

Our career has corresponded with this great outline. Perfection in our organization could not have been expected in the outset either in the National or State Governments or in tracing the line between their respective powers. But no serious conflict has arisen, nor any contest but such as are managed by argument and by a fair appeal to the good sense of the people, and many of the defects which experience had clearly demonstrated in both Governments have been remedied. By steadily pursuing this course in this spirit there is every reason to believe that our system will soon attain the highest degree of perfection of which human institutions are capable, and that the movement in all its branches will exhibit such a degree of order and harmony as to command the admiration and respect of the civilized world.

James Monroe, "Second Inaugural Address," *The Writings of James Monroe*, vol. 6, ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1902), 172–174.

### PRACTICING Historical Thinking

**Identify:** What, according to Monroe, will "command the admiration and respect of the civilized world"?

**Analyze:** According to Monroe, why did ancient republics fail, and why would America avoid this same fate?

**Evaluate:** How does Monroe's Second Inaugural Address signal a shift in the relationship between the federal government and states' rights from the arguments of the Kentucky Resolution (Doc. 5.19)?

## DOCUMENT 7.2

### JOHN C. CALHOUN, Address to the Southern States

1831

In this address, John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), former vice president and senator from South Carolina, argues that states can "nullify" (and therefore make void within their borders) federal laws that are deemed dangerous to a state's interest.

The great and leading principle is, that the General Government emanated from the people of the several states, forming distinct political communities, and acting in their separate and sovereign capacity, and not from all the people forming one aggregate political community; that the Constitution of the United States is, in fact, a compact, to which each state is a Party, . . . and that the several states, or parties, have the right to judge of its infractions; . . . be it called what it may—State-right, veto, nullification, or by any other name—I conceive to be the fundamental principle of our system, resting on facts as certain as our revolution itself,

... and I firmly believe that on its recognition depend the stability and safety of our political institutions. . . .

... Whenever separate and dissimilar interests have been separately represented in government; whenever the sovereign power has been divided in its exercise, the experience and wisdom of ages have devised but one mode by which such political organization can be preserved—the mode adopted in England, and by all governments, ancient and modern, blessed with constitutions deserving to be called free—to give each co-estate the right to judge of its powers, with a negative or veto on the acts of the others, in order to protect against encroachments the interests it particularly represents. . . . So essential is the principle, that to withhold this right from either, where the sovereign power is divided, is, in fact, *to annul the division* itself, and to *consolidate* in the one left in the exclusive possession of the right *all* powers of government. . . .

John C. Calhoun, *Speeches of John C. Calhoun: Delivered in the Congress of the United States from 1811 to the Present* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1848), 28, 30–31.

### PRACTICING Historical Thinking

**Identify:** Paraphrase Calhoun's message.

**Analyze:** Calhoun uses the word *compact* to mean the union of states under the Constitution. In what ways does Calhoun's understanding of the word *compact* differ from James Monroe's in his Second Inaugural Address?

**Evaluate:** To what extent does Calhoun's message invoke Thomas Jefferson's concept of "unalienable rights" (Doc. 5.6)?

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## DOCUMENT 7.3 | JAMES MADISON, Letter to Mathew Carey

1831

Former president and author of the US Constitution, James Madison (1751–1836), described his aversion to the theory of nullification in this letter to printer and entrepreneur Mathew Carey (1760–1839). Madison's letter was written in response to the growing tensions between the state of South Carolina and the federal government regarding the Tariff of 1828, which some South Carolinians, most prominently Senator John C. Calhoun, claimed that the state could "nullify" within its borders and therefore not follow the law.

Dear Sir

... To trace the great causes of this state of things out of which these unhappy aberrations have sprung, in the effect of markets glutted with the products of the land, and with the land itself; to appeal to the nature of the Constitutional compact, as precluding a right in any one of the parties to renounce it at will, by giving