

The Intelligent Design of God in the Declaration

America began with the word. Mere independence did not begin us and its announcement did not either. American independence was actually declared on July 2nd 1776. That evening John Adams wrote his wife Abigail that the day just ending might be celebrated forever. This prediction was premature. What we Americans celebrate is not the day we declared independence but the day the Declaration of Independence was promulgated to the reasonable world. Often on the annual return of that Fourth we have celebrated it by reciting it. (In Little Town on the Prairie, it is casually remarked that the girls know it by heart.) We are right to. Its words have made us what we are. Its truths contain, as the tree the many seeds, all that has come after, our liberty, our prosperity, our Constitution, our strife, our strength, our endurance, and our potential perpetuation.ⁱ

These truths, like golden apples in a frame of silver, are supported and protected by a very intelligent design.

I. The Declaration is divided into seven parts, the first devoted to separation; the second to revolution; and the third to prudence; the fourth, much the longest part, is devoted to twenty-eight charges against George III; the fifth part attends to fellow subjects of the monarch; the sixth is a declaration of independence

from Great Britain; and the seventh comprises the signatures of the representatives of the United States in Congress assembled.

To bring out the exceedingly intelligent design of this declaration this afternoon, we must move rather quickly. Which means we must pass over some mysteries; in the first paragraph the mystery of what a people is and in the second what a person is, a mystery though it is ourselves, if we achieve self-knowledge.

Two things are remarkable in the title. It is the first use of the name "the United States of America." Here it seems to be a plural. After our Civil War "United States" is always singular. "One and indivisible" as we Americans pledge, and we at George Wythe College pledge each class day. Second, is that the title does not say what is being declared.

The familiar first paragraph, appealing to the reasonable world, is a single sentence whose subordinate clause, longer than the main one, contains the first reference to God, to "nature and nature's God".

What is nature? Who is Nature's God? In this yoking phrase all the long struggle of our Western forefathers to harmonize Greek reason and Biblical revelation is epitomized. In the phrase, "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," Nature comes first and then God. Who is this God of Nature? Is this the God who is above Nature, who has brought Nature into existence, and is known to pious readers of Genesis as the Creator? Or is this the God that belongs to Nature,

that issues from Nature, or personifies Nature, or even the God that really is Nature, as a pantheist, a Spinoza, might recognize? It is hard to say. Closely examined, the phrase is ambiguous. Thus while it will appeal to most of the Christian sects, the Jews, perhaps the Muslims, and probably most deists, it can shelter many an Epicurean, or even a skeptic, if he be not dogmatic and bold, and out of a decent concern for mankind, hold his tongue. Thus it might include, in addition to Witherspoon and Wythe and the others, old Franklin and young Hamilton. Certainly, however, the phrase was meant to speak to the multitude of the people, overwhelmingly Christian. Thus the nearby phrase “the powers of the earth” by bringing to mind the “powers of heaven” and the “powers of hell”, inclines one to identify the God of Nature and of Nature’s laws as the Biblical Creator God.

The most famous second paragraph of the Declaration contains the second of the four inclusions of God in our founding.

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness —

In this beautifully designed single-sentence paragraph, ---try to order the sequence of the three named rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness any other way and you will get chaos--- all depends on the endowment of the Creator God; likewise all four

self-evident truths, that all are equal, that they have rights, that government is instituted to secure them, and that men may of right change the regime, all these too come from God. (That such change of government brings in an additional standard of safety and happiness, that government is judged by these ends as well as by rights, we have no time to examine now.) The burden of the paragraph is that God's design of man, made self-evident to man, makes self-government mankind's domain, man's right, and man's charge. According to the Declaration everything about government proceeds from God.

The next paragraph accords with God's donation of this responsibility to mankind. In it there is no mention of God, for considering whether it is prudent to make a revolution, man is exercising, or failing to, the prudence that is the very essence of the self-government God has endowed him to do. Moreover, this paragraph says something unique. Where there is tyranny, it is not only the right of the people to institute new government, it is their duty.

The section that follows, enumerating the 28 things that justify calling George III a tyrant and changing the government is likewise without a mention of God. It is up to man, not God, to judge whether there is tyranny, but for later examination, let me note that the ordering of the charges goes from George's violation of the legislatures of the colonies, to his violating of their courts, on to his abuse of his

executive duties, unto making war upon the people. Though those abuses have ceased, the portrait of that Tyrant is, along with Shakespeare's evil ones, an enduring gift to us Americans, arming us to recognize tyranny when it arises.

The next section, devoted to relations with "our Britttish brethren" is also without a mention of God, but please note, you with your portable phones, your flood of emails, your storm of tweets, and your willingness to trade your soul for celebrity on FaceTube, that our forefathers and foremothers, so cherished good letters, which Nietzsche rightly says are the best index of the culture of an era, that they lament the coming interruption of their correspondence with friends in Britain. Make no mistake: they knew what friendship is. Read the letters of John and Abigail Adams and the late letters of Adams and Jefferson.

The next, the sixth part, of the document, which declares independence, contains the two final mentions of God, In the beginning God is "appealed" to as the "Supreme Judge of the World" to affirm the rectitude of "our intentions" and in the end of the paragraph, God is relied upon to protect the signers of the Declaration who pledge to each other their "lives", their "Fortunes", and their "Sacred Honor. Without these mentions of God the Judge and God the Provident, the Declaration would not be beautifully and intelligently designed.

Then follows the signatures, in clusters by state, though not so designated, a sign of our unanimous union, under God.

II.

It is now time to step back from the Declaration, view it in the context of the whole, and look down upon it from a high and melancholy perch, for we know that civilizations perish.¹

Way out in a corner of Colorado, until recently accessible only by a three-day ride on horseback, are ruins left by a vanished people. There at Mesa Verde, in the overhangs of the mesa, are over 600 family dwellings and several large buildings, built of stone, with only stone tools. All were built about 800 years ago. For centuries before these people had lived on top of the mesas. Suddenly around 1200 A.D. they took shelter under the cliffs below the mesa, why no one really knows, and then equally suddenly, around 1273, these people abandoned not only their cliff dwellings, but the whole fertile mesa that they had inhabited for centuries. Why? No one knows? Was it war, if so why are there so few skeletons with wounds? Could it have been the twenty-three year drought that set in about 1273, visible to us in the compact rings in the trees living at that time? If so,

¹ « Nous autres, civilizations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles. ” Paul Valery, *La Crise of l’Esprit, Oeuvres de Paul Valery* (Pleiade: 1957) 1:988-1000.

why did these people never return after the rain returned? Or was it an event in the sky, a supernova, that their sages could not interpret except as a command to leave forever? No one is so bold as to say "I know for sure."

Very well, what if an inquiring stranger arriving on earth in eight hundred years, found the ruins of another American civilization, evidences of flourishing and civility, but with no account of how we disappeared, whether through sudden war, unknown pestilence, prolonged drought, or sheer loss of the reverences that unify a mere population into a people. "Who were these Americans?" such an inquiring stranger might wonder. And what if he had only the Declaration to learn what sort of a people we Americans were, what then would he, or she, or it, find?

Patient attention would naturally disclose that a divine being named "God" is referred to several times in the course of the Declaration. First of all, God is referred to as the Creator; He creates man and gives him unalienable rights. Second, God is referred to as a legislator; He legislates "the laws of Nature and Nature's God"; he is nature's God; nature is lawful; nature is filled with reason, it is so because God the law-giver legislated it so, and being so, it has a steady character, which He would presumably abridge only for special and unusual reason. Third, this same God is referred to as the Supreme Judge of the world; to

God in this truly awe-ful aspect, the people of the United States appeal for the rectitude of their intentions; God is then a party, a witness, to this Declaration; and He is the judge. And, fourth and finally, God is referred to as the Providence who will surely protect this people, these United States, and these signers of this Declaration.ⁱⁱ

And what would such a inquiring stranger make of these observations? How would he, or she, or it, interpret them? Perhaps this way:

The four references to God are placed carefully.ⁱⁱⁱ Each is fitted to the theme of its section. God the natural lawgiver goes with separation; God the Creator of man, equal in his unalienable rights, goes with revolution; God the Supreme Judge goes with declaring independence, which will surely lead to war, a war God will witness and judge; and finally God the Provident goes with the confidence the Declarers have, that He will regard their prudence, protect their lives, preserve their fortunes, and bless their sacred honor.

These references also make, or partake of, a story. Separation is, after all, the mode by which the Creator creates most of the things in Genesis 1, and independence is the result. Later God gives the Law; He has made us discerning enough to receive it; and made us with choice to obey it or stray from it; thus we are responsible for our choices; still later He will judge us, and meanwhile He may intervene providentially as a Statesman endeavors to.

God then, the God of the Declaration, and of the people of the Declaration, is a Creator, who unites in Himself, the power of the legislative, the judicial and the executive. We have seen this pattern before. We saw it as the measure behind George III judging all his interventions, usurpations, and abuses. George's attempt to unite the legislative, judicial, and executive powers was not for the sake of the good, it was not for the sake of the governed, and it was not with their consent. Unlike God, George did not respect the unalienable rights that are the foundation of the liberty of the American people.

There is more. The God referred to in the Declaration is not only the standard by which to judge tyrants, He is also the pattern of all good government. Had George not intervened in legislative and in judicial matters and had he, the executive, not made war on his own people, he would have been a good ruler. The Declaration itself, then, recognizes the possibility that God could be pleased with monarchy, provided it be constitutional monarchy. And yet, the same principles in the Declaration make it not at all fanciful to foresee in the future of the Americans the government to come in the Constitution of 1787, with We the people the sovereign creators, the legislative office next, then the executive, and finally the judicial, all separate "persons" of one sovereign, both distinguished and blended for the better expression of the sovereign people, a many for the sake of that one.

Imagine now our inquiring stranger 800 years from now searching out the deepest principles in the Declaration and asking: How do the people of the Declaration know these things about God? Do they simply assume them? Do they know them from revelation? Or through reason? Or are some things known by revelation and some others by reason?

The Declaration answers by saying that certain things are true; in particular it names four things that are true. Earlier we examined them, now let us do so more carefully, in the full light of the whole of the Declaration, with its majestic design.

Four truths and four truths alone are said to be self-evident by the Declaration: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by the Creator with unalienable rights; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; and that when a government destroys these ends, it is the right of the people to change the government.

First, let us note this: that among the self-evident things is the Creator. Let there be no misunderstanding: the word Creator was not by our ancestors used loosely; the meaning of it and its cognates, create, creating, created, and creature, was limited, solemnly and strictly limited; for the men and women of that time, there was only one Creator and one Creation.^{iv} America is, then, founded on a thesis in natural theology, that is, in an account of God (theos) in so far as He is evident to reason (logos), the

natural power of man to know. Not on supernatural theology, which depends on revelation, on things known through faith or miracle, but on natural theology, things that can be known by reason, is America founded.

Second, it is because of the Creator that all men are equal. True, as Montaigne said, each man bears the form of the human condition. That gets at it. But falls short. A biologist could say that. Saying that the Creator made men equal, in that He endowed each with the same unalienable rights, means man owes both his existence and his character to the Creator. No mere biologist would say that. Even an undogmatic one, such as Aristotle or Adolph Portmann, wouldn't. They might say all men are equal, but they would not say they were created by God. Nor would they say that each man is an image of the Creator. The consequences of these additions to what "scientific reason," ancient and modern, can know are immense. Owing his being and his character to God, means man is not only in a dependent but in a graciously dependent relation to God. He will then be, if he understands himself aright, filled with gratitude.

Third, the unalienable rights are a gift of God, more specifically an endowment; that is, the kind of gift that comes to you just because you are who you are, not because of something special you did. They are a free expression of love, God's love. They are not something you had to deserve first. The earth is then not "a place where when you go there they have to let

you in” but “a place you haven’t to deserve, to be let in.”^v Moreover, this endowment is in you; it is you, we might say.

***Thus, the rights understood by the Declaration are not the same as those prevailing in public discourse today in America. The natural rights upon which just government is founded are, according to the Declaration, an *endowment* from the Creator. They are a gift. The same One who created men also endows each of them with rights. Like our existence itself, these are gifts. Thus the suspicion that every orientation towards rights will put rancor in the soul, cause the man with it to transform all griefs into grievances, and think far more of what others owe him than of what he owes them, is, in the case of the Declaration that founded America, obviated.^{vi} As is the correlative criticism, of Publius in the *Federalist Papers* that rights, as in Bills of Rights, presuppose a King and consequently have no place in a government whose sovereignty reposes in the people, for the rights that are understood to be a gift of the superior who is your Creator are not likely to stir up a spirit of unjust self-love. Rights from God require care. Like other gifts, they may be abused or neglected. They may be squandered. Once lost they may never be recovered. Moreover, since they were given by the Creator, they may be withdrawn. They are only unalienable between man and man and man and government. In the face of God, there is no right to happiness, to liberty, or to life itself.^{vii}

Moreover, what a man knows is a gift he may well wish to share. And one he knows to be an endowment or an inheritance, he will surely wish to pass on to his posterity. However unalienable by nature vis à vis man, such rights must be defended and protected, if they are to be inherited. No one can lose them, but the regime of liberty built upon their recognition can be lost. And howsoever inherited, liberty must also be acquired by that posterity. Ultimately the blessings of Liberty come from God, intermediately they come from government (or the curses from bad government), and up close good government comes from good men, good men doing good, following good, and being good, such men as understand the truths held by the Declaration and most notably held by the signers who pledged their sacred honor.

Fourth, government is instituted by men to secure these rights, that men may flourish, have life, enjoy liberty, and be happy. (The rights can be secured, not the things, for these things no one can secure for another.) In other words, men are to go forth together to institute government. Government is the work of man. It fulfills God's plan, it pleases Him, but it is the work of man. God cannot govern for us. Christ was asked to by his Disciples, asked to defend himself with legions of angels, and earlier the Devil offered him the rule of the Roman Empire, but He always refused to do for men what they can, and so must, do for themselves. (This is, by the way, the most important reason the Declaration need not refer to or call upon

Christ. He came to save men's souls, not to govern them; government is to make them free, as free as they can be, pursuing happiness.) It is not only that man is to institute government, to secure these unalienable rights; man is also charged with judging government by its ends, safety to happiness, and if prudence allow, man is charged with the duty of changing government, even at the cost of life, liberty, and property. It is their right, it is their duty.

Was it not the duty of some people until now? At the time of the Roman Empire, was it then better to suffer evil than to oppose it? We must wonder about the history of man; since God did not prompt the first Christians and many previous Christians to institute new government based on these God-given rights, did He first choose the English people to do so in their Glorious Revolution, and then, when they oppressed their American brethren, did He choose the American people to exercise self-government more perfectly, to become the model for other peoples, and when they waxed mighty even bring it to others, and even when failing to be a model, a city on a hill, still to for their principles to be a light house on a hill, to shine a way for others far away, even as it showed in what the darkness the Americans had chosen to dwell.

Fifth, government is to be judged by the divine standard. It is to be judged by how much it secures the unalienable rights given by God and by the ends, safety to happiness, that have been written into the nature of things by Nature's God. Moreover, the very

form of God, his parts, is the measure of good government. Thus, the charges against George, arranged as they are, leading from legislative, to judicial, to executive abuses, show George to depart very far from the divine union of these separate powers in the God addressed in the Declaration.

Sixth, this means not only that bad government is measured by God, but that good government is in the image of God. The first image of God, as we know from Genesis, where the Creation is recounted, is man himself. Man and only man of all the creatures is in the image of God. But according to the Declaration, the second, or at least another, image of God is government. In good government as in God we find legislative, judicial, and executive powers.

Seventh, there is of course a difference between the image of God and God Himself. In God these powers, which by us may be separately named and chosen in addressing God, are united. Thus we read in Isaiah 33. 22: "For the Lord *is* our judge, the Lord *is* our lawgiver, the Lord *is* our king; he will save us."^{viii} In good government these powers should be separated. That is, no man is to be trusted with being, at the same time, law-maker, judge, and executor. What in God is united, which is one in Him, is in good government, separated, dispersed, and parceled out among different men.^{ix}

To recapitulate, it is to be noted that all of these truths about God and the people of the Declaration are evident; they are evident to reason; they are either self-

evident, the four truths, or based on these four self-evident truths, and thus likewise also evident. And for this too, God the Creator is responsible; He is responsible for a world through which truth runs, through and through, and for truth's being evident to his best creature, Man, who He endowed with reason enough to see all this truth including the evidence of the Creator Himself. It is no wonder then that, as Samuel Adams said, "The people seem to recognize this resolution as though it were a decree promulgated from heaven."^x

Who is responsible for the Declaration, for its promulgation of new principles of government, and for its remarkable design, which our inquiring stranger has discovered?

<< 335 Could skip >> On his tomb, at Monticello, one of the three things Thomas Jefferson had inscribed was "author of the Declaration of Independence." Although this is an exaggeration, we may pardon it. As Lincoln said, "All honor to Jefferson." And yet not only truth but its precious consequences cannot let this exaggeration pass without comment. Jefferson was not the author of the Declaration; the author of the Declaration was Congress assembled, and through them the United States that sent them and the people they spoke for. Old Jefferson himself said, as did old Adams, that he had only written what all had been saying for some time.^{xi} Although there was modesty in that admission,

for to put what everyone has been saying into uncommonly vigorous, dignified, and felicitous words is a fine achievement, still there is truth in the acknowledgment. Jefferson was the drafter, not the author, of the Declaration. All praise to the noble drafter.

The acknowledgment is important because, appreciative as the Congress was of Jefferson's drafting, it did not accept it all or think it complete. About one fourth it altered, much to Jefferson's silent vexation, somewhat soothed by Franklin sitting next to him, and in this the penultimate section, for example, Congress added the two mentions of God. Now Thomas Jefferson was a man of many plans and many ideas, more rich than coherent, and among his ideas were many private opinions that departed from the main line of the many Christian churches. Were Jefferson to be regarded as the author, rather than, as he was, the drafter of the Declaration, it would be natural to see in it a subtle expression of his ideas, rather than as the declaration of the whole Congress assembled and the people they spoke for, and thus to regard it as dubiously theistic. Fidelity to the true circumstances of the composition of the Declaration precludes such an interpretation utterly. Only by ignoring the known facts can one regard the Declaration as atheistic or even deistic.^{xii} <<skip to here???>>

It really is a wonder that so much contention, conversation, and thought in 1776 could have had such

a harmonious result, in the Declaration, and then such a remarkable result in all since then, as the forest from the tree, and the tree from the single seed. The Declaration is surely the most remarkable thing ever written by a committee. And the way the two references to God added by the Congress to Jefferson's draft make the whole a portrait of God with His three governing powers, and thus a sketch of good government, with separation of powers, is more remarkable still. Perhaps then it is reasonable to believe that the Great Governor of the World was pleased to incline the hearts of this legislature (to employ the language of the Articles of Confederation) to add these references to Himself. Did the Congress know that their additions completed the picture and made the pattern? To be sure what ever one man can discern in the purposeful product of another, that other man can have done deliberately, but it is not necessarily so. Whose purpose is evident then? Certainly, if God can bring good out of evil, He can bring it out of good, in this case these good men, whose hearts were surely inclined His way.

Can mere men have achieved such a thing? According to the understanding of all things held by the people of the Declaration, and explicitly affirmed in the Declaration, no mere people can achieve such a thing without the guidance and protection of God.

What are we to think then of the history of the American people since the Declaration? Are we to judge from the result, from the flourishing of America,

that He destined the American people to bring forth a more perfect and more God-pleasing government than any previous people? Does America manifest a destiny from God? Are we Americans a chosen people? Or “almost chosen” as Lincoln said, ever mindful of the sin of presumption, and ever mindful of the caution that who God chooses, He holds to higher standards and accordingly punishes more severely than the unchosen.

Did God make a Covenant with us Americans? The people of the Declaration seem to understand it that way, for they ask Him to judge the rectitude of their cause. Of course we know that our ancestors did achieve their Independence. May we infer that that was because He listened to their appeal, that He judged the rectitude their cause, and found it worthy? But their cause was not just the immediate Revolution of Independence; the document is titled a Declaration; mere independence was declared two days before; the Declaration was a declaration of principle, and whosoever some features attached to that time fade, the principles do not change.

If so, it was not a Covenant for one generation only, and all later Americans must fear if that rectitude should vanish, in an unjust war, in the indifference of the people to their own Liberty, even the very first of their liberties, to life itself, unto the righteous slaughter of innocents, or if the people shirk the duty to govern themselves, repose in soft despotism, loss all reverence and ardor, then we must wonder if the God we asked

to covenant with us might withdraw his support. If so, then all inheritors and beneficiaries of our Declaration must tremble, with Jefferson, to think that God is just, and pray and fast with Lincoln that every drop of blood drawn from the innocent be not paid, as would be altogether righteous, by others drawn by His terrible swift sword.

Some of the designs of the Lord seem evident in the course of human events, those of futurity are locked in His bosom.

Conclusion:

The truths of the Declaration are as self-evident today as when they were first declared. It is as President Coolidge said one Fourth of July: "If all men are created equal, that is final. If all men are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people." President Coolidge was right to say so (in celebration of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration, now four generations ago (Philadelphia, **5 July 1926).^{xiii} Since then the regimes that have denied the truths of the Declaration have visited misery on their slaves and their neighbors, and

the Americans whose judicial interpretations hold that life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are not God-given rights of every human being, or that the Declaration has nothing to do with the Constitution, have not protected the lives, defended the liberty, and advanced happiness of Americans as they might.

<< could be skipped 114 >> We the descendants of the founders are right to be proud of our Declaration. To be proud of it is to submit to it humbly. We understand it to measure us, not we it. It is by living up to the Declaration that we may mend our flaws, confirm our soul in self-control, and enjoy our liberty in law. And if we ever crown the good it has brought us with loving brotherhood, so that all are judged by the content of their character not the color of their skin, then at last we will be in accord with the abstract but self-evident truths of the Declaration and worthy of the Creator above them. <<skip to here>>

The Declaration cannot be amended, it cannot be altered, it cannot be changed. It can only be taken to heart, made more and more alive in our lives, and the source of still greater strength. The Declaration is a declaration of principles and principles cannot be changed, they can only be neglected, or ignored, or abused. If they are, they are already lost, and with them the people formed by them will be lost.

The words of the Declaration are the hills from whence cometh our national strength, they are the green pastures that comfort us; like a staff they support us; like a rod they chastise us; and they are the

cup that will run over almost forever, if we remember them and, remembering them, live them.^{xiv}

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ⁱ This interpretation was first written in the course of teaching Honors students at the University of Houston in 1994, especially Marcel Guerin and his attentive questions. Since then it gained from lecture presentation at several schools, home-schooling groups, at Brigham Young, The Air Force Academy, Univ. of Illinois, Hillsdale, Williams, George Wythe College, a stint at the International Theological Institute (Gaming, Austria), and for three years running, the Armstrong Lectures at Thomas More (Ft. Worth). And also from a close reading by Will Morrissey. And there ahead, above, and before me always there have been George Anastaplo and Harry Jaffa; listening to them, you might wonder if the Framers were their uncles. Sometime after I met their works and them, I attended the aristocratic classes of Leo Paul de Alvarez, and thanks to Glen Thurow, got to teach the same American government class soon after. Many thanks to all.

ⁱⁱ An alien observer would, then, conclude just what most American Christians would.

²³ I owe this observation to George Anastaplo, and also that these separate powers remind one of the Constitution. As to interpretation of the observation, we differ. According to George, these men saw the heavens and God himself in the image of the Republic they esteemed. To me it is on the contrary more reasonable to suppose that these men measured all things political by the pattern of God, the monarch who is not only fit to rule a free people, but created all men free, capable of self-government and bound by duty, when prudence should permit, to institute it. Anastaplo's remarks will be found in his genial, rich, and patriotic *The Constitution of 1787: A Commentary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1989), s. v. The appendices to this commentary contain the documents of the founding. An even larger collection, with excellent introductions, especially by Donald S. Lutz is *Roots of the Republic* ed. Steven L. Schechter (Madison House, 1990).

^{iv} If they had used the expression "creative writing" it would only have referred to inspired scripture, to the Bible.

^v I employ Frost's distinction from "The Hired Man."

vi The suspicion is, nevertheless, well grounded. As Nietzsche observed, modernity is the substitution of daily newspapers for daily prayers. The former make us think of what's wrong with others, the latter what is wrong with ourselves; the former fit with rights, what we are owed by others, the latter go with duties, what we owe others. For the Nietzsche, "Eine Zeitung an Stelle der tägliche Gebete," see the *Nachlass* (leftovers) of the 1880s; F. N., *Werke in Drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta (München: Hanser Verlag, 1956), III, p. 430.

vii The Lord can take you any time. (Psalm 37; Psalm 123; etc.) He may justly lead us into temptation, turn us over to the Devil, or blot us out. (Job) Hence, strictly speaking, for a Christian there can be no "right to life." There is of course a duty not to murder.

viii I am grateful to Richard Honaker who, after I delivered this essay to the Wyoming Home Schoolers Convention in 1995, pointed out this passage to me. Might we describe the progress recorded in the Old Testament as God's discovery, first that man, in the person of His chosen people, needed Him to become the Legislator as well as the Creator, then that they needed Him to provide judges, and finally even an executive or king, and yet that still more was needed, not an executive or messiah at all, but an example of service unto death.

ix Thus later in the Constitution, while the legislative, judicial, and executive powers will be somewhat shared, e.g. the president's veto on legislation, still no man may at the same time serve in more than one branch, e.g. be a Representative and a cabinet member at the same time.

x Quoted from Coolidge, above, p. 449.

xi **give words.

xii There are even some books that give his version rather than the one Congress signed and even authors of books that accord his draft the attention that only the final Congressional version deserves (e. g. Gary Wills). Such readers like to emphasize the heterodoxy of Jefferson's theism, and ignore the fact that heterodox theism is nonetheless theism, that the man who worked at pasting together a composite Gospel must be presumed to accord some authority to Christ, must be seeking counsel from his (or His) teaching, and that the man who spoke of a fire bell in the night and said he trembled to think that God is just, most probably believed in God.

For the facts about the authorship of the Declaration, we have the document itself; for the fact of the composition we have the statements of the later Jefferson himself, cited in my text; and for the details of the composition, we have the careful work of Julian P. Boyd, especially his *The Declaration of Independence: The Evolution of the Text as Shown in Facsimiles of Various Drafts* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1945).

xiii *Supplement to the Messages and Papers of the Presidents Covering the Second Administration of Calvin Coolidge* March 4, 1925, to March 4, 1929, pp. 9581 - 9582. Also to be found in his *Foundations of the Republic: Speeches and Addresses*, (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926).

In the Declaration you will find almost all of the things that constitute the United States of America. Thus, throughout this commentary on the Declaration, it has been natural for me to refer to these constitutions, both the written and the unwritten. For a fuller account of them, see my essay “The Thirteen Constitutes of America,” and the chapter it is modeled on, in George Anastaplo’s fine book, mentioned above.