

ESSAY REVIEW

The Papers of Thomas Jefferson

The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 20, 1 April 1791 to 4 August 1791.

Edited by JULIAN P. BOYD and RUTH LESTER. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982. xxxii, 759p. Illustrations. \$50.00.)

The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, second series, Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels, "The Philosophy of Jesus" and "The Life and Morals of Jesus."

Edited by DICKINSON W. ADAMS and RUTH W. LESTER. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1983. xii, 438p. Reproductions, appendix, index. \$30.00.)

When Julian Boyd died on May 28, 1980, thirty years after the publication of the first volume of his masterly edition of the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, nineteen volumes of what he had come to refer to as "the Enterprise" were in print, and another volume in final stages of preparation. Now, almost exactly forty years after Boyd recommended to the Thomas Jefferson Bicentennial Commission the need for a "Comprehensive Edition of the Writings of Thomas Jefferson,"¹ Princeton University Press has brought out two new volumes within less than a year of each other. The twentieth volume of the chronological first series covers April to August 1791, and *Jefferson's Abstracts from the Gospels*, begins as the first volume in a second "classified" series. Together with a separate comprehensive index to the first twenty chronological volumes, these two volumes bring to a close the Boyd years at the project, and inaugurate a new phase of "the enterprise."

The contributions made by the Boyd years at the Jefferson project are manifold. Not the least of these is the detailed and fascinating portrait of the man Jefferson, which emerges from the fullness of the documentation.² The

¹ Julian P. Boyd, *Report to the Thomas Jefferson Bicentennial Commission on the Need, Scope, Proposed Method of Preparation, Probable Cost, and Possible Means of Publishing a Comprehensive Edition of the Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. 1943. Mimeographed.

² A bibliographical summary evaluating Jefferson scholarship since 1950 is clearly beyond the scope of this essay. A testament to the importance of the Boyd edition in this process can be found in Bernard Bailyn's still-fresh and perceptive review essay of Volumes VII-XV, "Boyd's Jefferson: Notes for a Sketch," *New England Quarterly*, 33 (1960), 380-400. Other reviews of *Jefferson Papers* volumes consulted include. Lester J. Cappon, reviews of Vol. I in *The Journal of Southern History*, 16(1950), 532-534 and of Vols. XIII, XIV, and XV in *ibid.*, Vol. 26 (1960), 231-234; Merrill D. Peterson, reviews of Vol. XVII in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 23 (1966) 155-158, and of Vols. XVIII and XIX, in *ibid.*, 32 (1975), 656-658; Robert McColey, reviews of Vol. XVIII in *JSH*, 38 (1972), 656-657, Vol. XIX in *ibid.*, 41 (1975), 256, and Vol. XX, *ibid.*, 50 (1984), 114-115, Dumas Malone, review of Vol. XVII in *New York Times Book Review*, 12 Sept., 1965, 44-45

enormous influence of the Boyd edition extends far beyond its incalculable contribution to present-day Jefferson scholarship, however. Historical documentary editing as it is practiced today, its controversies as well as its accomplishments, stems from Boyd's industriousness and sense of purpose, and from his powerful example and impetus.³

The beginning of Julian P. Boyd's editorial career is closely associated with the preservation of the documentary record of Pennsylvania history. Born in Converse, South Carolina in 1903, Boyd's Pennsylvania connections began in 1927 when he became a graduate student and assistant instructor at the University of Pennsylvania. He never completed his Ph.D.; instead in 1928 he began his lifelong commitment to historical editing, working at the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society in Wilkes-Barre, where he edited the first of five volumes of *The Susquehanna Company Papers* (1928-1932).⁴ Boyd briefly left Pennsylvania to direct the New York State Historical Association in 1932, but returned in 1935 as librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. There, working with others, he edited the *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762* (1938). At the age of thirty-seven, he left Pennsylvania permanently to accept the librarianship at Princeton University, remaining there the rest of his life as editor of the comprehensive edition of the papers of Thomas Jefferson.⁵

Boyd sometimes explained that he had "been struck by lightning" in being called to the task of presenting the complete Jefferson to the twentieth century. His vision of what that entailed was expansive: because of Jefferson's "complete identity with the national purpose as it was pursued during his day," wrote Boyd in his introduction to the first volume of the *Papers*, Jefferson's correspondence and other writings are more than "the record of a remarkable man's career," or even "the best single gateway to the eighteenth century in America. . . . Above all, these volumes should be regarded as the embodi-

³ There is an extensive and growing literature on the theory and practice of historical documentary editing, much of it enriched by interdisciplinary comparisons with the work of literary editors. Comprehensive bibliographies of this literature include Ross W. Beales, Jr., "Documentary Editing: A Bibliography," in *The Maryland Historian*, 8(1980), 27-37; Frank B. Evans, "Publications Programs and Historical Editing," in *Modern Archives and Manuscripts: A Select Bibliography* (Chicago, 1975), 97-101; and Oliver W. Holmes, "Recent Writings Relevant to Documentary Publication Programs," *American Archivist*, 26 (1963), 137-142. A comprehensive overview of the changing expectations that reviewers and scholars have had of edited historical documents is in Fredrika J. Teute, "Views in Review: A Historiographical Perspective on Historical Editing," *American Archivist*, 43 (1980), 43-56.

⁴ Boyd only completed one of the five volumes; his successor, Robert J. Taylor, later became the Editor-in-Chief of *The Adams Papers*.

⁵ For a brief description of Julian Boyd's training and career, see "The Achievement of Julian Boyd," *Annotation*, 8 (July 1980), 2, 8.

ment of an idea" whose purpose "aimed beyond his own time or his own country." That idea was nothing less than "the most potent idea of modern history," comprising the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and reaffirmed by Jefferson fifty years later just before his death. It connected "the blessings and security of self-government" to "the free right to the unbounded exercise of reason and freedom of opinion" of all "the mass of mankind."⁶ Critics have argued since that this urgency of purpose embedded in the new edition of the Jefferson papers was colored with the political overtones of the cold war in a time when Jefferson's ideals seemed to be facing a formidable worldwide challenge.⁷

Boyd's vision of both the enormity and the importance of the task at hand led him to approach editing in a new way. His original plan called first for locating and assembling, in photofacsimile form, "the entire Jefferson documentation." The enterprise would be completed by "the publication of *all* of the papers assembled (some to be sure, in only summary form)."⁸ The search for Jefferson documents occupied the staff fully for the first several years, and to a limited degree, continues still. It encompassed every extant version not only of every known letter or other document actually written by Jefferson, but also public documents about which he expressed opinions, and letters written to him, or letters that "because of their allusion to him or because they passed through his hands, deserve to be printed or at least recorded among his papers."⁹

By 1949, the search had yielded 50,000 items drawn from the collections of 242 private owners and 181 institutions. To exercise both physical and intellectual control over the photostatic copies of these documents, which for the first time enabled a major editorial project to have within its editorial office facsimiles of all the texts being transcribed, Boyd and his staff devised a detailed record-keeping system.¹⁰ Together with a bibliography file of all publications about Jefferson, this internal information system enabled the editorial

⁶ Julian P. Boyd, "Some Animadversions on Being Struck by Lightning," *Daedalus*, 86 (1955), 49-56; Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), I: vii-xi; Jefferson to Roger C. Weightman, 24 June 1826, *ibid.*, xi.

⁷ Jesse Lemisch, "The American Revolution Bicentennial and the Papers of Great White Men: A Preliminary Critique of Current Documentary Publication Programs and Some Alternative Proposals," *AHA Newsletter*, 9 (1971), 7-21, *passim.*; see too the assessment by Teute, "Historiographical Perspective," 43-45.

⁸ Lyman H. Butterfield, "The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Progress and Procedures in the Enterprise at Princeton," *The American Archivist*, 12 (1949), 131-132.

⁹ Boyd, *Jefferson*, I: xiii-xiv.

¹⁰ Julian P. Boyd, *Directive Number 1, Directions Governing the Handling of Original Manuscripts and Photostats or Photo-Enlargements* (Princeton, Princeton University Library, Editorial Office, nd), 2-3.

staff to relate individual documents to each other and to the broader problems of the man and of his age, and formed a valuable resource in the preparation of annotations.

It was in these annotations that Boyd and his staff made a radical departure from past editing practices. Lyman H. Butterfield, Boyd's close associate in the Jefferson enterprise before he left to direct the publication of the Adams family papers, explained in 1948 that "we have arrived after a good deal of thought and experimenting at the conclusion that exhaustive annotation of such a large mass of documents is not feasible." The purpose of annotations, he noted, "is to provide information essential to understanding each document presented." To interpret that purpose too broadly, he warned, "would not infrequently produce explanatory material well in excess of the documents explained." Butterfield outlined two important exceptions to such a policy of moderation, however: notes on familiar topics would be furnished "when the editors find themselves in possession of new facts gathered in the ordinary editorial process," or had access to sources not readily available to others. "Furthermore, routine standards will not be applied in annotating documents that are of special importance, or that present unusual features or problems."¹¹

By the time the first volume appeared, Boyd had settled on a general form of annotation that was followed throughout the first twenty volumes. Normally, notes consisted of a descriptive note giving information about the physical form, location, and disposition of all known versions of a document; an explanatory note commenting on or clarifying material within the document; and, when necessary, textual notes recording corrections or significant differences between variant copies of documents.¹² In addition, Boyd explained, such "important and complex" documents as the Constitution of Virginia of 1776 and the Declaration of Independence, where several texts existed, or a series of related documents shed light on the principal one, would require not only separate notes for each part, but "also a general introductory comment to the whole."¹³

The annotation policy allowed the editors flexibility. Butterfield had noted, however, a circumstance that opened Pandora's box for the Jefferson project and its laudable intentions:

we find ourselves repeatedly amazed by the lack of reliable information on many phases of Jefferson's career. . . . It is impossible to find full and reliable accounts of such capital matters as the revision of the Virginia laws, the history of

¹¹ Butterfield, "The Enterprise at Princeton," 143. The note on "Editorial Method" in the first volume of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* repeated much of Butterfield's explanation of the philosophy of annotation nearly verbatim, see especially xxxiii, xxxiv.

¹² Boyd, ed., *Jefferson*, I: xxxv-xxxvii.

¹³ *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

the Democratic-Republican party, Jefferson's appointments as President and his introduction of Anglo-Saxon into the American college curriculum. The documentation to be presented in the Papers of Thomas Jefferson will throw light on all these and a host of other imperfectly charted or quite uncharted areas in our political and cultural history.¹⁴

At first reviewers were delighted at the results of such attention to annotation and explanation. Lester J. Cappon, who would later edit Jefferson letters himself, regarded the brief—none exceeding ten pages—introductory essays to groups of documents in the first Jefferson volume as “gems of historical criticism, as interesting and provocative as the manuscripts to which they pertain.”¹⁵ St. George L. Sioussat commented approvingly of the second volume on “a remarkable editorial note, that runs to twenty pages.”¹⁶ Cappon retained his admiration as the editorial notes proliferated and expanded, remarking in his reviews of volumes 15-17 “these editorial essays in historical and textual criticism are among the more notable contributions to scholarship in these volumes,” and arguing elsewhere that Boyd's work in annotation in particular “has raised editorship to new levels of attainment.”¹⁷

But as the relative number of pages of documents compared to those of editorial comment in each *Jefferson* volume decreased, as the time covered by each volume shrank to accommodate the growing annotations, as the scholarly effort to produce what were in effect carefully crafted monographs on important subjects lengthened the time between the appearance of new volumes, criticism of Boyd's method increased. The shift toward the more comprehensive annotation destroyed Boyd's original estimate that all of *The Jefferson Papers* could be encompassed in fifty volumes and played havoc with his early publication schedule.¹⁸ In a review of Volume 17, Merrill D. Peterson

¹⁴ Butterfield, “The Enterprise at Princeton,” 145.

¹⁵ Review in *The Journal of Southern History*, 16 (1950), 532-34. Cappon's edition of *The Adams-Jefferson Letters, The Complete Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams* (Chapel Hill, 1959) in two volumes, has relatively brief introductory essays to long sections of correspondence, and a minimum of explanatory annotations.

¹⁶ Review in *American Historical Review*, 56 (1951), 586.

¹⁷ Review in *Journal of Southern History*, 26 (1960), 234, Cappon's discussion of the principles of good editing in “A Rationale for Historical Editing Past and Present,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 23 (1966), quoted here from page 58, is used at the NHPRC annual “Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents” in the training of future editors.

¹⁸ The first twelve volumes of *The Jefferson Papers* appeared at the rate of two per year from 1950 through 1955, publication of the next eight was spread out over twenty-six years, with a volume appearing in 1956, two in 1958, and one each in 1961, 1965, 1971, 1974 and 1982. A “Tentative Breakdown of the Edition into Volumes” in an Appendix to “The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Directive Number 2 Concerning Editorial Procedures and Rules for Preparing the Text” (Editorial Office, Princeton University Library, Revised Issue, May 1947) estimated that the first twenty volumes would bring publication of the Jefferson corpus to May of 1803, whereas the actual twentieth volume closes with correspondence dated August 4, 1791. It should be noted, of course, that the original estimate was never intended to be binding, and that some of the miscalculation was a result, not of editorial apparatus, but of discovery of more extensive Jefferson material than had been anticipated in 1947.

questioned Boyd's extensive clarification of the role of Hamilton in the war crisis of 1790, a matter "which touched the Secretary of State only indirectly, and for the most part, unknowingly," not for its anti-Hamilton animus nor its length, but for the appropriateness of its inclusion in the *Jefferson Papers*. While admiring the scholarship it encompassed, and recognizing Boyd's desire to "assess the validity of those [policies] to which in some degree [Jefferson's] are a response," Peterson wondered "whether so large an obligation properly rests on the editor of a single statesman's papers." The question, he thought, raised real problems for the future of the Jefferson project.¹⁹

Peterson remained convinced that, on the whole, more was gained in the process than was lost: "Individually and collectively Boyd's historical essays are of great value, impressive in their documentation, astonishing in their range and insight, and indispensable for any serious student of the period."²⁰ Another reviewer was blunter, however: "this edition of Jefferson's Papers, like the great cathedrals, may take centuries to complete. Once again the editorial notes. . . make up a book within a book."²¹ Indeed, one of Boyd's most remarkable notes, the introduction to the series of fifteen documents linked together as "The War Crisis of 1790," was published as a separate book shortly before the note and the documents appeared again in their entirety in Volume 17.²² The thesis of these "books within books" increasingly centered around a remarkably detailed defense of Jefferson's contributions by means of a spirited attack on the claims of others, particularly Alexander Hamilton, for attention or credit. Boyd's growing and ardent identification with Jefferson's political cause sometimes marred the persuasiveness of the documents themselves.

It is in this context that Volume 20 of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, covering the period April 10 to August 4, 1791 can best be described as vintage Boyd. Readers of the letters and documents rejoin Jefferson a brief month after the final adjournment of the First Federal Congress on March 3, 1791. The most notable events for Jefferson that spring and summer, both publicly and personally, were the arrival and publication by Samuel Harrison Smith of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, and a physically and politically rejuvenating trip to New York, Vermont, and Connecticut with James Madison from May 17 until June 19. Apart from this northern journey, Jefferson resided in Philadelphia, conducting unofficial diplomacy on Indian affairs,

¹⁹ Review in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 23 (1966), 157-158.

²⁰ Review of Volumes XVIII and XIX, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 32 (1975), 657.

²¹ Robert McColley, review of Vol. XIX, *The Journal of Southern History*, 41 (1975), 256.

²² Julian P. Boyd, ed., *Number 7: Alexander Hamilton's Secret Attempts to Control American Foreign Policy* (Princeton, 1964).

negotiating Philip Freneau's appointment as a translator for the Department of State, considering plans to repay the debt to France, and drawing preliminary designs for a new capital city on the Potomac. On each of these problems, as well as on the application of Tench Cox to fill the newly vacant office of Comptroller of the Treasury, and on the mishandling by Joshua Johnson, American consul in London, of an incident over the Brigantine Rachel, Boyd has written extensive introductory notes.

The fifty-nine documents comprising these eight groups occupy ninety-seven pages of large-type text; the notes that precede them fill 239 pages more in much smaller type. Together, they occupy nearly half of a volume, of whose total number of 412 documents they represent less than one sixth. The most remarkable of these essays is the first, in which Boyd devotes nearly seventy pages to demonstrating, in effect, that most of what is worthwhile in the grand design of the city of Washington can be attributed to the studied vision of Thomas Jefferson, while design failures should be blamed on the monumental ego and poor judgment of Pierre Charles l'Enfant. Boyd charges that George Washington, in his urgency to ensure that the new capital was fixed on the Potomac rather than usurped by Philadelphia, was at least in part responsible for much of what was poorly done. Washington gave L'Enfant ill-defined and perhaps excessive authority over important decisions, and then spent precious time attempting to conciliate between this volatile and unreliable engineer and the Commissioners of the Federal District charged by Congress with responsibility for overseeing the enterprise. To Jefferson, the President's most trusted advisor in this matter, fell much of the task of soothing ruffled Commissioners, negotiating with the intractable L'Enfant, carrying out Washington's directives for the location of the public executive buildings, and improving on and guiding into published and more complete form the Frenchman's rough idea for "divergent avenues cutting across the basic gridiron." The animus toward L'Enfant that characterizes the tone of the essay makes one want to fault Boyd's conclusions. But so comprehensive is the research in primary sources, stretching forward to the eventual dismissal of L'Enfant in March of 1792, so detailed the explication of events, so elegant the weaving together of the whole into an extended argument, that even a sceptic emerges with wholehearted admiration for the inimitable skills of this unique editor.

The other seven essays, though shorter, are as thorough. Lifelong immersion in the documentation, not just of Jefferson but of his time, enabled Boyd to provide insights into specific events that even Jefferson's most indefatigable biographers have missed. An example is the political explosion detonated by the American publication of *The Rights of Man*, whose preface quoted without authorization Jefferson's privately penned satisfaction that "something is at length to be publicly said against the political heresies which

have sprung up among us." Boyd concludes that one of the consequences of the ensuing debate, which brought Jefferson into open confrontation with Vice President John Adams over fundamental republican principles, was a deterioration of the relationship between Jefferson and George Washington as well. Though Boyd is critical of the manipulations of Alexander Hamilton, he does not absolve Jefferson of political motivations, nor endorse a view of Jefferson as a disinterested statesman. On the contrary, here as in the essays on the northern journey of Madison and Jefferson, and on their abortive attempt to ensure publication of a Republican newspaper by giving Freneau a sinecure in the State Department, Boyd portrays a Jefferson passionately involved in political events and planning.

Similar conclusions emerge from the remaining 353 documents in the volume as well. Of those calendared, 113 are brief synopses of letters written to Jefferson on a variety of public and private topics; only 150 of the remainder were actually written by Jefferson. Throughout, the notes constitute a tour de force of research, making them the necessary first bibliographic resort for any scholar contemplating study of subjects touched upon by Jefferson. The Jefferson-connected documents printed in large type are supplemented by numerous other primary source materials, printed (often in full) in small type in the notes. A particularly useful example is the lengthy, frank, and critical evaluation of the direction of the French Revolution that William Short sent to his friend William Nelson on February 21, 1791 (pp. 226-227).

The documents are not, of course, all on political matters. When a "relation" by marriage, Charles Carter, wrote as a worried father to enquire about the costs and quality of a medical education at Philadelphia for his son, Jefferson found time in his full schedule of public business to determine exact costs of training in "Physics" both in Philadelphia and in Scotland, and assured his friendship and assistance should the young man come to Philadelphia (pp. 474, 613).

Documents throughout are transcribed with relatively little editorial interference.²³ Non-English texts (a number in this volume are in French) are not translated. In this volume, as in all of those since the first twelve in this series, an alphabetic listing of contents has simplified location of a particular document. A welcome note on the final page informs readers that a single consolidated "comprehensive index of persons, places, etc." will be published as

²³ A "middle course" in transcription policy between "facsimile reproduction" and "complete modernization" was spelled out by Boyd in the introduction to the first volume, and has been adhered to since. A detailed examination and critique of the inconsistencies of the Boyd attempt to approximate "scrupulous exactness" in the presentation of texts while protecting readers from distracting Jeffersonian "mannerisms" can be found in G. Thomas Tanselle, *The Editing of Historical Documents* (Charlottesville, 1977), 8-14.

Volume 21, and each subsequent volume will contain its own index. A brief series of illustrations printed on heavy paper stock appears in the center of the volume; unfortunately two reproductions (the 1791 printing of L'Enfant's Plan of the Seat of Government, and a satirical cartoon of "Contrasted Opinions of Paine's Pamphlet") appear in such a small scale that they are virtually indecipherable without a magnifying glass.

The character of the first volume in the topical series of Jefferson papers, *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels*, is distinctively different from those in the chronological series. In part, this can be attributed to editorship. Though carried forward for several years under the editorial direction of Julian Boyd, this volume had its origins as the Brown University doctoral dissertation of its principal editor, Dickinson W. Adams. Adams's death in 1977, and Boyd's in 1980, left the manuscript fundamentally complete, but with some editorial details still to be polished. The resulting volume is thus the hybrid creation of a number of able scholars. A new introduction to the primary documents edited by Dickinson Adams and supervised by Boyd was written by Eugene Sheridan, a new associate editor at the Jefferson Papers. Final decisions about form, such as the appendix constituting "all sources from the Jefferson papers that relate to the compilation of the gospel extracts," (p. x) and the superb index, became the responsibility of the new general editor, Charles Cullen. *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels* is thus notable, not only for its inauguration of a new series and its remarkable content contribution in its own right, but as an indication of how we might expect future volumes in both chronological and topical series to be shaped.

The volume consists of facsimile reproductions of the two compilations of New Testament texts made by Jefferson, after a method followed by other eighteenth-century thinkers of clipping scriptural verses and rearranging them for the author's own purpose. The first of these is the most remarkable. "The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth," compiled in English by Jefferson early in 1804, is not known to exist today. Dickinson Adams has painstakingly recreated the missing manuscript, using two sources: the mutilated copies of two King James Version Gospels (now in the University of Virginia collections) from which Jefferson clipped the verses to compose it; and a list of the Gospel passages (copied most probably by Jefferson's granddaughter), the original of which Adams believes to have been Jefferson's own guide to the clipping process. An extensive essay by Adams on the reconstruction process that he followed, as well as the numerous checks he devised to verify his decisions of what to include and exclude, is convincing. The facsimile was made by clipping Jefferson's chosen verses from photostats of un mutilated copies of the exact editions owned by Jefferson, virtually identical New Testaments printed by George Grierson in Dublin, one in 1791 and the other in 1799. The detective work involved in the process was painstaking and ingenious. Adams

also prepared commendably concise notes “to enable the reader to judge the accuracy of the reconstructed text” (p. 107).

The extant compilation of textual extracts from Greek, Latin, French and English versions of the Gospels that Jefferson made in 1820 presented far fewer difficulties for the editor. Acquired by the Smithsonian Institution in 1895, “The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth” was printed in a facsimile edition at federal expense in 1904, and has been reprinted and commented upon several times since. The justification for reprinting it yet again in facsimile form in the present volume is the opportunity to place it in juxtaposition to the reconstructed “Philosophy of Jesus,” with notes for both compilations pointing out relationships between the two, and calling attention to verses used in one but not in the other. In addition, the notes to “The Life and Morals of Jesus” supply (in all four languages) the remaining portions of those verses which Jefferson used only in part.

To the texts of these two “Jefferson Bibles” the editors have added an appendix of fifty-five letters, written to thirty-one different individuals, and including nine from others to Jefferson, for the period August 22, 1800 to January 17, 1825. Though these by no means exhaust the materials dealing with Jefferson’s expressions of religious ideas, they are a welcome supplement to understanding the theological assumptions about the nature and character of Jesus that underlie both sets of biblical extracts. Each of these letters is briefly annotated. It is to these documents and their notes, and to the texts of the several introductions—to the volume as a whole, and to each of the compilations—that the index entries primarily refer. The subheadings in that index are in order of appearance, rather than alphabetical, and the whole is a welcome example of the intentions of the editors for future volumes.

In his judicious and concise introduction, Eugene Sheridan has convincingly demonstrated that “Jefferson’s rational religion was perhaps nowhere better expressed than in his two compilations of extracts from the New Testament” (p. 3). He does this without usurping future scholarly investigations into the intricacies of Jefferson’s faith or the ramifications of the texts published here. Sheridan concludes that the 1804 “Philosophy of Jesus” and the “Syllabus” that preceded it in 1803 had a political rather than purely personal motivation: Jefferson wished to “rebut those who were assailing his character on religious grounds,” and he wished “to set forth a demystified form of Christianity that he deemed appropriate for a society that had chosen to live according to republican principles” (p. 13). By contrast, “The Life and Morals of Jesus” was intended “strictly for his own moral and religious instruction” (p. 38). Both encompass the key elements to Jefferson’s belief that he was himself a Christian “in the only sense in which he [Jesus] wished anyone to be; sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to

himself every human excellence, and believing he never claimed any other."²⁴ These elements included a firm monotheism, a determined anti-trinitarianism, a reverence for the moral teachings and life of Jesus, and a hope of life after death.

The nature of the two main documents in this volume, plus the mixture of different individual contributions to its compiling, make it inappropriate to infer any new directions at the Jefferson Papers on this basis alone. Yet two things in particular seem to promise modifications that will conserve Boyd's legacy while making individual volumes meet the scholarly demand for more rapid publication and accessibility than prevailed during his last years. Sheridan's introduction, briefer though no less thorough or scholarly, seems both to uphold Boyd's tradition for rigor and excellence and to respond to the concerns of his critics about excessive length. Charles Cullen, the new editor-in-chief, has been one of those in the lead in the new technology of computer-generated indexing, recognizing that the access it gives to ideas within the documents is one of the most important contributions that editorial projects make to scholarship. The index in this volume sets high standards for those in subsequent volumes of the chronological series.

In many ways *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* has been the flagship project for historical documentary editors. The "Boyd method" has permanently changed for the better the form in which most students of the past will discover our documentary heritage.²⁵ As documentary editors respond to financial pressures to streamline annotations, and to publish more highly selective letterpress editions in conjunction with complete microform editions, other models have emerged for editors to follow too. None have improved upon Boyd's dedication to the highest standards of reliability and scholarship. Both of these recent additions to the *Jefferson Papers* reaffirm that those standards are alive and well in the "enterprise at Princeton."

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²⁴ Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, April 21, 1803, Dickinson W. Adams, ed., *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels* (Princeton, 1983), 331.

²⁵ Nevertheless, as Charles Cullen points out in his Foreword to Volume XX, "the new methods and high standards that have made these volumes famous were established by Mr. Boyd specifically for Thomas Jefferson's papers. He did not believe that every collection of papers of every historical figure warranted the same treatment" (p. viii).

