

The Most Powerful Tool Extension Quotes

[Extract from “Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge” \(1778\)](#)

“Guard the sacred deposit of the rights and liberties of their fellow citizens.”

Thomas Jefferson to George Wythe (Paris, Aug 13, 1786)

“I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised, for the preservation of freedom and happiness.”

“Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish & improve the law by educating the common people.”

“Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests & nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.”

Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph (Paris, August 27, 1786)

“Knowledge indeed is a desirable , a lovely possession. ... ”

Thomas Jefferson to Edward Carrington (Paris, January 16, 1787)

“The way to prevent these irregular interpositions of the people is to give them full information of their affairs thro’ the channel of the public papers, and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of the people. The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them.”

“Cherish therefore the spirit of our people, and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them. If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves.”

Thomas Jefferson to John Wyche (Monticello, May 19, 1809)

“the people of every country are the only safe guardians of their own rights, and are the only instruments which can be used for their destruction.”

Thomas Jefferson to Governor Tyler (May 26, 1810)

“I have indeed two great measures at heart, without which no republic can maintain itself in strength. 1. That of general education, to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom. 2. Divide every county into hundreds, of such size that all the children of each will be within a central school of it... These little republics would be the main strength of the great one. We owe to them the vigor given to our revolution in its commencement in the Eastern States.”

Thomas Jefferson to J.C. Cabell (January 31, 1814)

“There are two subjects, indeed, which I shall claim a right to further as long as I breathe, the public education, and the sub-division of counties into wards. I consider the continuance of republican government as absolutely hanging on these two hooks. Of the first, you will, I am sure, be an advocate, as having already reflected on it, and of the last, when you shall have reflected.”

Thomas Jefferson to John Adams (July 5, 1814)

“When sobered by experience, I hope our successors will turn their attention to the advantages of education. I mean of education on the broad scale, and not that of the petty academies, as they call themselves, which are starting up in every neighborhood, and where one or two men, possessing Latin and sometimes a Greek, a knowledge of the globes, and the first six books on Euclid, imagine and communicate this as the sum of science. They commit their pupils to the theatre of the world, with just taste enough of learning to be alienated from industrious pursuits and not enough to do service in the ranks of science.”

Thomas Jefferson to Charles Yancey (Monticello, January 6, 1816)

“if a nation expects to be ignorant & free, in a state of civilisation, it expects what never was & never will be. the functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty & property of their constituents. there is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information. where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.”

Thomas Jefferson to Pierre Samuel DuPont de Nemours (Monticello, April 24, 1816)

“Enlighten the people the generally, and tyranny and oppressions of body & mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of the day.”

Thomas Jefferson to John Adams (Monticello, August 1, 1816)

“Bigotry is the disease of ignorance, of morbid minds; enthusiasm of the free and buoyant. Education and free discussion are the antidotes of both. We are destined to be a barrier against the returns of ignorance and barbarism.”