

When Thomas Jefferson penned the phrase The Laws of Nature and Nature's God in the Declaration of Independence, the concepts of the laws of nature were totally different than what we have today. Electricity, for example, was in its very infancy with notable demonstrations such as Ben Franklin's kite experiment (1752) and John Wesley's rotating ball static electricity treatments of human ailments (1756). Tesla (1882) and Edison (1880) were in the future. The visual observation of the Laws of Nature in those early days played a much different role in everyday life than now, where we seldom see the direct conversion of electricity into a useful process; we now just see the result, e.g. electronics, electrical control and electrical power.

So, where does that place Jefferson's statement? Certainly the laws of nature are the same today as they were then and also the God of Nature would be the same. What is different, then, is man's intellectual understanding and the bank of knowledge which we possess. Does this go back to free will? Exercising our will today is in a much greater field of knowledge than in Jefferson's or Wesley's times. Still, being anchored to fundamental knowledge through our spiritual soul with a correct moral compass is an individual's responsibility, although the effect is collective.

Each generation of Americans will reinterpret the Laws of Nature and Nature's God, hopefully with due deference to the original author and his times.