
If the Framers Despaired, Should We?

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A Review of:

Fears of a Setting Sun: The Disillusionment of America's Founders, by Dennis C. Rasmussen (Princeton), <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691210230/fears-of-a-setting-sun>

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Other Views:

- John O. McGinnis, "Sinking in Luxury, Sloth, and Vice," *LAW & LIBERTY* (Feb. 25, 2021), <https://lawliberty.org/book-review/sinking-in-luxury-sloth-and-vice/>.
- Thomas Koenig, *We Should All Be Madisonians*, *THE DISPATCH* (Apr. 13, 2021), <https://thedispatch.com/p/we-should-all-be-madisonians>.
- Francis Wilkinson, *Even America's Founders Were Disillusioned With America*, *Bloomberg Opinion* (Mar. 22, 2021), <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-03-22/america-s-founders-were-disillusioned-with-america-too>.

The last few years have seen a movement to denigrate the men in the late 18th century who were instrumental in fighting our Revolution and in establishing the Constitution. Much of this is on the grounds that many of them (most, if not all, of the framers from the South) were slaveholders, and the 1789 Constitution preserved their right to maintain their "peculiar institution." So it is that lately framers' statues have been toppled or removed, and there is talk, even, of renaming old and established universities such as Washington & Lee.

And yet, those Founders' visages peer at us from our coins and currency, biographies of framers continue to pour from the presses, and one Founder, Alexander Hamilton (who was actually against slavery) was the subject of a wildly successful Broadway musical. Another Founder, John Adams, was the hero of a popular television series, and monuments to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson still draw tourists to our nation's capital. To this day, *The Federalist*, the work of three of those Founders—Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay—remains the authoritative guide to interpreting the Constitution, and if the Founders are now not quite the mythical heroes they once were, their influence still looms large.

Why should that be, given that they lived two centuries ago, and the country has so dramatically changed since then? Part of the veneration we have for the founding generation is probably accounted for by the fact that in this country we have no monarchy, no aristocracy, and no established church—institutions that elsewhere serve to bind together the nation. What we do have (or had until very recently) was a general faith in our laws and Constitution, the product of the framing era, and thus a natural interest in the men who produced them.

Every now and then, a debunking work on the framers appears, and it is now fashionable among many of our legal academics to dismiss the Constitution as an anachronism—fit perhaps for the 18th century, and a country of 3 million, but hardly appropriate for a 21st century country with one hundred times the population, much more ethnic and cultural diversity, and a vastly greater geographical territory.

Dennis Rasmussen's effort is something different, though, and he claims that his is the first monograph actually to explore in depth how the Founders themselves became disillusioned with what they had done, and, indeed, in some cases, with the American people. His thesis in *Fears of a Setting Sun: The Disillusionment of America's Founders* is that virtually all of the framers came to lose faith in the future of their country. Anyone who has read the early 19th century correspondence between Adams and Jefferson (resumed after a period of estrangement)¹ knows that the two came to the realization that the nation they viewed from their old age was different from the one they had

¹ See, e.g., GORDON WOOD, *FRIENDS DIVIDED: JOHN ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON* (2017).

initiated. But Rasmussen appears to suggest that one could say something similar about Washington, as well as Hamilton. Indeed, of the framers examined here, only Madison enters old age (and he lived longer than any of the others) with his optimism about the country still intact.

One does wonder what the purpose of Rasmussen's endeavor is. He makes it clear that one reason he wrote the book was that no one had attempted anything similar before, and he invokes the explicit approval of his project of the dean of early American historians, Gordon Wood,² whose work he often refers to. Indeed, Wood himself wrote a similar work on the framers, *Revolutionary Characters*, a few years ago.³ That book presents Wood's view that the democratic nation that eventually arose from the Revolution was something very different from what the framers had anticipated, and that they had created a situation unlikely to produce great men of their caliber. As Rasmussen says, "No less an authority on the period than Gordon Wood has written that the bustling democratic society that the American Revolution unleashed, 'was not the society the revolutionary leaders had wanted or expected.'"⁴

Rasmussen is out to show not just that the Founders' views changed, but that they were eventually *disillusioned*. Perhaps if Rasmussen's thesis is correct, it might lead us to wonder if what the Founders created—the Constitution in particular—ought not to be subjected to the veneration it has enjoyed, but if Rasmussen is a critic of the Constitution, it's not completely clear. Indeed, it's not at all certain that Rasmussen believes that the framers are not due the adoration they have been accorded over much of our history. This book, is, surprisingly, a splendid and very readable summary of the achievements, politics, morals, and character of the framers, and Rasmussen actually makes a fair case that we should continue to hold them in high esteem. There may even be a bit of a problem with the idea that we ought to make much of their disillusionment, if such there was.

In any event, there is much here that has relevance to our current fractious political situation, and this is, when all is said and done, one of the best-written and enticing reviews of the founding generation ever published. What then, does Rasmussen have to say about the Founders, and what ought we to conclude about his conclusions?

His basic thesis is simply and repeatedly stated: the five key Founders Rasmussen examines grew disillusioned with the country they had founded in various ways. George Washington, during his second term as President, grew to be horrified by the rise of political parties (in particular the opposition to him led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison). Alexander Hamilton, who served as Washington's Secretary of the Treasury, observing the working of the new United States Constitution, concluded that the federal government it provided for was not sufficiently vigorous or energetic to do what the country needed it to do.

2 DENNIS C. RASMUSSEN, REVIEW OF FEARS OF A SETTING SUN: THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF AMERICA'S FOUNDERS IX (2021) [hereinafter Rasmussen].

3 GORDON WOOD, REVOLUTIONARY CHARACTERS: WHAT MADE THE FOUNDERS DIFFERENT (2006).

4 Rasmussen at 3.

John Adams, first Washington's Vice President and then his successor in the Presidency, concluded that the American people did not have the necessary virtue to maintain a republic and that, instead of understanding the character of republican government, the American people were too inclined to democracy. Thomas Jefferson, who succeeded Adams as President, by 1820 concluded that sectional divisions over the slavery issue would break apart the nation if they didn't lead to a race war. Only James Madison, who succeeded Jefferson as President, remained essentially an optimist.

Even those who've read multiple biographies of these key Founders will still find some powerful insights here, revealed not only because of Rasmussen's familiarity with the key secondary sources, but also because of Rasmussen's detailed examination of the primary sources, particularly the framers' personal correspondence, but also their pamphleteering (in the case of Hamilton) and their scholarly writing (in the case of Adams and Madison).

I. GEORGE WASHINGTON

Rasmussen does an excellent job backing up his assertion that George Washington was "the one truly indispensable figure of the Founding Era,"⁵ not just because he was a great general in the Revolutionary War, but because, for a while at least, he could stand above party and faction (both of which he abhorred). By the sheer force of his prestige in presiding over the Constitutional Convention, Washington was able to persuade his fellow Virginia delegates to approve the new document, ensuring it received the necessary states for ratification. Washington's influence was so great that both Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson—whose aims for the new nation were so divergent—both accepted positions in Washington's cabinet, assuring that his administration had the talent and the broad support it needed.

Washington's embrace of Hamilton's plan to incorporate a national bank (which Jefferson and Madison opposed) was crucial in putting the nation on a secure financial footing, along with Hamilton's funding of the national debt, and the attendant compromise in 1790 moving the nation's capital from the North to the South. Things were not as smooth in Washington's second term, when there was a rebellion in western Pennsylvania (over the excise tax on whiskey), and when the split between the Hamiltonian Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans broke into open journalistic warfare, and into the kind of partisan acrimony that is not uncommon in our own time. Still, Rasmussen makes out a plausible case that no President has ever accomplished more than did Washington.

Rasmussen makes a convincing suggestion that Washington's Farewell Address (drafted by Hamilton, but reworked by Washington himself) was the third most important American document (after the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution).⁶ Rasmussen's Chapter 3, on the Farewell Address, nicely demonstrates that Washington, insofar as he lambasted sectional and party differences and warned against entangling foreign alliances, actually set forth a program for consensus in American politics that, over the next two centuries, often was

5 *Id.* at 17.

6 *Id.* at 45.

adhered to, and often worked. Rasmussen also notes the Farewell Address's expressed hope "that the promotion of morality, religion, and education might help to foster moderation."⁷ But that hope, at least according to Rasmussen, was not something that could realistically be maintained. Indeed, Rasmussen claims that during the 1798-1800 quasi-war with France, in the Adams administration, when Washington acted in support of Adams's efforts against America's internal and external enemies, Washington's "unmatched integrity, judgment and independence had given way to the kind of blinkered partisan animus that he had so long abhorred. It was a sad end to an illustrious public career."⁸

Here, though, Rasmussen may underestimate the force of the perception on the part of Washington and many other Federalists that their domestic political opponents—and those opponents' alliances with France and other European powers—really did pose a threat to the nation's continued independence. Rasmussen claims that Washington eventually was plunged into a deep despair for the nation he had helped found, when the man regarded as the father of his country acknowledged that

I have, for sometime past, viewed the political concerns of the United States with an anxious, and painful eye. They appear to me, to be moving by hasty strides to some awful crisis; but in what they will result—that Being, who sees, forsees, and directs all things, alone can tell.⁹

It's quite possible, however, that this may have been more an expression of Washington's religious faith, or a kind of Christian pessimism about the nature of life on earth, than doubts about the Founders' design.

II. ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Rasmussen nicely demonstrates Hamilton's doubts about the Federal Constitution and, indeed, limns Hamilton's admiration for the *British* Constitution, with its monarchy and aristocracy. Given Hamilton's later and successful defense of our Constitution in *The Federalist*, it is jarring to be reminded that if Hamilton had had his way, we would have had a life term for the President (in effect, an elective monarch), and life terms not only for federal judges, but also for United States Senators. Rasmussen joins Gordon Wood in remarking that Hamilton was no friend to "Democracy," but Rasmussen acknowledges that no one worked harder than Hamilton in getting the Constitution accepted. He wrote 51 of the 85 essays in *The Federalist*, the original aim of which was to get the population of his native New York (and its delegates to the ratifying convention) to support the proposed Constitution.

Rasmussen also demonstrates that *The Federalist* was far from the only polemical undertaking by Hamilton, and that if Washington was indispensable, Hamilton's contribution to the founding was second only to Washington's. Given the objective data Rasmussen presents of Hamilton's activities before, during, and after Washington's two terms, Washington's primacy in indispensability may actually be in some doubt.

⁷ *Id.* at 48.

⁸ *Id.* at 55.

⁹ *Id.* at 58.

Just as Rasmussen suggests that Washington may have overreacted to the Republican opposition to the Federalists, Rasmussen appears to suggest that Hamilton went too far when he railed against the opposition from Jefferson and Madison to his financial program. He criticizes Hamilton's characterization of those two titans as "rabid" and "indiscriminate" and Hamilton's claim that they were willing "to risk rendering the Government itself odious."¹⁰ And yet given the extraordinary mendacity of the Jefferson-influenced opposition press, surely Hamilton had a point.¹¹

III. JOHN ADAMS

As with each of the others, Rasmussen has a splendid grasp of the essential character of John Adams, in some ways the most intriguing and least understood of the Founders.¹² Without the charisma of Washington, the sophistication of Jefferson, or the financial wizardry of Hamilton, what Adams had going for him was his superb grasp of history and law, his tenacity, and the virtue that, towards the end of his life, he felt lacking in the American people. Like Hamilton (whom he loathed), Adams was no friend to democracy and, overshadowed by the larger-than-life figures of other Founders, until recently Adams was not much in the popular mind.

Unlike Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, the American people, through their electors, repudiated Adams as President after only one term, and it is likely that Adams simply never connected with his fellow Americans as did the others. Nevertheless, interest in Adams has been on the upswing, and he did have accomplishments that entitle him to some veneration. He's the only one of the Founders to be succeeded as President by his own son (only one other President, George H.W. Bush, has managed that), and John Adams founded a dynasty almost unparalleled in American life and letters.¹³ John's wife, Abigail, who has come to be something of a heroine to modern feminists, was apparently his intellectual equal, also a talented correspondent, and, of course, the person responsible for holding his household together during the large part of their long marriage when he was on assignment for his country.

Somehow Adams managed to get himself hated by both Hamilton and Jefferson, although presumably for different reasons; Hamilton thought him incompetent, and Jefferson

¹⁰ *Id.* at 79.

¹¹ For one take on the battle between the Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans which finds more merit in the views of the Federalists and more duplicity on the part of the Jeffersonians, see STEPHEN B. PRESSER, *THE ORIGINAL MISUNDERSTANDING: THE ENGLISH, THE AMERICANS AND THE DIALECTIC OF FEDERALIST JURISPRUDENCE* (1991).

¹² For a brilliant and accessible one-volume biography making a great case for Adams's importance as a Founder, lawyer, and constitutional theorist, see R.B. BERNSTEIN, *THE EDUCATION OF JOHN ADAMS* (2020).

¹³ His great grandson, Henry Adams, wrote one of the great American autobiographies, *THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS* (1909), which won the Pulitzer Prize and was selected by the Modern Library as the best American book of non-fiction. Henry Adams's magisterial *HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA 1801-1817* (9 vols. 1881-1891) is regarded as a masterpiece. Henry's brother Brooks was another talented historian, lawyer, and political scientist, and the Adams family included a brace of other important officials and professionals.

thought him insufficiently democratic. Rasmussen concentrates on Adams's disappointment with the American people and their penchant for luxury and licentiousness. Rasmussen notes that Gordon Wood thought Adams's extreme pessimism accounts for much of his behavior, and Rasmussen gives at least one fine instance of this when he quotes Adams's worries about the acrimony over slavery: "If the gangrene is not stopped, I can see nothing but insurrections of the blacks against the whites and massacres by the whites in their turn of the blacks . . . till at last the whites exasperated to madness shall be wicked enough to exterminate the negroes."¹⁴

And yet Rasmussen makes a convincing argument that Adams's own great virtue in making peace with France in 1800—even over the fierce opposition of Hamilton and his fellow Federalists, and even though Adams knew it would probably result in his losing the election (and it did)—entitles Adams to be regarded as a savior of his country. Adams himself was not particularly gracious about his loss and, like Donald Trump (also a misunderstood figure in his way), he chose not to attend the inauguration of the man who defeated him for the Presidency.

But whatever pessimism Adams may have had about the country, and even his own Federalist party, Rasmussen is too careful a biographer not to acknowledge that towards the end of his life, and especially after he resumed his friendship with Jefferson, after many years of adversity, Adams achieved happiness, and he even lived long enough to see his son follow him into the White House. Rasmussen notes that Adams still worried about the country descending into vice, aristocracy, and corruption, and it's likely Adams died still feeling that the country hadn't really understood and appreciated the virtuous sacrifices he had made on its behalf. But when he died at age 90 on July 4, 1976, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it must have been with a great sense of a life well lived.

IV. THOMAS JEFFERSON

Adams's great political rival, Jefferson, died on the very same day, after the two had reconciled. If Adams had constantly been pessimistic about America, as Rasmussen suggests, Jefferson had not; indeed, Rasmussen may not be particularly successful in presenting Jefferson as a man disillusioned with his country. Rasmussen admits that until the final decade of Jefferson's life, he was optimistic and untroubled by the increasing democracy that so disturbed Hamilton and Adams. Indeed, as Rasmussen points out, Jefferson loved the masses and feared "luxury and privilege," although, either hypocritically or paradoxically, Jefferson himself lived a luxurious and privileged life.¹⁵

Why wouldn't Jefferson feel good about his country? It elected him President twice, and then it elected two of his closest political allies, Madison and James Monroe, each to two terms after his. Nevertheless, Jefferson—although one of the best known and (until recently) most revered of the Founders—was a man of elusive character.

Even setting aside the possibility that he sired a line of descendants with his late wife's enslaved half-sister, Sally

Hemmings, Jefferson was an unscrupulous politician who might have been at home in our own time. He subsidized mendacious journalists during his race against John Adams, and in his favoring of his own region, he nearly split the country apart with his Embargo Act against Great Britain.

It is the slavery issue that most piques Rasmussen's interest, however, and that is the hook that allows him to present Jefferson as obsessed with worry about the fate of his country. Rasmussen explains well Jefferson's early opposition to slavery, and then his lessening objection to it as time went on. Because of what Jefferson perceived as the North's strong opposition to slavery, and what he understood to be the South's tenacity in seeking to preserve it and to extend it into the Western territories, Jefferson thought it was inevitable that sectional conflict over slavery would result in a civil war, or even a race war in the South. Jefferson believed slavery would decline if its reach were expanded territorially, and Rasmussen suggests that this view was on the "fringe." Rasmussen even goes so far as to suggest that on this aspect of the issue of slavery Jefferson was "delusional," along with both Madison and Monroe.¹⁶ Rasmussen may here be giving us more his view than the Founders'.

Rasmussen has a point, though, that slavery was the issue that most made Jefferson pessimistic about the fate of the nation, and Rasmussen has some solid and famous letters of Jefferson to back up the Virginian's apparent despair. There is his frequently quoted observation that the sectional conflict over slavery revealed in the 1820 Missouri Compromise was "like a fire ball in the night, [which] awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union." Rasmussen argues that Jefferson believed a civil war was inevitable, and he points out that in the same letter he wrote that

I am now to die in the belief that the useless sacrifice of themselves, by the generation of '76 to acquire self government and happiness to their country, is to be thrown away by the unwise and unworthy passions of their sons, and that my only consolation is to be that I live not to weep over it.¹⁷

Admittedly this is pretty bleak stuff, but Rasmussen acknowledges that some scholars have concluded that Jefferson was deliberately overstating his views to his correspondent, who used Jefferson's letter to further his own political ambitions, which Jefferson had apparently wanted him to do. Still, Rasmussen believes that those 1820 sentiments truly reflected Jefferson's feelings, and Rasmussen himself concludes that "the great optimist had lost his faith in the American experiment."¹⁸

There was much, says Rasmussen, to drive Jefferson to this loss of faith. His health was beginning to fail (although he lived six more years), he was deeply in debt (so deep that Monticello eventually fell out of the hands of his family), and the centralization of national power and the increasingly commercial nature of the South were anathema to him. He thought Henry Clay's "American

¹⁴ Rasmussen at 143.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 149-50.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 174.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 175.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 178.

System” of the national bank, tariffs, and internal improvements would be antithetical to the desires of many Southerners, and that it would further the existing inclinations toward secession. Jefferson’s continuing zeal for “states’ rights,” Rasmussen points out, was even regarded by Jefferson’s extraordinarily sympathetic biographer, Dumas Malone, as something that “bordered on fanaticism.”¹⁹

And yet if one reads Jefferson’s correspondence resulting from the renewed friendship with Adams, one discovers a much mellower Jefferson,²⁰ one who takes some solace in religion, and one who seems much more at peace with himself than appears in the picture Rasmussen paints. It is, of course, impossible to know what Jefferson really thought, and that problem is endemic for the other figures in this book as well. How do we weigh and balance particular letters and expressed sentiments, and can we ever really know the emotional states of those long dead?

In a short chapter before coming to Madison, Rasmussen does a credible job of pointing out that a number of the lesser Founders—specifically George Mason, Patrick Henry, Sam Adams, Elbridge Gerry, Gouverneur Morris, John Jay, and John Marshall—all worried about the future of the nation and, in particular, the inevitability of armed sectional conflict. Their worries were, of course, justified, but does that mean that their efforts were in vain? And how does Rasmussen explain Madison’s optimism, which runs counter to his central thesis? This is the subject of the last few chapters.

V. JAMES MADISON

Until recently, Madison was generally regarded as the “father” of the Constitution, probably due to the fact that he was instrumental in the passage of the Bill of Rights, and also because his published Notes on the Constitutional Convention were an invaluable record. Madison has also been a subject of great interest lately because his malleable views on the interpretation of the Constitution have been used to support the currently popular progressive academic belief that the document is a “living Constitution” the interpretation of which has always been subject to change in the interests of changing times and changing popular and political desires.²¹

To his credit, Rasmussen nicely and quickly debunks Madison’s paternity of the Constitution by noting that of the 71 proposals Madison put forward at the Constitutional Convention, he lost on 40 of them. But eventually he did warm to the Constitution, and especially to the states rights’ interpretation embraced by his friend and mentor, Jefferson. Like Hamilton, he even became one of the foremost advocates for ratification when he authored several of *The Federalist Papers*.

Curiously, Rasmussen explains Madison’s continued optimism principally by the fact that Madison was gifted with a sunnier personality than many of the other framers. He simply wasn’t as worried about the future of slavery as was Jefferson, he wasn’t as concerned with a lack of virtue in the people as was Adams, he wasn’t as alarmed about a weak executive as was Hamilton, and he wasn’t as upset about political parties as was Washington (indeed, Madison was himself a rather smooth and clever political operative, as was Jefferson). Madison was, Rasmussen explains, a pragmatist who was not about to let the perfect be the enemy of the good, and having lived longer than the other framers noted here, and having seen the Constitution function tolerably for 50 years, Madison had good reason to be optimistic.

Rasmussen sees Madison as the exception that proves the rule of the Founders’ discontent. But his explanation for Madison’s behavior in terms of the qualities of his personality does raise a fundamental question about Rasmussen’s thesis. Could it be that what Rasmussen regards as the framers’ disillusionment about their creation is not actually a reflection of reality, but may have more to do with transient human emotions? After all, it is a feature of human nature to believe, especially as one enters old age, that things are not as good as they once were, and that the current generation simply doesn’t have the wherewithal to do as well as their forbears.

Another possible reason for the seeming despair of some framers at the state of the country was their Christian beliefs, particularly that our earthly existence is a pale imitation of the Kingdom of God, and that given the temptations and foibles of humans, perfection in the City of Man is simply impossible. Rasmussen hints at Hamilton’s desire for a “Christian Constitutional Society,” and he even quotes Ron Chernow’s brilliant perception that Hamilton hoped that “this new society would promote Christianity, the Constitution, and the Federalist Party, though not necessarily in that order of preference.”²² Adams was probably as religious as Hamilton, Washington appears to have agreed with Adams that the country couldn’t flourish without religion, and even Jefferson (thought by his opponents to be an atheist), towards the end of his life appears to have sought solace in religion. A deeper understanding of the framers’ views might come from exploring their religious beliefs, but this is not something Rasmussen attempts.²³

One can find matters left out in any book, however, and, even if one is not completely persuaded by Rasmussen’s provocative thesis, he has still managed to give us one of the best, most pungent, and most penetrating brief reviews of the key Founders. More than that, Rasmussen actually has a fair amount of political wisdom to offer in our fractious times. Even if he wishes to temper “our often-excessive admiration for the founding, the Constitution, and the government they produced,” he concedes that “there are equally good reasons to refrain from

19 *Id.* at 190.

20 See, on this point, Wood, *Friends Divided*, *supra* note 12, and Bernstein, *supra* note 12.

21 See, e.g., JACK N. RAKOVE, *ORIGINAL MEANINGS: POLITICS AND IDEAS IN THE MAKING OF THE CONSTITUTION* (1996), MARY SARAH BILDER, *MADISON’S HAND: REVISING THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION* (2017), JONATHAN GIENAPP, *THE SECOND CREATION: FIXING THE CONSTITUTION IN THE FOUNDING ERA* (2018).

22 Rasmussen at 98.

23 For a current plea that religion and morality are indispensable to proper political life, see KEN STARR, *RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN CRISIS: EXERCISING YOUR FAITH IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY* (2021).

following the Founders into outright disillusionment.”²⁴ After all, he notes, we ended slavery, we are not currently facing secession or civil war, and we have a much better media than was available to the founding generation (one could quibble with the latter two points).

Nevertheless, he ends this excellent little book with a reminder that it is unrealistic to expect that with “the right tweak” to our political system—“eliminating the electoral college, ending the filibuster in the Senate, establishing fixed term limits for Supreme Court Justices,” or any other of a variety of reform proposals—we “might fix all that ails us.” A flawless utopia, he notes, is unobtainable. His conclusion that “The founders’ penchant for meeting deep disappointment with steadfast resolve is one that we would do well to emulate in the face [of] our own political tribulations”²⁵ suggests that even if Rasmussen began with the idea of disparaging the Founders and their creation, his careful study actually reminds us of why we should cherish them and what they left us.

²⁴ Rasmussen at 229.

²⁵ *Id.* at 231.

