semper Tyrannis" (Ever thus to Tyrants). As a member of the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg, capital of Virginia, he drew up (1764) a protest of that body against the proposed act for taxing the colonies. He was a judge of the chancery court of Virginia (1778-1806); and professor of law at William Mary College from 1779-1789. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention and of the State Convention ratifying it. **Thomas Jefferson**, author of the Declaration of Independence, **Peyton Randolph** (president of the First Continental Congress) and **John Marshall** (fourth Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court) were among the famous men who studied under George Wythe, for whom the law college is named. Within the famed Christopher Wren Building of the William and Mary College – *its Chapel*, used for morning and evening prayer, moral discourses and conferring of degrees and honors during Jefferson's residency, is a prominent plaque honoring George Wythe. It reads: "**George Wythe, LLD** (1726-1806). Member of the Continental Congress, Signer of the Declaration of Independence, member of the Commission of 1776 on the revision of the laws of Virginia. Judge of the Chancery Court. **First Professor of Law in the College of William and Mary**. The American Arisides. He was an exemplar of all there is noble and elevating in the Profession of Law. **Erected as a tribute to his courage as a patriot, his ability as an instructor, his uprightness as a lawyer, his purity as a Judge.**" The original tablet was presented by the Virginia State Bar Association in 1893. **George Wythe worshipped Almighty God at Bruton Parish Episcopal Church** (circa. 1715) in Williamsburg, where he was a Vestryman. His marked pew (no. 21) is to the left of **Thomas Jefferson's pew (no. 17)**. (Author's bold italics).

## 4. What did Thomas Jefferson study at William and Mary College?

**Thomas Jefferson** wrote that, "...by going to the College I shall get a more Universal Acquaintance, which may hereafter be serviceable to me; and I suppose I can pursue my studies in the Greek and Latin as well there as here, and likewise learn something of the Mathematics."

He enrolled in the College on March 25, 1760, at the age of sixteen. By the time he came to Williamsburg, the young scholar was proficient in the classics and able to read Greek and Latin authors in the original, a practice he continued throughout his life. In addition to the philosophy school – the collegiate course in which Jefferson enrolled – the College of William and Mary included a grammar school for boys about twelve to fifteen years of age; the divinity school, where young men who had completed their studies in the philosophy school would be prepared

for ordination in the Church; and the *Indian school*, founded for the education and Christianization of Indian boys.

Its *Charter*, dated February 8, 1693, granted by King William III and Queen Mary II of England, for the founding of a Seminary in Virginia, reads, “*William and Mary, by the grace of God*, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King and Queen, Defenders of the Faith, to all whom these our present Letters shall come, greeting. Forasmuch as our well-beloved and trusty Subjects, constituting the General Assembly of our Colony of Virginia, have had it in their minds, and have proposed to themselves, to the end that the Church of Virginia may be furnished with *a Seminary of Ministers of the Gospel*, and that the Youth may be piously educated in Good Letters and Manners, and that the *Christian Faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God...*”

Jefferson lodged and boarded at the College in the building known today as the *Sir Christopher Wren Building*, attending communal meals in the Great Hall and morning and evening prayers in *the Chapel*. He was instructed in natural philosophy (physics, metaphysics, and mathematics) and moral philosophy (rhetoric, logic, and ethics). A keen and diligent student, he displayed an avid curiosity in all fields, and according to family tradition, he frequently studied fifteen hours a day. His closest college friend, John Page of Rosewell, reported that Jefferson “could tear himself away from his dearest friends, to fly to his studies.” (Source: *Jefferson’s William and Mary*. Brochure of the College of William and Mary). (Author’s bold italics)

## 5. Is it true that Thomas Jefferson was a Deist?

According to Noah Webster’s definition in his original 1828 Dictionary of that era, a “**deist**” was, “One who believes in the existence of a God, but denies revealed religion; one who professes no form of religion, but follows the light of nature and reason, as his only guides in doctrine and practice; a free-thinker.”

The following quotations from Jefferson’s writings belie the fact to his being a “Deist.” Few people are aware of Jefferson’s *Prayer for Peace*, as it is called. Excerpted from his **Second Inaugural Address**, it was delivered on March 4, 1805, as follows,

“I shall now enter on the duties to which my fellow-citizens have again called me, and shall proceed in the spirit of those principles which they have approved...I shall need, therefore, all the indulgence I have heretofore experienced...I shall need, too, the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our forefathers as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life, who has covered our infancy with His Providence and our riper years with His wisdom and power, and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils and prosper their measures, that whatever they do shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship and approbation of all nations.”

Elaborating on the *excesses inherent within the hierarchal state-controlled church*, Jefferson writes to *Moses Robinson* on March 23, 1801, from Washington, D.C.:

“...*the Christian Religion*, when divested of the rags in which they (the clergy) have enveloped it, and brought to the original purity and simplicity of its benevolent Institutor,

is a religion of all others most friendly to liberty, science, and the freest expansion of the human mind.”

In another letter, this time to *Levi Lincoln*, and written from his Virginian home, Monticello, on August 26, 1801, Jefferson gives his views on the *New England clergy*,

“...From the clergy I expect no mercy. They crucified their Savior who preached that their kingdom was not of this world: and all who practice on that precept must expect the extreme of their wrath. The laws of the present day withhold their hands from blood; but lies and slander still remain to them...”

Jefferson comments on *the disestablishment of the Anglican state-controlled Church in Virginia, and its clergy*, with his **Statute for Religious Freedom** in a letter to *Mrs. Harrison Smith*, dated August , 1816:

“...I recognize the same motives of goodness in the solicitude you express on the rumor supposed to proceed from a letter of mine to *Charles Thomson*, on the subject of the *Christian religion*. It is true that, in writing to the translator of the Bible and Testament, that subject was mentioned; but equally so that no adherence to any particular mode of Christianity was there expressed, nor any change of opinions suggested. A change from what? That priests indeed have heretofore thought proper to ascribe to me religious, or rather antireligious sentiments, of their own fabric, but such as soothed their resentments against the *Act of Virginia for establishing religious freedom*. They wished him to be thought atheist, deist, or devil, who could advocate freedom from their religious dictations. But I have ever thought religion a concern purely between our God and our consciences, for which we were accountable to Him, and not to the priests...I have ever judged of the religion of others by their lives and by this test my dear Madam, I have been satisfied yours must be an excellent one to have produced a life of such exemplary virtue and correctness. For it is in our lives, and not from our words, that our religion must be read...”

In the above letter to Mrs. Harrison Smith, **Jefferson** makes mention of Secretary of Congress, **Charles Thomson’s translation of the Bible**, which he ordered for himself. Jefferson clearly points out that he does not choose any particular mode of mainline Christian worship above another. He denounces the hierarchal Anglican priestly orders as having labeled him “anti-religious,” stating that this was of their own invention, in order to soothe their resentment against his authorship of the *Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom*. This disestablished their state-church in Virginia granting equal footing and freedom of worship to other mainline Christian churches. Jefferson himself exposes their revenge against his success, calling him atheist, deist or devil, for freeing other Christians from the Anglican state-church dictatorship. He once again denounces the tyranny of ecclesiastical-civil priesthood over the lives and consciences of other Christian believers.

*The Statute for Religious Freedom*, which Jefferson considered one of his greatest contributions to the nation, was a bill written in reaction to one proposed in 1785, *the establishment of Religion by Law*. Had this bill been passed, all citizens of Virginia would have been *taxed to support the clergy*. As Jefferson wrote in his *Autobiography*, we see that the issue was hotly debated for five years. From Jefferson’s **Autobiography**, we read his own description of the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia:

“But our opponents carried, in the General Resolutions of the Committee of November 19, a declaration that Religious assemblies ought to be regulated and that provision ought to be made for *continuing the succession of the clergy and superintending their conduct*. And in the bill now passed was inserted an express reservation of the question whether a general assessment should not be established by law on everyone to the support of the pastor of his choice; or whether all should be left to voluntary contributions; and on this question, debated at every session from ’76 to ’79 (some of our dissenting allies, having now secured their particular object, going over to the advocates of a general assessment), we could only obtain a suspension from session to session until ’79 when the question against a general assessment was finally carried and *the establishment of the Anglican Church entirely put down.*”

Comprehending Jefferson’s *Statute for Religious Freedom*, necessitates reading this document of America’s history in its entirety. The Library of Congress Rare Book Collection houses an 1800 publication vindicating *Jefferson’s Statute*, his public life and character, as follows:

**“Address to the People of  
the United States; with an  
Epitome and Vindication of the  
Public Life and Character of  
THOMAS JEFFERSON**

**To the People of the United States**

Fellow-Citizens,

...Republican citizens of America, will you believe it, and shall the groundless calumny yet find currency in our land, that Jefferson is an anti-federalist and enemy to the Constitution?...Equally repulsive to *the malign suggestion that Mr. Jefferson is an enemy to Religion*, the public records of his native state, present to the world in the Statute Book of their laws, the celebrated act “*for establishing religious freedom*” – drawn by the pen and offered to the assembly of Virginia, by the hand of their enlightened and illustrious fellow-citizen: Read, ye fanatics, bigots, and religious hypocrites, of whatsoever clime or country ye be – and you, base calumniators, whose efforts to traduce are the involuntary tribute of envy to a character more pure and perfect than your own, read, learn and practice the RELIGION OF JEFFERSON, as displayed in the sublime truths and inspired language of his ever memorable “*Act for establishing Religious Freedom,*” thus –

‘*WELL aware that Almighty God hath created the mind free*; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of *the Holy Author of our Religion*, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as were in his Almighty power to do; that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers civil, as well as ecclesiastical who being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time: *That to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would like to pattern, and whose powers*

*he feels most persuasive to righteousness, and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporary rewards, which proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional incitement to earnest and unremitting labours for the instruction of mankind;* that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, more than our opinions in physics or geometry; that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence, by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages, to which, in common with his fellow-citizens, he has a natural right; that it tends also *to corrupt the principles of that very Religion it is meant to encourage*, by bribing with a monopoly of worldly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it; that though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way; *that to suffer the Civil Magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency, is a dangerous fallacy*, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency, will make his opinions the rule of judgment, and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own; that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of Civil Government, for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order; and finally, *that Truth is great and will prevail if left to herself: that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict*, unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate, errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them:

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly – That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested or burdened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or beliefs; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.’

Further, if the opponents of *Mr. Jefferson* require additional proof of the *ardent piety and religious fervor of his mind*, let them read in his ‘*Notes on Virginia*,’ page 237, his reflections on the **subject of slavery**, expressive of his wishes for a gradual emancipation, which are concluded by the following pious apostrophe,

‘Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people *that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath?* Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that *God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever*: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situations among possible events: *that it may become probable by Supernatural interference! The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest.* – But it is impossible to be temperate and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history, natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into every one’s mind. I think a change already perceptible since the origin of the present (American) revolution. The spirit of the matter is abating, *that of the slave rising from the dust; his condition mollifying, the way I hope preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for total emancipation*, and that this is disposed in the order of event, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation...’  
July, 1800.”

## **The First Amendment Clause of the U.S. Constitution**

The following year, on September 17, 1787, the U.S. Constitution was written and signed. It included the important First Amendment Clause, that, ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of Religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.’ Jefferson’s 1786 *Act for Establishing Religious Freedom* was a forerunner to the *First Amendment of the Constitution*.

### **Separation of Church from interference by the State – Jefferson’s Letter to the Danbury Baptists**

In recent years, those who would like to interpret the First Amendment in a manner the founding fathers never intended, have made use of the term “Separation of Church and State” to mean that there could be no possible impact or influence of Christianity upon civil government – or even upon education.

The true meaning of the *Establishment Clause* can be stated in these terms – ‘*Separation of Church from interference by the State.*’ The only time the expression ‘Separation of Church and State’ was used by a founding father, is in an *off-the-record, non-political letter written by Thomas Jefferson* to the *Danbury Baptist Association*. He wrote this letter on January 1, 1802 replying to their public address which applauded his *stance for establishing Religious Freedom*. Jefferson prefaces his statement with an assurance to the Danbury Baptists that he *concurs with their belief of man being accountable to God alone for his mode of worship, without the government’s coercion or interference:*

“...Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature 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...”

### **Religious Values Protected from Government Interference**

The wall of separation between Church and state of which Jefferson speaks, is clearly in reference to protecting religious worship from the government’s interference, and not the government being encroached upon by religious values. Furthermore, the Declaration of Independence itself concludes with an emphasis upon this new nation’s dependence upon God’s protective care:

...with a firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour.

From the above we understand that Jefferson’s *Statute for Religious Freedom in Virginia, was against the establishment of Religion by Law*, thus “Separating, and protecting the Church (from interference by the) State” a forerunner to the First Amendment Clause.

6. Is it true that “Thomas Jefferson’s writings inscribed within the Jefferson Memorial, in Washington, D.C. portray him as a Deist?”

There are five writings of Thomas Jefferson inscribed upon the inner walls of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Official Fact Sheet: “*Thomas Jefferson Memorial Chamber Inscriptions – Washington, D.C., National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior*,” reads,

“Self-government, notably in the Declaration of Independence (1776), established his (Jefferson’s) popular reputation as the principal founder of American political thought. On the walls of the *Thomas Jefferson Memorial* are excerpts of Jefferson’s views on democracy and his advocacy of a system of government that would allow citizens to govern themselves. The inscriptions were chosen by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission as being the most reflective of Jefferson’s thought.”

Four of the five inscriptions honor Almighty God and His personal attributes, which belie the fact of Jefferson being a “deist.”

- I. I HAVE SWORN UPON THE ALTAR OF GOD ETERNAL HOSTILITY AGAINST EVERY FORM OF TYRANNY OVER THE MIND OF MAN. (Taken from a letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800.)
- II. We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men. We...solemnly publish and declare that these colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states...and for the support of this declaration, *with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence*, we mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour. (Taken from the Declaration of Independence, 1776).
- III. *Almighty God* hath created the mind free. All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens...are a departure from the plan of *the Holy Author of our Religion*...No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, But all men shall be free to profess and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion...I know but one code of morality for men whether acting singly or collectively. Taken from a Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, 1777, passed by the Virginia Assembly – *Statutes for Religious Freedom in Virginia* – in 1786). *The last sentence, “I know but one code of morality for men whether acting singly or collectively” is taken from a letter to James Madison, August 28, 1789*. (Author’s note: In context, *Thomas Jefferson’s August 28, 1789 letter to James Madison reads,*

“Dear Sir

Paris, Aug. 28, 1789

...It is impossible to desire better dispositions towards us, than prevail in this assembly. *Our proceedings have been viewed as a model for them on every occasion*; and tho’ in the heat of debate men are generally disposed to contradict every authority urged by their opponents, *ours has been treated like that of the Bible, open to explanation but not to question*. I am sorry that in the moment of such a disposition anything should come from us to check it. The placing them on a mere footing with the English will have this effect. When of two nations, the one has engaged herself in a ruinous war for us, has spent her blood and money to save us, has

opened her bosom to us in peace, and received us almost on the footing of her own citizens, while ***the other has moved heaven, earth and hell*** to exterminate us in all her councils in peace, shut her doors to us in every part where her interests would admit it, libeled us in foreign nations, endeavored to poison them against the reception of our most precious commodities, to place these two nations on a footing, is to give a great deal more to one than to the other if the maxim be true that to make unequal quantities equal you must add more to the one than the other. To say in excuse that gratitude is never to enter into the motives of national conduct, is to revive a principle which has been buried for centuries with its kindred principles of the lawfulness of assassination, poison, perjury etc. All of these were legitimate principles in the dark ages which intervened between ancient and modern civilization, but exploded and held in just horror in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. ***I know but one code of morality for man whether acting singly or collectively.*** He who says I will be a rogue when I act in company with a hundred others but an honest man when I act alone, will be believed in the former assertion, but not in the latter. I would say with the poet ‘hic niger est hunc tu Romane caveto.’ If the morality of one man produces a just line of conduct in him, acting individually, why should not the morality of 100 men produce a just line of conduct in them acting together? But I indulge myself in these reflections because my own feelings run me into them: with you they were always acknowledged. Let us hope that our new government will take some other occasion to show that they mean to proscribe no virtue from the canons of their conduct with other nations. In every other instance the new government has ushered itself to the world as honest, masculine and dignified. It has shown genuine dignity in my opinion in exploding adulatory titles; they are the offerings of abject baseness, and nourish that degrading vice in the people...” (Author’s bold italics.)

IV. ***God who gave us life gave us liberty.*** Can the liberties of a nation be secure when We have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever. Commerce between master and slave is despotism. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. ***Establish the law for educating the common people. This it is the business of the state to effect and on a general plan.*** (Taken from Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia, 1785.*) ***The last two sentences are taken from a letter to George Washington, January 4, 1786.*** (Author’s note: ***In context, Thomas Jefferson’s January 4, 1786 letter to George Washington reads,***

“Sir

Paris Jan. 4, 1785 (i.e. 1786)

“I have been honoured with your letter of Sep. 26 which was delivered me by Mr. Houdon, who is safely returned...The institutions you propose to establish by shares in the Patowmac and James river companies given you by the assembly, and the particular objects of those institutions are most worthy. It occurs to me however, that if the bill ‘for the more general diffusion of knowledge’ which is in the revisal, should be passed, it would supersede the use, and obscure the existence of the ***charity schools*** you have thought of. I suppose in fact that that bill, or some other like it, will be passed. I never saw one received with more enthusiasm than that was by the house of delegates in the year 1778, and ordered to be printed, and it seemed afterwards that nothing but the extreme distress of our resources prevented its being carried into execution even during the war. It is an axiom in my mind that our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, ***and that too of the people with a certain degree of instruction.*** ***This it is the business of the state to effect, and on a general plan.*** Should you see a probability of this however, you can never be at a loss for worthy objects of this donation...” (Author’s bold italics.)

- V. I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but 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 discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society *to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors*. (Taken from a letter to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816.) (Author's note: In context, *Thomas Jefferson's July 12, 1816 letter to Samuel Kercheval reads,*

...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 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. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, *as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors...*" (Author's bold italics).

**Thomas Jefferson**, in these profound writings, *honors Almighty God* as the Author of our Religion; Protector; the Creator of men and women – equal; the Giver of Life; Giver of Liberty; the Endower of men and women with certain inalienable rights, among which are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness; Just; Patient, and Caring – Divine Providence. This precludes Jefferson being a “deist.”

Unfortunately, these inspiring writings by Thomas Jefferson were permanently removed from the Jefferson Memorial's *Brochure* in the mid-1990's, by the *National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior* – which *Brochure* is available free of charge to millions of Americans – and internationals – visiting annually this memorial.

7. **“Did Thomas Jefferson write his own Bible?**  
A July 25, 2012, front page article in the *Washington Post* entitled ‘Liberty through the Lens – Should we be led by faith?’ by Ann Gerhart, states that ‘he (Jefferson) assembled his own Bible. He wrote the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, passed by the General Assembly in 1786, to enshrine a fierce civic desire for separation of church and state in the new nation. The country is still arguing over the height of that wall... – and it's freedom of religion vs. freedom from religion, again...’

### **The Jefferson Bible Myth**

Most Americans have been sold the widely-accepted myth that **Thomas Jefferson** wrote his own Bible. This is what I had been told, and having neither seen the Bible, nor anything to the contrary, was unable to form an opinion based upon fact. I set about tracking down this

elusive book. It is in the *Smithsonian Institution* and I was not only able to scrutinize it, but also able to make photocopies of the Title Page and Table of Contents, both written in Jefferson's own handwriting. The book is entitled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, extracted textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French and English*. The Table of Contents reads: "*A Table of the Texts from the Evangelists employed in this Narrative and the order of their arrangement.*"

There is only *one copy*, the original of this personal exercise of Jefferson. It was never published by this founding father, nor did he intend to publish it, nor was it part of his extensive 6,000 plus volume library which he sold to the Library of Congress. Jefferson's "Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, extracted textually from the Gospels" is now a museum piece in the custody of the *Smithsonian Institution*.

In 1904, 78 years after Jefferson's death, the United States Congress ordered the printing of 9,000 copies of Jefferson's "Life and Morals..." but they did so under the erroneous title of: "The Jefferson Bible." This was executed as a **government document** by the **57<sup>th</sup> Congress, first session**, as follows:

"That there be printed and bound, by photolithographic process, with an introduction of not to exceed twenty-five pages, to be prepared by Dr. Cyrus Adler, *Librarian of the Smithsonian Institution*, for the use of Congress, 9,000 copies of Thomas Jefferson's Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, as the same appears in the National Museum; 3,000 copies for the use of the Senate and 6,000 copies for the use of the House. Cyrus Adler."

It is unfortunate that the title given by Jefferson was not utilized, but instead it was entitled: "The Jefferson Bible." In addition, Jefferson's format of chapter and verse, followed by word for word Scripture verses, on the doctrinal teachings of Christ was also changed. The Bible chapters and verses were removed, and the text was written in narrative form. In Jefferson's original, not one word of commentary or opinion by him was included. The rewritten version of 1904 is misleading at best, giving the false impression that Thomas Jefferson "wrote his own Bible." Further, this work was a pure exercise for Thomas Jefferson. Similar harmonies of the Word of God have been produced in recent years as Bible study aids.

Jefferson had no intention whatever, nor did he ever attempt to "write his own Bible." A brilliant intellect had been one his gifts from Almighty God – and he used it in many creative avenues, including a compilation of the genuine moral teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

### **Thomas Jefferson's Library – Jefferson's Personal Bible**

Thomas Jefferson's library includes many volumes on religion. This is now part of the Library of Congress Rare Book Collection and is listed under the title *Jefferson Collection*. There are 190 entries under the title "Religion," **187 of these pertaining to Christianity**, while the remaining three are as follows:

An Historical Account of the Heathen gods and heroes necessary for understanding of the ancient poets. 1722. Boyse's Pantheon History of Heathen gods, for those who would understand History, Poetry, Painting, Statuary, Medals, coins, etc. 1753. And one copy of Sale's Koran, 1764.

On the title page of this catalogue, Jefferson's famous words are quoted:

***"...I am for freedom of Religion, and against all maneuvers to bring about a legal ascendancy of one sect over another..."***

From these words we see Jefferson's abhorrence of a legally established state church, dictating to, and controlling other Christian denominations at will. This he denounces and calls "priestcraft."

Among Jefferson's entries on religion are innumerable Bibles – Greek, Latin, French and English versions; the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament); the Apocrypha; The Holy Bible – Old and New Testaments, translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, 1804.

**Jefferson's** well-worn, beautifully leather-bound, **personal Bible** holds preeminence in this collection. Its *Jefferson Collection* Rare Book card catalogue entry describes **Jefferson's Bible** as:

**Bible. English. 1808.**

Thomson

**The Holy Bible** containing the Old and New Covenant, commonly called the Old and New Testament translated from the Greek by Charles Thomson, late Secretary to the Congress of the United States. Philadelphia. Printed by J. Aitken, 1808. The Bible on which Dr. Daniel Boorstin took the oath of office as the 12<sup>th</sup> Librarian of Congress, November 12, 1975.

Other entries in the Jefferson's Collection under *Religion* include:

Old and New Testament and Apocrypha 1798

Greek New Testament 1583

Greek and Latin New Testament 1578

Bible – New Testament Greek 1800

Hammond's New Testament – A Paraphrase and Annotation upon all the Books of the New Testament, briefly explaining all the difficult places therein.

The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, translated out of the original Greek, 1802.

The History of Jesus by Thompson and Price, 1805.

The History of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: with the Lives of the Holy Apostles, and their successors for three hundred years after the crucifixion.

Newman's Concordance to the Bible, 1650.

Cruden's Concordance, 1738.

Clarke's Concordance to the Holy Bible, 1696.

Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.

***The Truth of Christian Religion by Hugo Grotius in six books, written in Latin by Grotius, and now translated into English with an addition of a seventh book against the present Roman Church, 1694. (Hugo Grotius was the father of International Law).***

*Evidences of Christianity*, a view of the evidences of Christianity in

Three parts. Part I: Of the direct Historical Evidence of Christianity, and wherein it is distinguished from the evidence alleged for other miracles.

Part II: Of the Auxiliary Evidence of Christianity. Part III: A brief consideration of some popular objections, 1795.

*Barclay's Minute Philosopher*, in seven dialogues, **containing an apology for the Christian Religion, against those who are called Freethinkers. 1732.**

*The works of Reverend John Witherspoon, D.D., LL.D.*, late President of the College, at Princeton, New Jersey. To which is prefixed an account of the author's life, in a sermon occasioned by his death, by the Reverend Dr. John Rodgers of New York. In three volumes. (**Dr. Witherspoon was the only preacher-signer of the Declaration of Independence**). It was Witherspoon, in 1781 noting the differences in the English language as spoken in America, who coined the word "Americanism."

*Primitive Christianity Revived*, by William Whiston, Volume 1: Epistles of Ignatius; Volume II: The Apostolical Constitutions in Greek and English; Volume III: An Essay on those Apostolical Constitutions; Volume IV: An Account of the Primitive faith, concerning the Trinity and Incarnation.

***A Scriptural account of the Millennium: being a Selection from the Prophecies Concerning Christ's Second Coming, and personal glorious reign on earth a thousand years. To which are added a number of arguments to show that this event has not yet taken place. Also, some observations, calculated to stimulate man to an enquiry into the matter to make the necessary preparation for that all important event. By Benjamin Gorton, 1802.***

*The Christian's Duty from the Sacred Scriptures*, containing all that is necessary to be believed and practiced in order to our Eternal Salvation. Collected out of the Old and New Testament and the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, etc. (Initialed by Jefferson).

*Tracts in Religion: The Blessings of America*. A sermon preached in the Middle Dutch Church, on the 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1791, being the Anniversary of the Independence of America. By William Linn.

*Principles of Civil Union and Happiness considered and Recommended*. A sermon by Elizur Goodrich.

***The Inquirer: Being An examination of the Question lately agitated, respecting the Legitimate Powers of Government, whether they extend to the Care of Religion, and warrant making and enforcing Laws for the Purpose of establishing, supporting or encouraging the Christian Religion. 1801.***

*Prideaux' Connections*. 2 vol. fol. *The Old and New Testament connected in the History of the Jews and neighboring Nations, from the Declension of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah to the Time of Christ*, by Humphrey Prideaux, 1719.

The above list of books on the subject of religion in *Jefferson's library* represents but a small fraction of his collection on Christianity. It is reminiscent of a well-equipped and balanced **library of Bibles and Christian works** of the highest calibre. It also shows Thomas Jefferson's extensive personal collection of Old and New Testaments, intact. These hold preeminence in his library of books entitled, "**Religion**," This precludes "deism," "atheism" and alien false religions which are non-existent in this founding father's extensive collection. Biblical sermons, such as "*The Blessings on America*" also show the inseparable link between Christianity and the American government. It would seem questionable whether one would collect such an extensive library of Bibles and Bible-related materials if the Word of God was not an integral part of one's life.

During a visit to *Monticello*, prior to the publication of my book, *The Rewriting of America's History* (©1991), I was shown a number of Christian paintings in the hall, parlour and dining room of Jefferson's gracious southern home in Charlottesville, Virginia. I subsequently received *a catalogue made up by Jefferson himself*, on his paintings and *objets d'art* at Monticello. Having studied this great founding father and having reached the conclusion that his foremost adherence was to the teachings of the Bible, it did not surprise me at all to find that no less than **25 works of the great masters belonging to Jefferson reflected the Old and New Testament narrative**. In perusing this hand-written catalogue by Jefferson, one is struck by this founder's knowledge, love, awe and respect for the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. Jefferson relates vividly in his own words, events in Jesus Christ's life, taking you to chapter and verse of Scripture. He also describes Joseph ("in the act of fervent prayer"; *the sacrifice of Isaac and God's miraculous intervention*, from Genesis 22; Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son returning home; *the Transfiguration*; Jesus before Pilate, from Mark 15 and Matthew 27; *the crucifixion from Luke 23:44-45 "when the sun is darkened, the temple rent, the atmosphere kindled with lightning, the tombs open and yield their dead;"* the Descent from the Cross and other cataclysmic gospel events.

They are catalogued by Jefferson, *in his own handwriting*, as follows:

**Catalogue of Paintings &c. at Monticello.  
(Excerpted)**

*Jesus driving the money changers out of the temple.* Seven figures of full length and about half the natural module, the subject Matthew 21:12 on Canvas. Copied from Valentin.

St. Peter weeping. His hands are pressed together, and near him the cock shows it was the moment of Matthew 26:75 "and Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him before the cock crows thou shalt deny me thrice, and he went out and wept bitterly" a half length figure of full size, on Canvas, copied from Carlo Lotti.

Purchased from St. Severin's collection. Catalogue No.36.

Jesus among the Doctors, and disputing with them. The subject Luke 2:46. His right hand pointing to heaven, the left pressing his breast, the drapery blue and purple, the hair flowing loose. A half length figure of full size, seen in profile, on Canvas.

St. Joseph the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  length of full size on Canvas. A book is laying open before him. Hands interlocked with energy, his head and eyes turned up to heaven, and his mouth open, as in the act of fervent prayer.

Jesus in the Praetorium, stripped of the purple, as yet naked and with the crown of thorns on his *head*. He is sitting. A whole length figure of about 4 feet. The persons present seem to be one of his revilers, one of his followers, and the superintendent of the execution. The subject from Mark 15.16-20. An original on wood by Malbodius.

***The sacrifice of Isaac. He is placed on the pile, on his knees, his wrists bound.***

***Abraham with his left hand grasping the back of his neck, a naked sword (sic) in his right uplifted and ready to strike the fata stroke. In that instant an Angel hovering above him, stays his hand, and Abraham looks up with distraction to see by what power his (sic) hand is withheld. In a bush on the right hand is seen the ram. The figures are whole length: that of Abraham on scale of not quite half the natural size. On canvas, an original. The subject Gen. 22.***

Jesus before Pilate. The subject Matthew 27 on canvas, copied from Pordononi.

The Prodigal son. He is in rags kneeling at the feet of his father, who extends his hands to raise him. The mother and sister appear shocked at his condition, but the elder son views him with indignation. The figures of full size on canvas purchased

from St. Severin's collection. Catal. 306. An Original.

***The Transfiguration. Copied from Raphael. Whole length figures of 6.I on Canvas.***

***The subject Matthew 17. 1-8. See 4. Manuel du Museum. PL. I.***

*The Baptism of Jesus by John.* Figures whole length of 10.I on wood from Devois.

The subject Luke 3:21.22.

*The Crucifixion.* Whole length figure on wood. An Original by Gerard Seggers. The moment is that of Luke 23.44-45.

***The Crucifixion. The instant seized is that of the expiration, when the sun is darkened, the temple rent, the atmosphere kindled with lightning, the tombs open and yield their dead. On one side is the Centurion, struck with awe, and seeming to say "verily, this was a righteous man." On the other the two Marys, one of them her hair bristled with fear, the other in adoration. The subject is taken from Matt. 27.51,52 and Luke 23.45. The figures are whole lengths, the largest of 16.I copied on canvas from Vandyke.*** (Author's bold italics).

Again, as with this founding father's library on Christianity, it would be preposterous for him to take the time and care to describe each event portrayed in these ***works of art in detail from Scripture*** if they contradicted his beliefs.

Unfortunately, visitors to Monticello in recent years have reported that there remain but two Christian paintings in the hall, parlour and dining room of Jefferson's handsome home – one of which is, *John the Baptist's Head on a Platter*.

#### **8. Did Jefferson read his Personal Bible – in his Library – catalogued by him under "Religion," and now housed in the Library of Congress Rare Book Collection?**

An eye-witness account of **Thomas Jefferson reading his Bible frequently**, is given by **Captain Edmond Bacon** in his book, "Monticello" (circa 1862), housed in the Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection. As overseer of Monticello for 20 years, he attests to this fact,

"...**Mr. Jefferson** had a very large library. When the British burnt Washington, the library that belonged to Congress was destroyed, and Mr. Jefferson sold them his. He directed me to have it packed in boxes and sent to Washington...There was an immense quantity of them. There were sixteen wagon-loads. I engaged the teams. Each wagon was to carry three thousand pounds for a load, and to have four dollars a day for delivering them in Washington. If they carried more than three thousand pounds, they were to have extra pay. There were all kinds of books –books in a great many languages that I knew nothing about. ***There were a great many religious books among them – more than I have ever seen anywhere else.*** All the time Mr. Jefferson was President I had the keys to his library, and I could go in and look over the books, and take out any one that I wished, and read and return it. I have written a good many letters from that library to Mr. Jefferson in Washington.

**Mr. Jefferson** had a sofa or lounge upon which he could sit or recline, and a small table on rollers, upon which he could write lay his books; and other times he would recline on his sofa, ***with his table rolled up the sofa, astride it. He had a large Bible, which nearly always lay at the head of his sofa. Many and many a time I have gone into his room and found him reading that Bible.*** You remember I told you about riding all night from Richmond, after selling that flour, and going into his room very early in the morning, and

paying over to him the new United States Bank money. *That was one of the times I found him with the big Bible open before him on his little table, and he busy reading it. And I have seen him reading it in that way many a time. Some people, you know, say he was an atheist. Now if he was an atheist, what did he want with all those religious books, and why did he spend so much of his time reading his Bible?...*

9. **Did Thomas Jefferson go to Church?  
I heard that he banned Christianity in government,  
as U.S. President in Washington, D.C. Is this true?**

In the *Washington, D.C. Visitors' Guide, 1990*, under the section, *Washington at Worship*, we read,

“When **President Thomas Jefferson** first arrived in Washington in 1800, there were so few churches that *he began a custom of Sunday preaching in the House of Representatives*. Members of each denomination represented in Congress supplied distinguished clergy as guest speakers. The scarlet-uniformed Marine Band led the congregation in hymns and psalms. The Sabbath celebrations became so popular that gentlemen settled their ladies in every spot where a chair could be wedged. More formal services were held by a group of Scottish Presbyterians in a corridor of the Treasury Building. Other services were conducted at *St. Paul's Episcopal Church*, and *Christ Church*, a converted tobacco warehouse.”

My research of *Christ Church* on Capitol Hill, revealed the following,

“*Christ Church* was the first Episcopal Church in Washington Parish, created by the Maryland Vestry Act of 1794, ‘An Act to form a new parish by the name of Washington Parish to include the City of Washington, and Georgetown on the Potomac.’ *Christ Church's* first building was a tobacco warehouse on the corner of New Jersey Avenue and D Street, S.E. *Thomas Jefferson could often be seen, prayer book in hand, walking to Christ Church* located a few blocks south of the site for the new Capitol building.” (Source: *Christ Church – Washington Parish. A Brief History*, by Nan Robertson, Pulitzer Prize winning Journalist.)

Further research disclosed that *Presidents James Madison, James Monroe and John Quincy Adams* also worshipped the Lord at *Christ Church* on Capitol Hill.

*The Washington, D.C. Visitors' Guide, 1990*, includes *St. John's Episcopal Church*, on Lafayette Square, opposite the White House, designed by Architect of the Capitol, Benjamin Henry Latrobe and completed in 1816, as follows,

“Every U.S. president since *James Madison* has worshipped in this church, known appropriately as “*The Church of the Presidents*.” *The President's Pew is identified by a brass plate on Pew 54*, where the President is always seated when attending a service. Slip into a back pew as *Abraham Lincoln* did during afternoon prayer services, and sense the quiet history of the church that witnessed *Dolley Madison's* baptism and burial.”

Housed in the Library of Congress Rare Book Collection is an informative book on Washington, D.C.'s early beginnings, entitled, *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* by

Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith, (Margaret Bayard). She was the daughter of Colonel John Bayard, a famous Revolutionary Officer, Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly and member of the Continental Congress; and married Samuel Harrison Smith, son of Jonathan Bayard Smith, member of the Continental Congress, signer of the Articles of Confederation and Colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment during the Revolution, who, at age 28, established the first national newspaper printed in America – *The National Intelligencer*. They maintained a permanent residence in Washington, D.C. We read with interest of her first encounter with *Thomas Jefferson* in Washington,

*“And is this,”* said I, after my first interview with *Mr. Jefferson*, *“the violent democrat, the vulgar demagogue, the bold atheist and profligate man I have so often heard denounced by the federalists? Can this man so meek and mild, yet dignified in his manners, with a voice so soft and low, with a countenance so benignant and intelligent, can he be that daring leader of a faction, that disturber of the peace, that enemy of all rank and order?”* Mr. Smith, indeed, (himself a democrat) had given me a very different description of this celebrated individual; but his favourable opinion I attributed in a great measure to his political feelings, which led him zealously to support and exalt the party to which he belonged, especially its popular and almost idolized leader. Thus the virulence of party-spirit was somewhat neutralized, nay, I even entertained towards him the most kindly dispositions, knowing him to be not only politically but personally friendly to my husband; *yet I did believe that he was an ambitious and violent demagogue, coarse and vulgar in his manners, awkward and rude in his appearance, for such had the public journals and private conversations of the federal party represented him to be.*

In December, 1800, a few days after Congress had for the first time met in our new Metropolis, I was one morning sitting alone in the parlour, when the servant opened the door and showed in a gentleman who wished to see my husband. The usual frankness and care with which I met strangers, were somewhat checked by the dignified and reserved air of the present visitor; but the chilled feeling was only momentary, for after taking the chair I offered him in a free and easy manner, and carelessly throwing his arm on the table near which he sat, he turned towards me *a countenance beaming with an expression of benevolence and with a manner and voice soft and gentle*, entered into conversation on the commonplace topics of the day, from which, before I was conscious of it, he had drawn me into observations of a more personal and interesting nature. I know not how it was, but there was something in his manner, his countenance and voice that at once unlocked my heart, and in answer to his casual enquiries concerning our situation in our *new home*, as he called it, I found myself frankly telling him what I liked or disliked in our present circumstances and abode. I knew not who he was, but the interest with which he listened to my artless details, induced the idea he was some intimate acquaintance or friend of Mr. Smith’s and put me perfectly at my ease; *in truth so kind and conciliating were his looks and manners* that I forgot he was not a friend of my own, until on the opening of the door, Mr. Smith entered and introduced the stranger to me – *Mr. Jefferson*.

I felt my cheeks burn and my heart throb, and not a word more could I speak while he remained. Nay, such was my embarrassment I could scarcely listen to the conversation carried on between him and my husband. For several years he had been to me an object of peculiar interest. In fact my destiny, for on his success in the pending presidential election, or rather the success of the Democratic Party, (their interests were identical) my condition in life, my union with the man I loved, depended. In addition to this personal interest, I had long participated in my husband’s political sentiments and anxieties, and

looked upon *Mr. Jefferson* as the corner stone on which the edifice of republican liberty was to rest, looked upon him as a champion of human rights, the reformer of abuses, the *head of the Republican Party*, which must rise or fall with him and on the triumph of the Republican Party I devoutly believed the security and welfare of my country depended. Notwithstanding those exalted views of *Mr. Jefferson* as a political character; and ardently eager as I was for his success, I retained my previously conceived ideas of the coarseness and vulgarity of his appearance and manners and was therefore equally awed and surprised, on discovering the stranger *whose deportment was so dignified and gentlemanly, whose language was so refined, whose voice was so gentle, whose countenance was so benignant, to be no other than Thomas Jefferson*. How instantaneously were all these preconceived prejudices dissipated, and in proportion to their strength, was the reaction that took place in my opinions and sentiments. *I felt that I had been the victim of prejudice*, that I had been unjust. The revolution of feeling was complete and from that moment my heart warmed to him with the most affectionate interest and I implicitly believed all that his friends and my husband believed and which the after experience of many years confirmed. Yes, not only was he great, but a truly good man! The occasion of his present visit, was to make arrangement with Mr. Smith for the publication of his *Manual for Congress*, now called *Jefferson's manual*. The original was in his own neat, plain, but elegant handwriting. The manuscript was as legible as printing and its unadorned simplicity was emblematical of his character. It is still preserved by Mr. Smith and valued as a precious relique.

After the affair of business was settled, the conversation became general and Mr. Jefferson several times addressed himself to me; but although his manner was unchanged, my feelings were, and I could not recover sufficient ease to join in the conversation. He shook hands cordially with us both when he departed, and in a manner which said as plain as words could do, *'I am your friend.'*

*"...At this time the only place for public worship in our new city was a small, very small frame building at the bottom of Capitol Hill. It had been a tobacco-house belonging to Daniel Carroll, (Author's note: This was Daniel Carroll of Duddington Manor; not Daniel Carroll who signed the Constitution.) and was purchased by a few Episcopalians for a mere trifle and fitted up as a church in the plainest and rudest manner. During the first winter, Mr. Jefferson regularly attended service on the Sabbath-day in the humble church. The congregation seldom exceeded 50 or 60, but generally consisted of about a score of hearers. He (Thomas Jefferson) could have had no motive for this regular attendance, but that of respect for public worship, choice of place or preacher he had not, as this was the only church in the new city. The custom of preaching in the Hall of Representatives had not then been attempted, though after it was established Mr. Jefferson during his whole administration, was a most regular attendant. The seat he chose the first Sabbath, and the adjoining one, which his private Secretary occupied, were ever afterwards by the courtesy of the congregation, left for him and his secretary...Not only the chaplains, but the most distinguished clergymen who visited the city, preached in the Capitol. I remember hearing Mr. E. Everet, afterwards a member of Congress, deliver an eloquent discourse to a most thronged and admiring audience. Preachers of every sect and denomination of Christians were there admitted...As Congress is composed of Christians of every persuasion, each denomination in its turn has supplied chaplains to the two houses of Congress, who preach alternately in the Hall of Representatives...Clergymen, who during the session of Congress visited the city, were invited by the chaplains to preach...Now, in 1837 there are 22 churches of brick or stone...*

...There was one sermon delivered by Mr. Breckenridge at the commencement of the war that was deemed quite prophetic – whether inspired or not, predictions were certainly and accurately fulfilled. This pious and reverend preacher, in the plainest and boldest language of reprehension addressed the members of Congress and officers of government present on that occasion. The subject of his discourse was the observance of the Sabbath. After enlarging on its prescribed duties, he vehemently declaimed on the neglect of those duties, particularly by the higher classes and in this city, more especially by persons connected with the government. He unshrinkingly taxed those then listening to him, with *desecration of this Holy Day*, by their devoting it to amusement – then, *addressing himself to the members of Congress*, accused them of violating the day, by laws they had made, particularly the carrying the mail on the Sabbath; he enumerated the men and horses employed for this purpose through the union, and went into details striking and impressive:

‘It is not the people who will suffer for these enormities,’ said he, ‘you the law-givers, who are the cause of this crime, will in your public capacity suffer for it. Yes, it is the government that will be punished, and as, *with Nineveh of old*, it will not be the habitations of the people, but your temples and your palaces that will be burned to the ground; for it is by fire that this sin has usually been punished.’

He then gave many *instances from Scripture history* in which destruction by fire of cities, dwellings and persons had been the consequence of violating the *Fourth Commandment*.

At the time this sermon was preached, the most remote apprehension did not exist of a British army ever reaching Washington, although war was impending. His predictions were verified. *The Capitol, the President’s House, and every building belonging to the government were destroyed and that by fire. Mrs. Madison (Dolley Madison)* told me that on her return to the city, after the British had left it, she was standing one day at her sister’s door, for she had no house of her own, but until one was provided by the public, resided with her sister, and while there, looking on the devastation that spread around, saw Mr. Breckenridge passing along, she called to him and said, ‘I little thought, Sir, when I heard that threatening sermon of yours, that its denunciation would so soon be realized.’ ‘Oh, Madam,’ he replied, ‘I trust this chastening of the Lord, may not be in vain.’” (Author’s bold italics).

Further to the above, *Thomas Jefferson was a Vestryman at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church* in Charlottesville, Virginia, site of his home, Monticello. When in Williamsburg, Virginia, *he worshipped at Bruton Parish Episcopal Church (Pew 17)*; when in Philadelphia, *Jefferson worshipped at Christ Episcopal Church, Philadelphia* – called “the nation’s church” due to numerous founding fathers’ worshipping the Lord at this famed church – to include *George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, Alexander Hamilton, Francis Hopkinson, Benjamin Rush*, and the maker of the first American flag, *Betsy Ross*. (Source: Archives of Christ Church, Philadelphia).

In addition, we have the eye-witness account of *Captain Edmond Bacon*, Jefferson’s overseer at Monticello for 20 years. In his book, “Monticello,” published in 1862, and housed in the Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection, Captain Bacon relates *Thomas Jefferson’s attendance at Baptist worship services*:

“...*Mr. Jefferson never debarred himself from hearing any preacher* that came along. There was a Mr. Hiter, *a Baptist preacher*, that used to preach occasionally at the

Charlottesville Courthouse. He had no regular church but was *a kind of missionary – rode all over the country and preached*. He wasn't much of a preacher, was uneducated, but he was a good man. Everybody had confidence in him, and they went to hear him on that account. Mr. Jefferson's nephews Peter Carr, Sam Carr, and Dabney Carr thought a great deal of him. I have often heard them talk about him. *Mr. Jefferson nearly always went to hear him* when he came around. I remember his being there one day in particular. His servant came with him and brought a seat – a kind of campstool – upon which he sat. *After the sermon* there was a proposition to pass around the hat and *raise money to buy the preacher a horse. Mr. Jefferson did not wait for the hat*. I saw him unbutton his overalls, and get his hand into his pocket, and *take out a handful of silver*, I don't know how much. *He then walked across the Courthouse to Mr. Hiter and gave it into his hand*. He bowed very politely to Mr. Jefferson and seemed to be very much pleased..." (Author's bold italics).

## 10. Was Thomas Jefferson a Unitarian?

In conducting research for my book, *The Rewriting of America's History* (© 1991) I consulted the *Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* files compiled on "*The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*." A letter from the Assistant Director of Research of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, addressed to Miss Elizabeth B. Seegar, a resident of Virginia, responds in the negative to this question,

"Dear Miss Seegar,

Your letter inquiring about the *religious beliefs of Thomas Jefferson* has been referred to our Research Department for an answer. You raise a very interesting question, but also a very difficult one. Not even scholars who have devoted years to Jefferson's life and thought have been able to answer it with complete satisfaction. If one is thinking only of his membership in an organized religious body, the question is not so difficult. He was a member of the Church of England during the colonial period and subsequently, of the Episcopal Church. As late as 1785, he served as a vestryman. *On the other hand, he cannot have been formally a Unitarian, since Unitarians did not yet exist as an organized body in Virginia*. The real problem arises in establishing his religious beliefs and the degree to which they conformed to orthodox Christian doctrine. Except for a period of youthful doubt, he could certainly be termed a profoundly religious man." (Author's bold italics).

## 11. What were Thomas Jefferson's views on Sodomy?

Interestingly enough, Jefferson, in his *Notes on Virginia*, elaborates upon the important issue of maintaining and sustaining peace within the nation, through the just punishment of criminal offenses. They comprise three categories, in Jefferson's own handwriting – *Sodomy* being listed in the second:

"*The Revised Code* further proposes to proportion crimes and punishments. This is attempted on the following scale:

- I. Crimes whose punishment extends to Life
  - 1) High Treason
  - 2) Petty Treason
  - 3) Murder
  - 4) Manslaughter
- II. Crimes whose punishment goes to Limb
  - 1) Rape
  - 2) **Sodomy - Dismemberment**
  - 3) Maiming
  - 4) Disfiguring
- III. Crimes punishable by Labour
  - 1) Manslaughter, first offense.
  - 2) Counterfeiting money.
  - 3) Arson
  - 4) Asportation of vessels
  - 5) Robbery
  - 6) Burglary
  - 7) Housebreaking
  - 8) Horse-stealing
  - 9) Grand Larceny
  - 10) Petty Larceny
  - 11) Pretensions to witchcraft, etc. – Ducking – stripes.
  - 12) Excusable homicide
  - 13) Suicide
  - 14) Apostasy. Heresy. - To be pitied, not punished.”

(Source: *Notes on the State of Virginia*, written in the year 1781, somewhat corrected and enlarged in the winter of 1782, for the use of a foreigner of distinction, in answer to certain queries proposed by him. MDCCLXXXII. Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection). (Author's bold italics).

**12. In his Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that “all men are created equal.” However, the institution of Slavery existed in the thirteen *British American Colonies* at that time. Is he not contradicting himself?**

In Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*, one of the main grievances against Great Britain and British Law, to which the American colonists were subjugated, was the issue of Slavery. It is the **28<sup>th</sup> clause**, or grievance against the King of England then ruling his British American Colonies, found in Thomas Jefferson's *Autobiography*, as well as in the *original* hand-written draught of his *Declaration of Independence*, as follows:

*He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation hither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of INFIDEL powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative*

*for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another.*

Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* clearly *denounces the institution of Slavery enforced by the British King, ruling his British American Colonies* – stating that King George III “has violated the most sacred rights of life and liberty” belonging to human beings, and that he has “suppressed every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce.” In his original *hand-written Declaration of Independence*, now housed in the Library of Congress, Rare Manuscript Division, the words INFIDEL, CHRISTIAN, LIBERTIES and LIVES are capitalized by Jefferson. From the above, we understand that Jefferson meant exactly what he wrote, “*that all men are created equal.*”

It is unfortunate that Congress struck out the 28<sup>th</sup> *Clause*, as two dissenting States, Georgia and South Carolina, would have dropped out of the thirteen original States.

*Thomas Jefferson*, like other *Signers of the Declaration of Independence*, was born into the institution of Slavery which had been unhappily introduced in 1619 to these British American Colonies by Great Britain. The first Dutch-Man-of-War ship sent from England to West Africa, brought slaves – sold by their own chieftains - to Virginia.

Preceding his Declaration of Independence, signed on the 4th July, 1776, Jefferson gave a riveting anti-slavery speech in his famous 1774 *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (set forth in some Resolutions intended for the inspection of the present Delegates of the people of Virginia, now in Convention) in the House of Burgesses, Williamsburg. It outlines the grievances of the American colonists against Great Britain, as excerpted below:

*“...The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those colonies, where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, It is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa; yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to a prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his majesty's negative: Thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few African corfairs (slaves) to the lasting interests of the American states, and to the rights of human nature deeply wounded by this infamous practice...”*

After the *Declaration of Independence*, Jefferson was free to initiate a bill in Congress, which he did in 1779, proposing an initial attempt to deal with the slavery issue. In his *Autobiography*, we read the following account of it:

*“The bill on the subject of slaves was a mere digest of the existing laws respecting them, without any intimation of the plan for a future and general emancipation. It was thought better that this should be kept back, and attempted only by way of amendment, however the bill should be brought on. The principles of the amendment however were agreed on, that is to say, the freedom of all born after a certain day, and deportation at a proper age. But it was found that the public mind would not yet bear the proposition, nor will it bear it even at this day. Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and adopt it, or worse will follow...”*

**Jefferson** could foresee the tremendous evil that would befall this country if the young nation did not eradicate this “*infamous practice*,” which had “*deeply wounded*” *human beings*. He said that “commerce between master and slave is despotism,” and gave this warning, related in his *Autobiography*:

“It is still in our power to direct the *process of emancipation* and deportation peaceably and in such slow degree as *that the evil will wear off insensibly and their place be pari passu (slowly but surely) filled with white laborers*. If on the contrary it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up...*Commerce between master and slave is despotism.*”

Unfortunately, *Jefferson’s admonitions as to what would befall this nation if the slavery issue was not fully resolved*, became the reality of a tragic civil war within a century. Abraham Lincoln was God’s instrument, raised up to totally eradicate this great moral evil from American soil. This he did with his Emancipation Proclamation, an immortal document, setting the slaves free on a permanent basis in 1863. (Source: Library of Congress, Rare Manuscript Division). (Author’s bold italics).

### **An Historical Account of the Institution of Slavery**

*Ancient Slavery* was recognized as a feature of early civilizations. *The Chaldeans, Egyptians, Hindus, Japanese, Greeks, Romans and Celts owned slaves*. The great development of the African slave trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century put an end to the slave traffic in white persons.

*As early as 1760* the Quakers in Pennsylvania objected to slaveholding and trading. In 1774 an abolition society was formed in Pennsylvania. One of the most notable accomplishments in the life of founding father **Benjamin Franklin** was his work against slavery. *He organized and became President of the world’s first anti-slavery society, the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. He wrote the first remonstrance against slavery*, which was presented to the Congress of the United States. Within a few years, similar societies were in existence in other parts of America. These societies looked toward the gradual emancipation of the slaves, with compensation to the masters; and their activities aroused no hostility, even among the slaveholders. A popular plan of the early *Abolitionists* was the colonization of freed slaves in Africa; and in 1821, under **U.S. President James Monroe**, a colony of liberated slaves was started in Cape Mesurado, Africa. This grew in numbers, and in 1847, it declared itself an independent republic under the name of *Liberia*.

In 1782, a movement was started in England by *Thomas Clarkson* and *William Wilberforce* for the *abolition of the slave trade*. In 1792 a motion was passed in the House of Commons for the gradual abolition of the slave trade. In 1805 slave trade with new colonies was forbidden, and two years later the General Abolition Bill was extended to all British colonies.

From the above historical account, we understand that in 1774, *Thomas Jefferson* and *Benjamin Franklin*, founding fathers of this “*Republic under God*” preceded *William Wilberforce’s* 1782 anti-slavery movement in England; with their stand against, and attempts to abolish slavery. (Author’s bold italics).

**13. I have heard that Thomas Jefferson designed the first Seal of the United States, and that he placed two false gods on the Obverse Side of the Seal. Is this true?**

According to the original *Department of State, Washington, D.C.* records, the history of the first Seal of the United States is as follows:

“Late in the afternoon of July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress ‘*Resolved*, that *Dr. Franklin, Mr. J. Adams and Mr. Jefferson* be a committee to prepare a device for a Seal of the United States of America.’ (Journals of the Continental Congress)...The committee to design the arms of the new nation had no national precedent to follow, for the arms of a kingdom are nearly always those of the sovereign or his family, and the new Republic could accept no individual’s arms. The several colonies, however, each had a seal, and these, as they were generally significant and simple, would have been a fair guide to the exigencies of a national seal...

***Franklin’s note reads:***

Moses standing on the Shore, and extending his Hand over the Sea, thereby causing the same to overwhelm Pharoah who is sitting in an open Chariot, a Crown on his Head and a Sword in his Hand. rays from a Pillar of Fire in the Clouds reaching to Moses to express that he acts by Command of the Deity.

Motto, ***Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God.***

***Jefferson’s note says:***

Pharoah sitting in an open chariot, a crown on his head and a sword in his hand passing thro’ the divided waters of the Red Sea in pursuit of the Israelites: rays from a pillar of fire in the cloud, expressive of the Divine presence and command, reaching to Moses who stands on the shore and, extending his hand over the sea, causes it to overwhelm Pharoah.

Motto, ***Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.***

(Journals of the Continental Congress).

Franklin suggested the motto, ***Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God***, which was incorporated in the proposed **Reverse of the Seal** around Franklin and Jefferson’s descriptive design. It so much pleased *Jefferson* that he took it as his own motto, and had it cut upon his private Seal.”

The Committee (*Franklin, Jefferson and Adams*) called into consultation Eugene Pierre Du Simitiere, a West Indian Frenchman, noted artist and author, living in Philadelphia, to draw the Seal. Du Simitiere’s description of the **Obverse of the Seal**, was, Right, ‘*Liberty in a corslet of armour (alluding to the present times) holding in her right hand the Spear and Cap, resting with her left on an anchor, emblem of Hope.* Left, ‘*An American Soldier, completely accoutered in his hunting shirt and trousers, with his tomahawk, powder horn, pouch, etc, holding with his left hand his rifle gun rested, and the Shield of the States with his right.*’ (‘*Justice bearing a Sword in her right hand, and in her left a Balance, was substituted for the American Soldier.*’)

**Crest**, ‘The Eye of Providence in a radiant triangle whose Glory extends over the Shield and beyond the figures.’ ‘It was probably suggested by Du Simitiere himself, since Adams does not mention it as having been proposed by any member of the committee.’

In the center, **Obverse of the Seal**: Within the shield are thirteen scutcheons with initial letters sable as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> N.H. 2<sup>nd</sup> M.B. 3<sup>rd</sup> R.I. 4<sup>th</sup> C. 5<sup>th</sup> N.Y. 6<sup>th</sup> N.J. 7<sup>th</sup> P. 8<sup>th</sup> D.C.\* 9<sup>th</sup> M. 10<sup>th</sup> V. 11<sup>th</sup> N.C. 12<sup>th</sup> S.C. 13<sup>th</sup> G. for each of the thirteen independent States of America.

\* Delaware Counties. ‘E Pluribus Unum’ appears on a banner, under Liberty and Justice. (Source: Library of Congress, Rare Manuscript Division). (Author’s bold Italics).



Reverse

[Drawing by Benson J. Lossing from the description]



Obverse

[The pencil sketch by Du Simitiere, found in the Jefferson Papers]

THE FIRST DESIGN

**14. In November, 1998, the American media reported that Thomas Jefferson had fathered a child by Sally Hemings. What evidence do they present to prove this?**

From *Accuracy in Media* came this report entitled, *In Defense of Jefferson*. It reads,

“*Nature magazine* omitted facts when it claimed in its November issue that scientific evidence proved that President Thomas Jefferson fathered a child by his slave Sally Hemings. Reed Irvine, chairman of *Accuracy in Media*, reports that the January issue of *Nature* will admit that the Magazine did not tell the whole story.

The scientific Journal will print a letter from one of the study’s authors that says that genetic evidence shows that Jefferson was only one of many Jefferson men (25 of whom lived in the Monticello area) who could have fathered Sally’s son Eston. (*The most likely candidate, according to historian Herbert Barger, is Jefferson’s younger brother Randolph, a widower who often visited Monticello and was known to dance and play the fiddle with the slaves.*) It remains to be seen whether the media and the numerous liberal historians who trumpeted the claims of Jefferson’s paternity will follow Nature’s lead in acknowledging reasonable doubt.”

(Author's note: Both *Nature* magazine and *Science* magazine published articles in their January, 1999 editions, quoting foremost DNA experts worldwide, who validated the lack of evidence, pointing to *Randolph Jefferson* as the most likely candidate. However, the American media *chose to ignore their facts.*) (Author's bold italics).

## 15. Who was Randolph Jefferson?

In the Library of Congress' Rare Book Collection is the printed manuscript of Charles W. Campbell, of the University of Virginia, who recorded *Isaac's Recollections of Monticello* in 1847, in Petersburg, Virginia, where he found Isaac living in quiet retirement after his many years of service to *Thomas Jefferson*. The popular edition regularized many of the eccentricities of spelling and capitalization but retained always the original touches which reflected directly Isaac's own pronunciation and his habits of speech. In his candid terms we read his account of *Randolph Jefferson*:

"Old Master's brother, *Mass Randall*, was a mighty simple man: used to come out among black people, play the fiddle and dance half the night; hadn't much more sense than Isaac."

Isaac speaks of *Thomas Jefferson* in these terms,

"*Mr. Jefferson bowed* to everybody he meet; talked wid his arms folded. Gave the boys in the nail factory a pound of meat a week, a dozen herrings, a quart of molasses, and peck of meal. Give them that wukked the best a suit of red or blue; encouraged them mightily. Isaac calls him a mighty good master."

"*Randolph Jefferson*, the little-known, only brother of *Thomas Jefferson*, is better known by all the letters (28) known to have been exchanged between the two in the years 1807 and 1815, and give a fairly complete picture of the relations which existed between Thomas and his brother and neighbor, whose plantation of Snowden was but twenty miles from Monticello. These letters, in the Carr-Cary Papers, reveal the striking intellectual disparity between the Sage of Monticello and the Squire of Snowden. From an early day *Thomas Jefferson* was of course well aware of his brother's limitations, as is indicated by his letter dated January 11, 1789 from Paris: 'The occurrences of this part of the globe are of a nature to interest you so little that I have never made them the subject of a letter to you...I have not the less continued to entertain for you the same sincere affection, and same wishes for your health and that of your family, and almost an envy of your quiet and retirement.' These letters are evidence not only that *the interests, tastes, grammar and spelling* of Thomas Jefferson's only *brother were decidedly those of an earth-bound farmer*, but that Thomas Jefferson's relations with his brother were ever characterized by an affectionate solicitude." So writes the Editor of these revealing letters, two of which follow,

*Randolph Jefferson* to *Thomas Jefferson*, July 9, 1807:

Addressed: Mr. Thomas Jefferson  
pr son Lewis Monticello  
To the Care of mr. Dinsmore

Dear Brother

I should of wrote to you on this business before but wished to be certain in seeing whether I could procure the quantity of seed that I agreed with the nigroes for which was a bushel of Green soard and as much of White Clover they are now delivering that quantity at Eight shillings pr Gallon I think the price high at that but I asure you that it was not in My power to git it cheaper if Convenient be pleased to inclose to Me as Much Money as will pay them of for there seed and send the letter on to warren Where I Can receive it in any short time and you Will Very Much oblige your. –

Most affectionately.-  
Rh; Jefferson  
July 9<sup>th</sup> 07

P S

Be so good as to let Mr. Randolph know if he Wants to perchase either of those kinds of seed it Will be in My power to oblige him if he will write me immidiatily.-

***Randolph Jefferson to Thomas Jefferson, July 11, 1813:***

July 11 1813

Dear brother

I have sent the girl by Squire and hope she Will answer to learn and should of sent her before but we have bin so very busy a bout my Wheat that I could Not spare a hand out of the field to bring her & Would be Very Much oblige to you to put her under one of the grone hands to keep her in good order I suppose We May send for her in three or four Weaks I would be glad you Would let us know Whether you can come by We are all Well heare My Wife Joins Me in love to the family I am Dr brother

Your Most affectionately...-  
Rh Jefferson

The above recorded description of ***Randolph Jefferson*** given by Isaac, a faithful servant of ***Thomas Jefferson*** for many years at Monticello; together with the above-quoted original letters of Randolph Jefferson to his illustrious and brilliant brother, give a fairly accurate picture of the little-known brother of Thomas Jefferson, who “***played the fiddle and danced half the night***” ***with the slaves at Monticello***. (Author’s bold italics).

**16. What do you know of Thomas Jefferson’s Family life at Monticello? What kind of a husband, father and grandfather was he?**

From ***The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson***, dated January 6, 1821, we read,

“On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1772, I was married to ***Martha Skelton***, widow of Bathurst Skelton, and daughter of John Wayles, then twenty-three years old. Mr. Wayles was a lawyer of much practice, to which he was introduced more by his great industry, punctuality, and practical readiness, than by eminence in science of his profession. He was a most agreeable companion, full of pleasantry and good humor, and welcomed in every society... ***(My wife was) the cherished companion of my life, in whose affections, unabated on both sides, I...lived...ten years in unchequered happiness.***”

From Monticello, on May 20, 1782, Jefferson writes to James Monroe,

“*Mrs. Jefferson* has added (May 8, 1782) another daughter to our family. She has been ever since and still continues very dangerously ill.”

From Paris, on January 17, 1787, Jefferson writes these lines to Elizabeth Thompson,

“My history... would have been as happy a one as I could have asked could the objects of my affection have been immortal. But all the favors of fortune have been embittered by domestic losses. Of six children I have lost four, and finally their mother (*Mrs. Jefferson died September 6, 1782*).

Inscribed in Jefferson’s *Prayer Book* is the following account,

*My children: births, and deaths*

*Martha Jefferson* was born September 27, 1772, at 1 o’clock A.M.

*Jane Randolph Jefferson*, born April 3, 1774, at 11 o’clock A.M.

She died September \_\_\_\_\_, 1775.

*A son*, born May 28, 1777, at 10 o’clock P.M. Died June 14, at 10 o’clock and 20 minutes P.M.

*Mary Jefferson*, born August 1, 1778, at 1 o’clock and 30 minutes A.M.

Died April 17, 1804, between 8 and 9 A.M.

*A daughter*, born in Richmond, November 3, 1780, at 10 o’clock and 45 Minutes P.M. Died April 15, 1781, at 10 o’clock A.M.

*Lucy Elizabeth Jefferson*, born May 8, 1782, at 1 o’clock A.M.

Died \_\_\_\_\_, 1784.

The death of his beloved wife dealt a crushing blow to Jefferson. His letter to Jean Francois, Chevalier de Chastellux dated November 26, 1782 expresses his deep grief,

“Your friendly letters found me a little emerging from the stupor of mind which had *rendered me as dead to the world as she was whose loss occasioned it*. Your letter recalled to my memory that there were persons still living of much value to me. If you should have thought me remiss...you will, I am sure, ascribe it to its true cause, the state of dreadful suspense in which I had been kept all the summer, and the catastrophe which closed it. Before that event my scheme of life had been determined. I had...rested all prospects of future happiness on domestic and literary objects. *A single event wiped away all my plans, and left me a blank which I had not the spirits to fill up.*”

Years later, *his eldest daughter, Martha*, described his unconsolable grief. *At his wife’s death, Jefferson fainted, and the family feared they would not be able to revive him*. The following three weeks, he kept to his room, pacing the floor incessantly, night and day. When he finally left his house, it was to take long horseback rides in solitude.

*Jefferson had been bereft of four of his six children*, leaving two daughters, *Martha* and *Mary*. Shortly after his wife’s death, he sent *Martha* to school in Philadelphia. He began writing on a continuous basis to his two motherless daughters, Martha, who resembled him, and Mary, who looked like his wife. They became, from henceforth, the center of his affections and happiness.

From Annapolis, *Jefferson* writes to *his daughter Martha* the following affectionate and instructive letter dated November 28, 1783,

“The conviction that you would be more improved in the situation I have placed you than if still with me, has solaced me on my parting with you, which *my love for you has rendered a difficult thing*. The acquirements which I hope you will make under the tutors I have provided for you will render you more worthy of my love; and if they cannot increase it, they will prevent its diminution. Consider the good lady who has taken you under her roof...as your mother, as the only person to whom, *since the loss with which Heaven has pleased to afflict you*, you can now look up; and that her displeasure or disapprobation, on any occasion, will be an immense misfortune, which, should you be so unhappy as to incur by any unguarded act, think no concession too much to regain her good-will.

With respect to the distribution of your time, the following is what I should approve:

From 8 to 10, practice music.

From 10 to 1, dance one day and draw another.

From 1 to 2, draw on the day you dance, and write a letter next day.

From 3 to 4, read French.

From 4 to 5, exercise yourself in music.

From 5 till bedtime, read English, write, etc....

*I expect you will write me by every post*. Inform me what books you read, what tunes you learn, and *enclose me your best copy of every lesson in drawing*...Take care that you never spell a word wrong. Always before you write a word consider how it is spelt, and, if you do not remember it, turn to a dictionary. It produces great praise to a lady to spell well.

*I have placed my happiness on seeing you good and accomplished*, and no distress this world can now bring on me would equal that of your disappointing my hopes. If you love me, then strive to be good under every situation and to all living creatures, and to acquire those accomplishments which I have put in your power, and which will go far towards insuring you the *warmest love of your affectionate father.*”

And again, from Annapolis on December 22, 1783, *Jefferson* writes these words of wisdom to *his daughter, Martha*,

I omitted, dear *Martha*, to advise you *on the subject of dress*...I do not wish you to be gaily clothed at this time of life (11 years old), but that what you wear should be fine of its kind. But above all things, and at all times, let your clothes be clean, whole, and properly put on...Nothing is so disgusting to our sex as a want of cleanliness and delicacy in yours. I hope, therefore, the moment you rise from bed your first work will be to dress yourself in such style as that you may be seen by any gentleman without his being able to discover a pin amiss or any other circumstance of neatness wanting.”

And again, this time from Aix-en-Provence, on March 28, 1787, *Jefferson* responds to *Martha* thus,

“You ask me to write you long letters. I will do it, my *dear Martha*, on condition *you will read them from time to time, and practice what they inculcate*. Their precepts will be dictated by experience, by a perfect knowledge of the situation in which you will be placed and by *the fondest love for you*. This it is which makes me wish to see you more

qualified than common. My expectations from you are high, yet not higher than you may attain. ***Industry and resolution are all that are wanting.*** Nobody in this world can make me so happy, or so miserable, as you...***To your sister Mary and yourself I look to render the evening of my life serene and contented. Its morning has been clouded by loss after loss, till I have nothing left but you.***”

In *The First Forty Years of Washington Society*, we read an intimate account of Thomas Jefferson’s family life, from Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith’s visit to Monticello:

“Monticello, August 1<sup>st</sup> 1809

...Before we reached he house, we met ***Mr. Jefferson*** on horseback, he had just returned from his morning ride, and when, on approaching, he recognized us, he received us with ***one of those benignant smiles, and cordial tones of voice that convey an undoubted welcome to the heart.*** He dismounted and assisted me from the carriage, led us to the hall thro’ a noble portico, where he again bade us welcome. I was so struck with the appearance of this Hall, that I lingered to look around, but he led me forward, smiling as he said, ‘You shall look bye and bye, but you must now rest.’ Leading me to a sofa in the drawing room as singular and beautiful as the Hall, he rang and sent word to ***Mrs. Randolph (Mrs. Martha Jefferson Randolph, his daughter)*** that we were there, and then ordered some refreshments. ‘We have quite a sick family,’ said he; ***‘My daughter*** has been confined to the sick bed of her little son; my grand-daughter has lost her’s and still keeps to her room and several of the younger children are indisposed. For a fortnight ***Mr. and Mrs. Randolph*** have sat up every night, until they are almost worn out.’ This information clouded my satisfaction and cast a gloom over our visit, - but ***Mrs. Randolph soon entered, and with a smiling face, most affectionately welcomed us. Her kind and cheerful manners*** soon dispersed my gloom and after a little chat, I begged her not to let me detain her from her nursery, but to allow me to follow her to it; she assented and I sat with her until dinner time...At 5 o’clock the bell summoned us to dinner...***They are 12 in family, and as Mr. Jefferson sat in the midst of his children and grand-children,*** I looked on him with emotions of tenderness and respect. The table was plainly, but genteely and plentifully spread...We sat till near sun down at the table, where the desert was succeeded by agreeable and instructive conversation, in which everyone seemed to wish and expect ***Mr. Jefferson*** to take the chief part...during the 4 days I spent there these were the most social hours...

I spent the interval in walking with Mr. Smith round the lawn and grave, and had just parted from him to join the children to whom I had promised another story, when as I passed the terrace, ***Mr. Jefferson*** came out the joined us. The children ran to him and immediately proposed a race; we seated ourselves on the steps of the Portico, and he, after placing the children according to their size one before the other, gave the word for starting, and away they flew; the course round this back lawn was a quarter of a mile, the little girls were much tired by the time they returned to the spot from which they started and came panting and out of breath ***to throw themselves into their grandfather’s arms, which were opened to receive them; he pressed them to his bosom and rewarded them with a kiss; he was sitting on the grass and they sat down by him,*** until they were rested; then they again wished to set off, he thought it too long a course for little Mary and proposed running on the terrace. Thither we went, and seating ourselves at one end, they ran from us to the pavilion and back again; ‘What an amusement,’ said I, do these little creatures afford us.’ ‘Yes,’ replied he, ‘it is only with them that a grave man can play the fool.’ ***They now called on him to run with them, he did not long resist and seemed delighted in delighting them. Oh ye whose envenomed calumny has painted him as the slave of the vilest passions, come here and contemplate this scene! The simplicity, the gaiety, the modesty and gentleness of a child, united to all that is great and venerable in the human character. His life is the best refutation***

*of the calumnies that have been heaped upon him and it seems to me impossible, for anyone personally to know him and remain his enemy...* The mornings and evenings are here always cool and indeed *Mrs. Randolph* says it is never hot...

As it was the last evening we were to pass here, Mr. Jefferson sat longer than usual after tea. All the family except *Mrs. Randolph* were at tea. I gazed upon *Mr. Jefferson* in the midst of this interesting circle and thought of the following lines, which I copied from one of his letters,

‘When I look to the ineffable pleasures of my family society, I become more and more disgusted with the jealousies, the hatred, the rancorous and malignant passions of this scene, and lament my having ever again been drawn into public view. Tranquility is now my object; I have seen enough of political honors, to know they are but splendid torments; and however one might be disposed to render services on which many of fellow citizens might set a value, yet when as many would deprecate them as a public calamity, one may well entertain a modest doubt of their real importance and feel the impulse of duty to be very weak,’

and again, in another of a later date, 1797, he says,

‘Worn down here with pursuits in which I take no delight, *surrounded by enemies and spies, catching and perverting every word which falls from my lips, or flows from my pen, and inventing where facts fail them*, I pant for that society, where all is peace and harmony, where we love are beloved by every object we see. And to have that intercourse of soft affections, hushed and suppressed by the eternal presence of strangers, goes very hard indeed, and the harder when we see that the candle of life is burning out and the pleasures we lose are lost forever. I long to see the time approach when I can be returning to you, tho’ it be for a short time only – these are the only times existence is of any value to me, *continue then to love me, my ever dear daughter, and to be assured, that to yourself, and your sister and those dear to you, everything in my life is directed*, ambition has no hold upon me but through you, *my personal affections would fix me forever with you. Kiss the dear little objects of our mutual love,*” etc. etc.’

By these dear objects, I saw him now surrounded. I saw him in the scenes for which his heart had panted, at the time when others looked upon his elevated station with envy, and did not know that these honors which his country lavished on him and which they envied, were splendid torments to his unambitious spirit and affectionate heart...

Wednesday morning. *Mrs. Randolph* was not able to come down to breakfast, and I felt too sad to join in the conversation. I looked on every object around me, all was examined with that attention a last look inspires; the breakfast ended, our carriage was at the door, and I rose to bid farewell to this interesting family. *Mrs. Randolph* came down to spend the last minutes with us, as I stood for a moment in the Hall, *Mr. Jefferson* approached and in the most cordial manner urged me to make another visit the ensuing summer, I told him *with a voice almost choked with*

*tears, 'that I had no hope of such a pleasure – this,' said I, raising my eyes to him, 'is the last time I fear in his world at least, that I shall ever see you – But there is another world.'* I felt so affected by the idea of this last sight of *this good and great man*, that I turned away and hastily repeating my farewell to the family, *gave him my hand, he pressed it affectionately as he put me in the carriage saying, 'God bless you, dear madam. God bless you.'* *'And God bless you,' said I, from the very bottom of my heart.*

*Yes, he is truly a good man, and eminently a great one. Then there is a tranquility about him, which an inward peace could alone bestow...His actions, not his words, preach the emptiness and dissatisfaction attendant on a great office...his manners, - how gentle, how humble, how kind...His face owes all its charm to its expression and intelligence;...his countenance is so full of soul and beams with such benignity...His low and mild voice harmonizes with his countenance...*" (Author's bold italics).

**17. When did Thomas Jefferson die?  
What were his last words?**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 1826, *Jefferson lay a Monticello* dying. Although his doctor had pronounced that he could not live through the night, *Jefferson prayed* that he might survive to celebrate the *Jubilee of the Declaration of Independence*. Miraculously, he lived on until the 4<sup>th</sup> July, his last words to his family and friends being, "I have done for my country, and for all mankind all that I could do, and now I resign my soul, without fear, to my God, my daughter, to my country." And then he uttered distinctly two times like Simeon of old, "*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*" (Luke 2:29).

That Thomas Jefferson should leave this world at the very hour and day of the great Jubilee celebrating America's freedoms – at ten minutes to one o'clock, the time when the Declaration of Independence had received its final reading – showed *the Hand of God* so clearly evidenced in the affairs of this nation. While America marveled at what a historian called a "*Divine Conspiracy of Circumstances*," Jefferson's intimate friend, *John Adams*, himself champion of the Declaration of Independence on the floor of Congress, left this world five short hours later. His last words were "*Independence forever*," and "*Jefferson survives*."

A noted historian of that day tells us that "Heaven itself mingled visibly in the Jubilee celebration of American liberty, hallowing anew this day by a double apotheosis."

And let it be so.

(Excerpted from, *Signers of the Declaration of Independence*, © 2012 by Dr. Catherine Millard).

-----