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BOOKS

The Political Writings of
THOMAS JEFFERSON
Representative Selections

Edited with an Introduction by
EDWARD DUMBAULD

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INTRODUCTION

I. JEFFERSON'S POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

An intelligent understanding of American traditions and institutions is more important today in the light of world events than ever before. Indispensable in that connection is a thorough knowledge of Thomas Jefferson's political philosophy and his impact upon American life during its formative years. If there is any unique or distinctively significant contribution which America has made or can make to modern civilization, it is Jeffersonian democracy. Jefferson gave to America what America is giving to the world. His achievements as a foremost figure in the nation's public life and as spokesman of "the American mind"¹ overshadow his accomplishments in other fields. Yet little of all that has been written about the varied aspects of his many-sided genius has concerned itself specifically with Jefferson's political principles. Hitherto no convenient volume has brought together the strands of his thought on this vital topic.

The central feature of Jefferson's political creed was his concern for human freedom. He constantly proclaimed "the happy truth that man is capable of self-government." A succinct summary of his beliefs was embodied in his statement: "I have sworn on the altar of God eternal hostility to every form of tyranny over the mind of man."²

He epitomized the true significance of his life when he chose to be remembered on his tombstone as "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia."³ It was

¹To Henry Lee, May 8, 1825. Paul L. Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1904), XII, 409.

²To François de Marbois, June 14, 1817, Andrew A. Lipscomb and A. Ellery Bergh, eds., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, 1903), XV, 130; to Benjamin Rush, September 3, 1800, *Works*, IX, 148.

³*Works*, XII, 483.

characteristic of his thinking that he enumerated as most important among the events of his career not his incumbency of high offices of state where he wielded power over his fellow men, but his contributions to the cause of liberty. He believed that mankind should be free; that human conduct should be guided and governed by reason, not by arbitrary authority or tyrannical mandates of rulers; and that the purpose of government was to protect the safety and happiness of the people by guaranteeing their God-given natural rights. To be subject to a government of unlimited powers he regarded as the greatest of political evils.⁴ Throughout his life he remained true to this political faith which had animated the American Revolution and which received its noblest formulation at his hands in the Declaration of Independence. That document gave to the world not only a deathless presentation of Jefferson's own political opinions but a true "expression of the American mind."

The tradition of freedom to which it gave voice has never lost its vitality. It is an imperishable feature of America's national heritage. That this is so is largely due to Jefferson. It was not inevitable that upon liberation from English domination America should become a self-governing republic. There might have been established one or more new monarchies. Nor did the achievement of federal union and the avoidance of schism among the States necessarily mean that the national government would be a democratic polity. The fact that a single government (whether federal or consolidated) is established within a particular area instead of a multitude of separate sovereignties does not inevitably necessitate that the political structure so erected will be based on the consent of the governed. Self-government is not guaranteed by having a single government within a country, as many nations in modern Europe to their sorrow can testify. The United States might have had an autocratic or tyrannical national government, as other peoples have been obliged to endure, if it had not been

⁴Edward Dumbauld, *The Declaration of Independence and What It Means Today* (Norman, 1950), p. 48; to Gilbert Merritt, July 10, 1821. W. C. Ford, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Correspondence Printed from the Originals in the Collections of William K. Bixby* (New York, 1916), p. 261.

for Jefferson's influence on American life. Thanks to his tenure of public office, citizens of the United States could declare, "We are all federalists, we are all republicans," and could adopt as their slogan "federal union and republican government."⁵ So, too, in the struggle of competing ideologies today for control of the modern world, it is certain that if American policies, based on the tradition of Jefferson, prevail, whatever regime for the government of international affairs is established will recognize the right of mankind to be free.

World government must be self-government if the insistent voice of Jefferson and America is heeded. And that voice can never be silenced, for it proclaims the indubitable aspirations of human nature itself. In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, its author sent forth from his Virginia mountainside these ringing final words: "May it be to the world what I believe it will be (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the signal . . . to assume the blessings and security of self-government. . . . All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them."⁶

II. JEFFERSON'S LIFE

Born on April 13, 1743, at Shadwell, in what is now Albemarle County, Virginia, Jefferson was "a typical American of his region and generation. . . . Living among planters and frontiersmen who knew and controlled their own lives with an easy mastery,

⁵ *Works*, I, 182; Dumbauld, *The Declaration of Independence and What It Means Today*, p. 28.

⁶ To Roger C. Weightman, June 24, 1826. *Works*, XII, 477 (Cf. p. 9.).

he believed in the capacity of the free people of the whole country to see their own interests and pursue them as his own neighbors about him did.”¹ From March 25, 1760, to April 25, 1762, he was enrolled in William and Mary College. At the conclusion of his formal schooling he continued to live in the brilliant colonial capital of Williamsburg for the next nineteen years, as a law student and lawmaker. His preceptor in the legal profession was the learned and distinguished George Wythe. Jefferson was admitted to the bar in 1767 and practiced his profession until the courts were closed at the outbreak of the American Revolution. In 1769 he was elected for his first term as a legislator. He continued to serve in the Virginia House of Burgesses until that body ceased to function in 1775. Prevented by illness from participating in the first Virginia Convention in 1774, he forwarded for perusal by its members his *Summary View of the Rights of British America*, which impressed contemporary statesmen so strongly that it was published in Williamsburg as a pamphlet.

Jefferson attended the second Virginia Convention at Richmond in 1775. He was chosen as a delegate of the Old Dominion to the second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, where he took his seat on June 21, 1775. The young Virginian had previously visited the Quaker metropolis in 1766 in order to be inoculated for smallpox by the celebrated Doctor Shippen. In 1776 Jefferson won lasting renown as author of the Declaration of Independence. In the fall of that year he left Congress and returned to Virginia, where he entered the House of Delegates.

He had hoped to be recalled to take part in framing the first Constitution of Virginia. “Should our Convention propose to establish now a form of government, perhaps it might be agreeable to recall for a short time their delegates. It is a work of the most interesting nature and such as every individual would wish to have his voice in. In truth it is the whole object of the present controversy; for, should a bad government be instituted for us in future, it had been as well to have accepted at first the bad

¹Woodrow Wilson, “The Spirit of Jefferson,” *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, VI (1906), 551f.

one offered to us from beyond the water without the risk and expense of contest.”² From Philadelphia he did forward a draft for a proposed constitution. Of this the preamble was accepted and prefixed to the declaration of rights and frame of government which were chiefly the work of George Mason.³ Jefferson believed that the instrument so adopted was not really a “constitution,” because it had been enacted by the ordinary legislature instead of by a constitutional convention. Only an assembly upon which the people had specially conferred “a power superior to that of the ordinary legislature” could create a basic or fundamental law binding upon all branches of the government and unalterable by them.⁴ Anything less than this would not be a constitution.⁵

In the Virginia Assembly Jefferson pursued his memorable program of legislative reform, seeking to bring the law of that Commonwealth into conformity with republican principles and to eliminate those features which were the vestiges of English monarchical institutions. Jefferson was convinced that “our whole code must be reviewed, adapted to our republican form of government, and, now that we had no negatives of councils, governors and kings to restrain us from doing right, that it should be corrected, in all its parts, with a single eye to reason and the good of those for whose government it was framed.”⁶

The *Report of the Committee of Revisors*, printed in 1784, containing 126 bills, was largely the product of Jefferson's industry. From time to time, through Madison's efforts, some of these

² To Thomas Nelson, May 16, 1776. Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, 1950), I, 292.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 329-386.

⁴ *Ibid.*, VI, 295ff. Jefferson appended to his *Notes on Virginia* a proposed constitution of Virginia which he prepared in 1783 when there was talk of holding a convention. See also *ibid.*, VII, 293; and *Notes on Virginia*, Query XIII, *Works*, IV, 17ff.

⁵ The British Constitution, which can be changed by any act passed by Parliament, Jefferson regarded as “no constitution at all.” To A. Coray, October 31, 1823, *Writings*, XV, 488. Similarly, if the French king had power to “model the constitution at will,” it meant “that his government is a pure despotism.” To James Madison, July 31, 1788, *Writings*, VII, 96.

⁶ Paul L. Ford, ed., *Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1914), pp. 66f.

bills became law, especially the world-famous Act of Religious Freedom, passed in 1786. Two important measures enacted during Jefferson's service in the House of Delegates were the laws for abolition of primogeniture and entail. These statutes promoted equal distribution of property, instead of permitting the whole estate of a landholder to pass intact to his eldest son, and so on for generation after generation. These reforms, along with freedom of religion and diffusion of knowledge, he considered as forming a system by which every fiber would be eradicated of ancient or future aristocracy "and a foundation laid for a government truly republican."⁷

Not until late in Jefferson's life did he see his proposal for general education put into force. "A system of general instruction, which shall reach every description of our citizens, from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest."⁸ Convinced that "no nation is permitted to live in ignorance with impunity,"⁹ he vigorously proclaimed that: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, . . . it expects what never was and never will be."¹⁰ From Europe he exhorted his law teacher, George Wythe: "Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people."¹¹ To George Washington he wrote: "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."¹² Of the University of

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁸ To Joseph C. Cabell, January 14, 1818. In Roy J. Honeywell, *The Educational Work of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1931), p. 247.

⁹ Minutes of Board of Visitors of University of Virginia, November 29, 1821. *Writings*, XIX, 408.

¹⁰ To Charles Yancey, January 6, 1816. *Works*, XI, 497.

¹¹ To George Wythe, August 13, 1786. *Works*, V, 154. Cf. p. 65.

¹² To George Washington, January 4, 1786. *Writings*, XIX, 24. See also to Edward Carrington, January 16, 1787, *Works*, V, 252ff; and to William C. Jarvis, September 28, 1820, *Works*, XII, 163. Cf. to John Norvell, June 11, 1807. *Works*, X, 417f.

Virginia, established as the fruition of his lifelong efforts, he said: "This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it."¹³

On June 1, 1779, Jefferson was chosen as the second republican Governor of Virginia (succeeding Patrick Henry in that office) and retired from the House of Delegates. He served two one-year terms as chief executive, after which he held no public office until after his wife's death in 1782. He then accepted an appointment as envoy to the peace conference ending the Revolutionary War. But when news came that negotiations were already so far advanced that his attendance would not be required, he returned to his home. Shortly afterward, he was re-elected to Congress. He took his seat in that body on November 4, 1783, at Princeton, New Jersey. On May 7, 1784, he was chosen by Congress as a plenipotentiary, in conjunction with John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, to negotiate treaties of commerce with European nations. On July 5, 1784, he sailed for Europe, landing at Cowes on July 25, 1784. The following year Jefferson succeeded Franklin as minister to the French court. He remained abroad until 1789.¹⁴ On October 8, 1789, he "left Havre at half before one o'clock in the morning" and, after a delay at Cowes awaiting favorable winds, he sailed on the *Clermont* for Norfolk on October 23, 1789, arriving exactly a month later.

Jefferson had expected, after settling some personal affairs in America, to return to Paris; but found that President George Washington wished him to serve as first Secretary of State under the new Constitution. He resigned that office effective December 31, 1793, but returned to Philadelphia in 1797 as Vice-President. On March 4, 1801, he was sworn in as third President of the

¹³ To William Roscoe, December 27, 1820. *Writings*, XV, 303.

¹⁴ For an account of Jefferson's interesting experiences in Europe, though in large part unrelated to his political or diplomatic activities, see Edward Dumbauld, *Thomas Jefferson: American Tourist* (Norman, Okla., 1946), pp. 60-153.

United States. He served two terms, leaving the rustic capital of Washington on March 11, 1809, after the inauguration of his successor, James Madison. Thereafter he lived in retirement in Virginia, holding no public trust except as Rector of the University of Virginia, to the establishment of which Jefferson devoted his later years. During this period he was fond of saying that politics was a subject "which . . . I . . . leave to the generation which it concerns. They are to feel the good and evil of measures, and therefore have the right to direct them."¹⁵ Nevertheless, it was heartening to the aged statesman to learn that his tenets of republicanism were not being abandoned. "It is a comfort to me when I find the sound principles of the Revolution cherished and avowed by the rising generation."¹⁶

Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, as did John Adams. The passing of these two venerable patriarchs on the date marking a half century since the fruition of their labors for independence seemed to awaken throughout the land a deeper sense of national destiny. It was as if that solemn moment marked the end of childhood and the beginning of maturity for the rising young republic.¹⁷

III. JEFFERSON AND POLITICAL PARTIES

Though Jefferson repeatedly expressed his distaste for public life¹ and political partisanship,² the fact remains that it was as

¹⁵ To J. A. Bingham, July 2, 1822. Massachusetts Historical Society, Jefferson Papers. Cf. to James Monroe, January 28, 1809. *Works*, XI, 96.

¹⁶ To Leonard M. Parker, July 24, 1821. Massachusetts Historical Society, Jefferson Papers. Cf. to John Holmes, April 22, 1820. *Works*, XII, 159.

¹⁷ Lyman H. Butterfield, "The Jubilee of Independence," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, LXI (April, 1953), 119.

¹ "I have no ambition to govern men. It is a painful and thankless office." To John Adams, Monticello, December 28, 1796, *Works*, VIII, 261. See also to Destutt de Tracy, Monticello, January 26, 1811. *Works*, XI, 186. For Jefferson's comments on the torments of public life, see Edward Dumbauld, *Thomas Jefferson: American Tourist*, pp. 21, 23f.

² To Francis Hopkinson, Paris, March 13, 1789. *Works*, V, 456.

a party leader that he displayed his most distinctive talents. His influence was greatest, not as an orator, but as an organizer.³

Jefferson early became prominent as a political leader. Before independence, the chief political division in most of the Colonies was between the frontiersmen and the wealthy tidewater families who held offices of profit and power under the British colonial government or were engaged as merchants in trade with England. Jefferson allied himself with Patrick Henry as a champion of the backwoodsmen, who defended their settlements against the attacks of Indians but were denied an equal representation in the government.⁴ Their struggle for self-government and the right to manage their own affairs led gradually to the movement for independence from Great Britain.⁵ In this struggle, as is well known, Jefferson played a prominent part. He was active in the work of the Continental Congress, where he supported the measures of John and Samuel Adams of Massachusetts. When at length the views of these advocates of complete separation from England prevailed, Jefferson as author of the Declaration of Independence became the spokesman of American sentiments to the world.

In the period between the end of the Revolution and the adoption of the Constitution framed in 1787, the same political divisions continued. Jefferson remained sympathetic to the interests of the Western pioneers. Navigation of the Mississippi was one of the important issues to this group, who feared that it

³ Charles F. Adams, ed., *Works of John Adams* (Boston, 1850-1854), II, 511, 514.

⁴ In his *Notes on Virginia* Jefferson demonstrated statistically that "nineteen thousand men, living below the falls of the rivers . . . in one part of the country, give law to upwards of thirty thousand living in another, and appoint all their chief officers executive and judiciary. From the difference of their situation and circumstances, their interests will often be very different." *Works*, IV, 18f. Likewise Quaker merchants in Philadelphia controlled Pennsylvania and refused to provide funds for defense of the Western frontiers. In Massachusetts it happened that the city of Boston was the center of agitation for popular rights. Jefferson in Congress supported the measures of John and Sam Adams.

⁵ See Edward Dumbauld, *The Declaration of Independence and What It Means Today*, p. 16.

might be sacrificed for the sake of promoting the navigation and commerce of Eastern states. Jefferson's appointment to the diplomatic mission negotiating treaties of commerce with European nations gave reassurance that no treaty provisions detrimental to the agricultural states would be adopted.⁶

The next great party struggle in America took place while Jefferson was in Europe. This was the battle over adoption of the Constitution drawn up at Philadelphia in 1787. It was with respect to the partisan divisions on this question that Jefferson made the statement to Francis Hopkinson that he belonged to neither faction, and that "if I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all."⁷ Concerning the Constitution, Jefferson's position was ambivalent. As a "Continentalist" and especially in the light of his experience in Europe, he had long recognized the need of an effective federal government, particularly in the field of foreign affairs. On the other hand, he saw possibilities of danger in the polity formulated by the Philadelphia Convention. There was no Bill of Rights to protect the citizens against abuse of power by the government; and the possibility of perpetual re-election of the president might result

⁶Anthony M. Lewis, "Jefferson and Virginia's Pioneers, 1774-1781," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIV (1948), 551; Charles Warren, "The Mississippi River and the Treaty Clause of the Constitution," *George Washington Law Review*, II (1934), 271; Dumas Malone, *Jefferson, The Virginian* (Boston, 1948), p. 419. Speaking of the period after independence, Charles Warren fixes July 4, 1778, as the date "that there arose the first division of Americans into political parties" (p. 273). On that day George Rogers Clark captured Kaskaskia, commencing the conquest of the western territory, access to which depended upon control of the Mississippi; and preparations were afoot in Philadelphia to welcome the French minister, Gérard. That diplomat sought to discourage American expansion westward. His intrigues led to formation of a "Gallican" party among representatives of eastern States. New England, in order to obtain support for its fisheries, which France also opposed, at first voted with the Southern "anti-Gallican" party; but after the interests of that region in the fisheries had been definitely secured by the terms of the peace treaty with Great Britain, New England's commercial interests aligned it with the eastern commercial States who thought the Mississippi comparatively unimportant (pp. 278, 282f).

⁷See note 2 *supra*.

in monarchy. Generally speaking, Jefferson favored the adoption of the Constitution and the simultaneous addition thereto of a Bill of Rights.⁸ Through his influence on James Madison, the latter offered in Congress proposals which resulted in the adoption of the Bill of Rights contained in the first ten amendments to the Constitution.

Though Jefferson was thus more of a "federalist" than an "anti-federalist" during the controversies over the Constitution, the situation was different in the next partisan struggle which arose. Here the name "Federalist" continued to be employed to designate one of the contending parties. The leader of this group was Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury in the administration of President George Washington. The leader of the other contending party was Jefferson himself. As Secretary of State in Washington's official family, the Virginian found that he and Hamilton "were daily pitted in the cabinet like two cocks."⁹

Hamilton's party was pro-British in its sympathies. It found its chief strength among merchants and financial speculators, whose support for the new government it sought to assure by policies which would afford them pecuniary advantage. It endeavored to increase the powers of the federal government at the expense of the States, and of the executive branch at the expense of the legislative. Distrusting and fearing the people as "a great beast," it looked for the coming of a "crisis" when, through military dictatorship, popular licentiousness might be curbed and the "frail and worthless fabric" of the Constitution might be replaced by a more "energetic" government after the pattern of the English monarchy.¹⁰

Jefferson's party (which came to be known as "Republican" or "Democratic"), on the other hand, favored popular government. Protection for the rights of individuals against arbitrary action

⁸ Edward Dumbauld, "Thomas Jefferson and American Constitutional Law," *Emory University Journal of Public Law*, II (1953), 370, 378ff.

⁹ To Walter Jones, Monticello, March 5, 1810. *Works*, XI, 138.

¹⁰ John Sharp Williams, *Thomas Jefferson: His Permanent Influence on American Institutions* (New York, 1913), pp. 152ff.

by officials was regarded as more important than "energy" and authority in the government. Predominance was given to civil over military power. Agricultural rather than mercantile interests were encouraged and, until the vexatious bungling of the French envoy, Edmond Charles Genêt, caused embarrassment to the Jeffersonians, they were sympathetic toward the French Revolution, seeing in it a kindred movement to the American Revolution, and believing that the success of the former would be of help in guaranteeing the permanence of the fruits of the latter.¹¹

The triumph of Jefferson at the polls in 1800 marked the death knell of the Federalist party. It never revived from the shock of this defeat, and never regained popular favor. The democratic character of the American polity was assured. The Jeffersonian party continued in power for decades. Apart from a brief interlude caused by the election of the individualistic John Quincy Adams by the House of Representatives in 1825, the democratizing tendency continued with increasing intensity under Andrew Jackson and his successor, Martin Van Buren. But the election of 1840 brought into the presidency General William Henry Harrison, as representative of the "Whig" party which had been formed in 1834 out of a motley aggregation of groups antagonistic to Jackson.¹² Harrison died shortly thereafter, and John Tyler succeeded to the office of Chief Executive. He soon lost the support of the Whigs. In 1844 the Whig candidate, Henry Clay, was defeated by the Democrat, James K. Polk. A Whig president, Zachary Taylor, was elected in 1848. But in 1852 the election of Franklin K. Pierce gave a death blow to the

¹¹ To Edward Rutledge, Philadelphia, August 29, 1791. *Works*, VI, 309. See also note 2 *supra* and Jefferson's First Inaugural Address.

¹² Edward Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency from 1788 to 1897* (New York, 1898), pp. 179f. Use of the term "Whig" to describe this nineteenth-century party of opposition to the Democrats should be distinguished from its use to describe the Patriots during the Revolutionary period. In that earlier era opponents of the "Loyalists" or "Tories" were often known as "Whigs." This usage survived from the English practice, according to which the "court" and "country" parties were called Tories and Whigs, respectively.

Whig party. The Whigs could not face squarely the burning issue of slavery.

In 1856 there appeared on the national scene a new party (the present Republican Party) whose candidate, John C. Frémont, lost to the Democrat, James Buchanan. But four years later Abraham Lincoln carried the Republican banner to victory.

As a result of the war of 1861–65, the Republican Party remained in power for many years. The first Democrat to hold office thereafter was Grover Cleveland, elected in 1884 and 1892. Woodrow Wilson, chosen in 1912 and 1916, was the second. The third was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who began in 1932 a twenty-year period of Democratic success. In 1952 a Republican, Dwight D. Eisenhower, became president.

The present Democratic Party, it will be noted, claims ancestry extending back to the Republican-Democratic party founded by Jefferson.¹³ But it must be observed that when that party, in the post-Jackson period, had come to be dominated by slave-owning sections of the country, it was the principles of Jefferson that inspired the founders of the Republican Party. Its early activities were animated by a zealous determination to revitalize Jefferson's "self-evident truths" regarding human freedom and equality. Abraham Lincoln declared repeatedly that his own opinions were based upon the teachings of Jefferson. "The principles of Jefferson are the definitions and axioms of free society," Lincoln affirmed. Speaking at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on February 22, 1861, he avowed that "all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn . . . from the sentiments which originated and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."¹⁴

The enduring influence of Jefferson on American political parties is thus manifest. Equally plain is his own skill as a

¹³ Frank R. Kent, *The Democratic Party: A History* (New York, 1928), p. 14.

¹⁴ Edward Dumbauld, *The Declaration of Independence and What It Means Today*, p. 58.

politician in his own time. Besides liberating his country from foreign rule, he was successful in holding, among other important positions of public trust, the highest office in the gift of his state and of his nation. His policies molded the measures of his successors. This was the effect of gifted political leadership.

The continuance of Jefferson's influence over succeeding generations is doubtless due to the inherent value and validity of his political philosophy rather than to his skill in the management of men. Later thinkers revere him because his teachings have won their own assent rather than because they are dominated by his political contrivances. But his record in public life is evidence of his superlative skill as a practitioner of the political art.

Jefferson believed that, at any time and place where men are free to think and to speak, differences of opinion will lead to formation of political parties.¹⁵ He believed also that there was a natural division into two parties, one of which fears and distrusts the people, the other of which has faith in the people and seeks to protect them from abuse and misgovernment on the part of their rulers.¹⁶

IV. JEFFERSON'S POLITICAL WRITINGS

Though prominent in political life and as advocate of democratic theories of government, Jefferson produced no systematic treatise containing a statement of his political principles.¹ These must be studied in his state papers² and in his voluminous correspondence,³ which often contains luminous and stirring discussion of political topics.

¹⁵ To John Adams, Monticello, June 27, 1813. *Writings*, XIII, 279.

¹⁶ See p. 195, note 8.

¹ Cf. Charles E. Merriam, *A History of American Political Theories* (New York, 1903), p. 145.

² Jefferson advised a publisher proposing to reprint his writings that "these . . . would no more find readers now, than the journals and statute books in which they are deposited." To John W. Campbell, September 3, 1809. *Works*, XI, 115ff.

³ "The letters of a person, especially of one whose business has been