THE FOUNDERS' SPEECH ON THE CONSTITUITON

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The Founders' Speech to a Nation in Crisis

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Sampling of Reviews

(2000+ Ratings and Reviews on Amazon)

“Absolutely BEAUTIFUL! This is like time travel! Just like there’s a million movies about WW2 and then there’s the documentary “They shall never grow old”, this book is a shocking experience. It’s like sitting in a living room with the most brilliant minds of the era, and they talk about the most fundamental things in life, and you’re right there with them. It’s very moving.”
- Christine

The book is written as a speech to the nation, composed of the actual words spoken or written by many of the Founding Fathers and a few others. Incredible and inspiring! This book will move those that are thrilled with the history of our great nation, and give courage to stand against the tide wishing to drown our incredible history with undue criticism and scandal. This book will renew your love of how our country came to be, the benefits we derived from these great men and their lofty ideals, the promise of a new nation conceived in liberty. I highly recommend this book."
- P. Creery

"The unity of this book is powerful, but the most impressive aspect of the book is the fact that the figures who arose from the enlightenment saw precisely the kinds of challenges which we face today. In some ways this is a sort of commonplace book or a vade mecum, a book of common (political) prayer, something to which we can and must return when we need to be reminded of the stakes, the wishes of liberty's adversaries and how their siren song of socialism has brought death and oceans of blood. One hopes that it will be shared widely and that readers will attend to its collected wisdom."
- Richard B. Schwartz, Professor of English, The University of Missouri
"This book is a must-read for students of US history. It is

extremely well put together, and if you are a student of US history, this is a book that should be at the top of your list of Must-Read books. Yes, it's that good."
- -Don Marchant, University of Southern Utah

"The genius of the founders made accessible. In their own words the founders and other free thinkers perfectly predict the corrupt and increasingly authoritarian country we now live in. Even with a very detailed list of the possible ways we could destroy ourselves from within, we've managed to do it. We've sold our liberty for security and we shall have neither. Anyone who values free thought, free speech and inalienable rights needs this book. I plan to give it to my kids as a resource for discussion."
- Tina

"It is nearly impossible to put this book down. The author has managed to consolidate the ethos of our democratic Republic by consolidating the thoughts or words of our founders and other important thinkers from following generations. Every citizen should read this book!"
- Grumpy Pants

"My heart has been aching, wondering what our Founding Fathers would think of our country today...then I found this book. I was in tears just in the Prologue! How did we let things get so far from the original intent? How do we get it back? Every American should have and read this book!"
Cynthia Houser

"This is a fantastic read. It can be read in one day and reread the next. Steven Rabb does an excellent job of gathering opinions of all of The Founding Fathers and applying them to today's world. FIVE STARS"
-Timothy J. Tschida

PROLOGUE

SCRIBE Through a cosmic stroke of Providence, the Founding Fathers have been transported across space and time to deliver one final service to their country. The Founders have been called to survey the state of America today and recall its people to their founding principles through the crafting of a single speech.

Once again, they stand outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The intervening years have changed its gardens. The flag on its pole has noticeably more stars. And where once its backdrop was clear sky, now buildings of glass and concrete pull the eye.

The Hall itself, however, appears unchanged, its red brick unfaded, its white window casings untarnished.

All of this, together with the beauty of the day, is taken in by the Founders. Respectfully I follow, selected as their humble Scribe, as they enter the Hall by ones and twos — some deep in thought, some in private conversation — stepping once again toward the Assembly Room.

Quietly, I listen to them discuss all they have surveyed: our schools and communities, churches and culture, and economy and governments. Some speak with more energy than others. Some with more awe. But all are equal parts amazed at society's progress, and disturbed at the loss of its liberties.

Their conversations trail off as they file into the Assembly Room, pausing as a group to take in the fond familiarity of the room. Tables and chairs fill it. Cloth drapes partially cover the windows. Twin fireplaces flank the far wall covered in rich ivory paper and clean white molding.

"Just as it was so long ago," Alexander Hamilton, his blue eyes shining with restrained emotion, says in deferential tones. He looks toward the high ceiling and adds, "Not even the chandelier has changed."

"And yet," Thomas Jefferson — tall, stately and staid, as in his prime — counters, "so much else has."

The seven men continue to stand. They consider the weight of Jefferson's words as they contemplate their surroundings, its history, and their place in both.

"The power man has achieved over matter," Franklin marvels, his eyes staring out the nearest window — and at the inconceivably tall buildings they frame. "The engineering alone… truly I was born too soon," he finishes with a smile at the group.

"You worked your marvels enough," Samuel Adams ribs. "Let these inventors have their day too."

Franklin's grin grows sheepish. Then, his eyes sharpen as he focuses again on the task at hand. "Gentlemen," he says, "it is for us to write something this generation will read. To say something they will hear."

"To that I must object," Hamilton, offended, argues. "The Constitution and Federalist Papers are certainly worth reading."

"No duel with me, Mr. Hamilton," says Franklin. "I only mean to note that this generation of Americans has clearly read neither. So it is for us to reach them, as we did their forefathers so long ago."

Hamilton considers Franklin's words before offering a begrudging, "Sadly, I must agree." At that cue, each of the seven men move to their historic chairs.

Mr. Washington stands alone on the raised platform at the front of the room, his statuesque physique as commanding as ever. He moves behind the dais's long table. His hand rests briefly on the back of his mahogany chair, on the sun-shaped crest which Franklin had once described as a rising sun. He then looks out fondly at his fellow compatriots, and when he sits most follow suit.

Some remain standing though, including John Adams. Before speaking, he surveys the room from above the dark rims of his glasses. "So much that must be said, gentlemen."

"And you would say it better than any, Mr. Adams," Jefferson responds. His chair — a traditional sack-back Windsor — creaks as he eases himself into it.

The discussion begins in earnest then, words exchanged almost faster than I, their Scribe, can write.

James Madison, noticeably shorter and thinner than the rest of the group, leans with his elbows on his own chair's armrests, clears his throat, and waits for all eyes to fall on him. "This speech, gentlemen," he says with clipped,

determined, though quiet words, "must be from all of us. One voice. United."

Before he's even finished, Mr. Hamilton, from his place across the room, agrees. "Of course, but not only in our words, but also in the words of the great minds who preceded us, and perhaps from those who followed…"

"Yes yes," John Adams, with his infamous impatience, says. "Those generations who followed must be heard. So many sacrificed so much that all might be free."

"I presume, Mr. Adams, you refer to our *civil* war," Jefferson replies with biting wit. The room grows quiet as everyone tries to discern whether he means those differences between Adams and himself or the horrible conflict none in the room had lived to see. Jefferson flashes a smile to his old friend and rival, softening his words. "And I agree. They must be heard. Many generations now of patriots have watered the tree of liberty with their blood…"

"The foremost question, gentlemen," Mr. Franklin interrupts. His gray eyes, discomfortingly steady, fall in turn on everyone in the room — even me, their Scribe. "Is not who should be heard, but where to start."

"The Revolution," Samuel Adams says emphatically. His eyes quickly scan the room as if daring anyone to argue. "We

must remind the people of the blood spent to purchase their liberty."

"Agreed, Mr. Adams," his cousin John says with placating nods. "Though not only the War of Independence, but also the revolution in the hearts of the American people."

"That must be said, surely," Mr. Madison acknowledges. The rest of the room quiets to hear his words. "But we must start, gentlemen, with the development of Common Law and the philosophical genius that preceded our Constitution."

"Naturally," Mr. Hamilton says, taking to his feet and crossing the room to stand next to Madison and count him an ally. "The people must understand the rule of law and our system of checks and balances…"

"Gentlemen," Washington interrupts. "If I may?" He looks over the room and, taking their quiet for assent, stands.

Those still sitting respectfully take their feet.

John Adams breaks the lengthening silence. "And what are your thoughts, Mr. Washington?" he asks.

With all eyes on him, and the Rising Sun Chair beside him, Washington reaches into the breast pocket of the blue wool uniform he'd taken to later in life. "I humbly beseech you,

gentlemen," he says with certain authority, laying his Bible on the table, "to consider beginning here."

The room remains quiet. Each man is deep in thought.

"Of course," Jefferson says in his understated tones. "The God-given rights of mankind."

"The foundation of the rule of law," Madison follows.

Contentious even in agreement, John Adams adds, "What I see, gentlemen, is the virtue of the people."

Mr. Washington steps in, "All true, gentlemen. But first we must remind the people of the spark of divinity within each of them, the dignity bestowed by the benevolent Creator on every human soul. We start in the beginning."

Again, a quiet fills the room as Washington's words sink in.

And again, it's Jefferson who speaks first. "Of course. The beginning," he says, his eyes lost in thought. Then he turns to me and formally asks, "Sir, will you be so kind as to help us record this speech?" With a wry smile at Mr. John Adams, his friend and rival, he adds, "I would hate for anyone again to complain of my handwriting."

Everyone chuckles — Adams the hardest — as they gather round to begin their work.

Pen in hand, I set to continue taking down their words, but am restrained by a hand on my shoulder.

"Not so fast, young man," Mr. Washington says. "For without His blessing, we would not have come this far."

I sheepishly set down my pen and lower my chin as Mr. Washington reminds us in prayer of whose blessings we enjoy.

Over the hours that follow, the Founding Fathers quote philosophers from generations past, friends from their own time, and writings from the great minds of the few generations who followed them.

Disagreement enters the room but exits just as quickly, as does despair. But their passion never wavers, and the hope always returns for the future of the nation they founded and love.

We work with a deep sense of urgency, quotes rolling off their tongues so fast I can barely keep up. And just as the midnight oil burns, the Founding Fathers complete their speech and depart as suddenly as they arrived. And so my friends, my fellow guardians of liberty, it is my great honor as their Scribe, to present the heartfelt emanations of the Founding Fathers; *The Founders' Speech To A Nation In Crisis*.

Author's Note

The full length book begins with Chapter 1, Liberty, then proceeds through chapters on Conscience, Agency, Knowledge, Speech, Tyranny and Property.
For this e-book sample, we go straight to Chapter 6, Constitution.

CONSTITUTION

1 ALEXANDER HAMILTON The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the Hand of the Divinity, and can never be erased. *2 ALEXANDER HAMILTON* So why has government been instituted at all? Because the passions of men will not conform to the dictates of reason and justice without constraint. *3 THOMAS HOBBES* Simply said, the passions of men are commonly more potent than their reason. *4 GEORGE WASHINGTON* And we must take human nature as we find it, for perfection falls not to the share of mortals. *5 JAMES MADISON* And what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?

6 JAMES MADISON If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself. *7 THOMAS JEFFERSON* For man is not made for the state, but the state for man, and it derives its just powers from the consent of the governed — *8 DANIEL WEBSTER* the people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people.

9 JAMES MADISON In Europe, charters of liberty have been granted by power. But America has set the example of charters of power granted by liberty. This revolution in the practice of the world may, with an honest praise, be pronounced the most triumphant epoch in history. *10 GEORGE WASHINGTON* For I cannot conceive anything more honorable, than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people — the purest source and original fountain of all power.

11 ALEXANDER HAMILTON The origin of all civil government, justly established, must be a voluntary compact between the rulers and the ruled; and must be liable to such limitations as are necessary for the security of the absolute rights of the people. *12 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE* To secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. *13 ALEXANDER HAMILTON* For what original title can any man or set of men have to govern others, except their own consent?

14 ALEXANDER HAMILTON It has been observed by some that a democracy would be the most perfect government. Experience has proved that no position in politics is more false than this. The ancient democracies, in which the people themselves deliberated, never possessed one feature of good

government. Their very character was tyranny, their figure, deformity. *15 ALEXANDER* HAMILTON Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob. For in all the numerous assemblies, of whatever characters composed, passion never fails to wrest the scepter from reason.

16 SCRIBE Democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine. *17 SCRIBE* It is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote. *18 JAMES MADISON* Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.

19 JOHN ADAMS Power is a thing of infinite danger and delicacy and has never yet been confided to any man, or any body of men, without turning their heads. *20 JOHN ADAMS* Any man — the best, the wisest, the brightest you can find — after he should be entrusted with sufficient power, would soon be brought to think, by the strong effervescence of his selfish passions against the weaker efforts of his social refinements

in opposition to them, would soon come to believe that he was more important, more deserving, knowing and necessary than he is; that he deserved more respect, wealth, and power than he has; and that he will punish with great cruelty those who should esteem him no higher and show him no more reverence and give him no more money or power than he deserved.

21 JOHN ADAMS All men would be tyrants if they could. The meaning of that maxim, in my opinion, is no more than this plain, simple observation upon human nature which every man, who has ever read a treatise upon morality or conversed with the world or endeavored to estimate the comparative strength of the different springs of action in his own mind, must acknowledge; that a man's selfish passions are stronger than his reason; that the former will always prevail over the latter in any man left to the natural emotions of his own mind, unrestrained and unchecked by other power extrinsic to himself. *22 JOHN ADAMS* Thus, we must not depend alone upon the love of liberty in the soul of man for its preservation. *23 JOHN WINTHROP* For unbridled passions will produce the same effect, whether in a king, nobility, or a mob.

24 JAMES MADISON It has been said that all government is an evil. It would be more proper to say that the necessity of any government is a misfortune. This necessity, however, exists; and the problem to be solved is not what form of government is perfect, but which of the forms is least imperfect. *25 ALEXANDER HAMILTON* Give all power to the many, they will oppress the few. Give all power to the few, they will oppress the many. Both, therefore, ought to have power that each may defend itself against the other. *26 MONTESQUIEU* For it is necessary, from the very nature of things, that power should be a check to power.

27 WILLIAM GRAYSON Such is the history of the two opinions prevailing in the world — the one, that mankind can only be governed by force; *28 JAMES MADISON* that, as some say, there is not sufficient virtue among men for self government, and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another; *29 WILLIAM GRAYSON* the other, that humanity is capable of freedom and good government; *30 JOHN ADAMS* and that government is instituted for the common good: for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people.

31 ALEXANDER HAMILTON Real liberty is neither found in despotism or the extremes of democracy, but in moderate

governments. Thus we are forming a republican government. *32 JAMES MADISON* For as there is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. A republican form of government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form.

33 GEORGE WASHINGTON A constitutional republic is not the phantom of a deluded imagination. On the contrary, laws under no form of government are better supported, liberty and property better secured, or happiness more effectually dispensed to mankind. *34 SCRIBE* For in a republic, the constitution is not an instrument for the government to restrain the people: it is an instrument for the people to restrain the government, lest it comes to dominate their lives and interests.

35 JAMES MADISON In a republic, the great danger is that the majority may not sufficiently respect the rights of the minority. *36 JAMES MADISON* Our government, therefore, ought to secure the permanent interests of the country against innovation, to be so constituted as to protect the minority against the majority, *37 JAMES MADISON* to

guarantee the rights of the minority against a majority disposed to take unjust advantage of its power.

38 JAMES MADISON The majority, having such coexistent passion or interest must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. *39 JAMES MADISON* Ambition must be made to counteract ambition, and the interest of the man must be connected with the Constitutional rights of the place. *40 JOHN ADAMS* For we are a nation of laws, not of men.

41 JAMES MADISON The powers delegated by the Constitution to the federal government are few and defined; exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation and foreign commerce. *42 TENTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION* The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

43 JAMES MADISON Those powers which are to remain in the state governments are numerous and indefinite, extending to all the objects which in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives and liberties and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the state. *44 ALEXANDER HAMILTON* For there are certain social

principles in human nature from which we may draw the most solid conclusions with respect to the conduct of individuals and of communities. We love our families more than our neighbors; we love our neighbors more than our countrymen in general. These human affections, like the solar heat, lose their intensity as they depart from the center and become languid in proportion to the expansion of the circle on which they act. On these principles, the attachment of the individual will be first and forever secured by the state governments.

45 JAMES MADISON Each state, in ratifying the Constitution, is considered as a sovereign body, independent of all others, and only to be bound by its own voluntary act. In this relation, then, the Constitution will forever be a federal, and not a national, Constitution. *46 THOMAS JEFFERSON* To take a single step beyond the boundaries specially drawn around the powers of Congress is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition. *47 ALEXANDER HAMILTON* That state liberties, indeed, can be subverted by the federal head is repugnant to every rule of political calculation.

48 JAMES MADISON In discriminating the several classes of federal power, the next and most difficult task was to provide

some practical security for each against the invasion of the others. *49 GEORGE WASHINGTON* For the spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create whatever the form of government, a real despotism. *50 JAMES MADISON* For the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.

51 THOMAS JEFFERSON And an elective despotism was not the government we fought for, but one which should not only be founded on true free principles, but in which the powers of government should be so divided and balanced among general bodies of magistracy, as that no one body could transcend their legal limits without being effectually checked and restrained by the others.

SCRIBE Tempers flared at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 as large and small state delegates debated the structure of the legislative branch. But the tide turned in Independence Hall when Benjamin Franklin stood: *52 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN* We must consider, gentlemen, that if proportional representation takes place, the small states will contend that their liberties will be in danger. If an equality of

votes for each state is to be put in its place, the large states will say their money will be in danger. When a broad table is to be made, and the edges of planks do not fit, the artist takes a little from both, and makes a good joint.

SCRIBE And thus, the Great Compromise created a House of Representatives elected by the popular vote, and a Senate that provides equal representation through the election of two Senators for each state. Likewise, the electoral college was created to respect the interests of all the states in the selection of a President, and as a buffer against majoritarian rule.

SCRIBE As ratification of the Constitution was debated, Anti-Federalists rose up in dissent, believing that the Constitution went too far in empowering the general government, and not far enough in protecting the liberties of the people. The heated debate within each state culminated with the addition of the first ten amendments — the Bill of Rights.

53 GEORGE MASON The question, gentlemen, will be whether a consolidated government can preserve the freedom and secure the great rights of the people. I wish for such amendments, and such only as are necessary to secure the dearest rights of the people. If such amendments be introduced as shall exclude danger, I shall most gladly put

my hand to it. *54 GEORGE CLINTON* For all human authority, however organized, must have confined limits or insolence and oppression will prove the offspring of its grandeur.

55 JOHN WINTHROP A Bill of Rights will serve to secure the minority against the usurpation and tyranny of the majority. *56 JAMES MONROE* It will protect liberty of conscience in matters of religious faith; of speech and of the press; of the trial by jury in civil and criminal cases; of the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus; of the right to keep and bear arms. If these rights are well defined and secured against encroachment, it is impossible that government should ever degenerate into tyranny!

SCRIBE George Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention, and as it concluded, recognized Benjamin Franklin for closing remarks: *57 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN* Sir, I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general government necessary for us, and there is no form of government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered. I doubt, sir, whether any other convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution. For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices,

their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded like those of the builders of Babel; and that our states are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats. Thus, I consent, sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best.

58 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN As we have gathered these months, sir, I have often looked at that sun behind you without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting. But now I know that it is a rising sun. *59 SAMUEL ADAMS* For this day presents the world with the most august spectacle that its annals ever unfolded — millions of freemen, deliberately and voluntarily forming themselves into a society for their common defense and common happiness.

60 SAMUEL ADAMS You are now citizens, the guardians of your own liberties. We may justly address you, as the *decemviri*[1], as did the Romans, and say: "Nothing that we propose can pass into a law without your consent. Be yourselves, O

Americans, the authors of those laws on which your happiness depends." *61 THOMAS JEFFERSON* For this Constitution will render each of us, and our fellow citizens, the happiest and the securest, on whom the sun has ever shown.

SCRIBE Upon ratification of the Constitution, Article II vested powers in the executive branch, in the first President of the United States, George Washington. *62 PRESIDENT WASHINGTON'S FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS (PARTIAL)* Among the vicissitudes[2] incident to life no event could have filled me with greater anxieties than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order and received on the 14th day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection. On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust to which the voice of my country called me, could not but overwhelm with despondence one who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature and unpracticed in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies.

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit in this first

official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible Hand, which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency; for the voluntary consent of so many distinct communities from which the event has resulted cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established without some return of pious gratitude, along with a humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage.

As we have pledged on one side that no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests, so, on another, that the foundation of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the preeminence of free government be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the

affections of its citizens and command the respect of the world.

I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction which an ardent love for my country can inspire, since there is no truth more thoroughly established, that there exists in the economy and course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.

63 ALEXANDER HAMILTON For it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether governments are forever

destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force.

64 JOHN ADAMS It has ever been my hobbyhorse to see rising in America an empire of liberty, and a prospect of two or three hundred millions of freemen, without one noble or one king among them. You say it is impossible. If I should agree with you in this, I would still say, let us try the experiment, and preserve our equality as long as we can. *65 SCRIBE* Thus what is most important in this grand experiment, in these United States, is not the election of the first president but the election of its second president. For the peaceful transition of power is what will separate this country from every other country in the world.

66 DANIEL WEBSTER Misfortunes may be borne in our nation, and their effects can be overcome. If disastrous war should sweep away our commerce, another generation may renew it; if it exhausts our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolates and lays waste our fields, they will grow green again, and ripen to future harvests. If the walls of yonder Capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, it can be rebuilt. But who shall reconstruct the fabric of a demolished American government? Who shall rear again the well-proportioned columns of Constitutional liberty?

Who shall frame together the skillful architecture which unites national sovereignty with state rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, if these columns fall, they will not be raised again. Like the Coliseum and the Parthenon, these columns will be destined to a mournful and melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over these columns, for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw, the edifice of Constitutional American liberty.

67 FREDERICK DOUGLASS The Founding Fathers, with a sublime faith in the great principles of justice and freedom, laid deep the cornerstone of the national super-structure, which rises in grandeur around you. *68 FREDERICK DOUGLASS* For the Constitutional framers were peace men, but they preferred revolution to peaceful submission to bondage. They were quiet men, but they did not shrink from agitating against oppression. They believed in order, but not in the order of tyranny. With them, nothing was "settled" that was not right. With them, justice, liberty, and humanity were "final" — not slavery and oppression.

69 CALVIN COOLIDGE If all men are created equal, that is final. If they 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.

70 FREDERICK DOUGLASS My fellow citizens, interpreted as it ought to be, the Constitution is a glorious liberty document. Read its preamble; consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? The Constitution contains principles and purposes entirely hostile to the very existence of slavery! *71 JOHN QUINCY ADAMS* The Founding Fathers, in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, destined slavery to be banished from the earth!

72 THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (PARTIAL) 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. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. *73 PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION* We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

74 SAMUEL ADAMS Our unalterable resolution would be to be free — for the self-governing American people to be not only adequately informed but ever alert and vigorously active in forestalling whenever possible, and combating whenever necessary, any and all threats to individual liberty and to its supporting system of constitutionally limited government. *75 GEORGE WASHINGTON* Let every violation of the Constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled on whilst it has an existence!

76 ABRAHAM LINCOLN Let the Constitution be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice; in short, let it become the political religion of the nation. *77 ABRAHAM LINCOLN* Let all Americans — let all lovers of liberty everywhere — join in this great and good work. For if we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union; but we shall have so saved it, as to make, and to keep it, forever worthy of the saving. We shall have so saved it, that the succeeding millions of free happy people, the world over, shall rise up, and call us blessed, to the latest generations. *78 JAMES MADISON* For the union of these states is a wonder; the Constitution, a miracle; and their example is the hope of

liberty throughout the world. *79 WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON* Liberty for each. Liberty for all. Liberty forever.

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ENDNOTES

[1] *Decemviri:* Commissions of ten men established by the Roman Republic.

2 Vicissitudes: Changes in circumstances that naturally occur in the affairs of life.