

**THE WORKS**

**OF**

**J O H N A D A M S .**





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THE  
WORKS

OF

JOHN ADAMS,

SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

WITH  
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

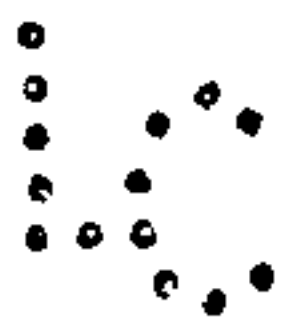
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY

HIS GRANDSON

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

VOL. X.



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### CONTENTS OF VOLUME X.

		PAGE
<b>1811.</b>		
October	15. TO BENJAMIN STODDERT . . . . .	3
	27. BENJAMIN STODDERT TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	4
November	25. TO SAMUEL SMITH . . . . .	7
	30. ROBERT SMITH TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	8
December	1. SAMUEL SMITH TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	8
	6. TO ROBERT SMITH . . . . .	9
	13. TO SAMUEL SMITH . . . . .	9
	25. TO BENJAMIN RUSH . . . . .	10
<b>1812.</b>		
June	2. TO THOMAS MCKEAN . . . . .	12
	13. THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	14
	21. TO THOMAS MCKEAN . . . . .	15
	28. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	17
August	6. TO SAMUEL B. MALCOM . . . . .	20
November	25. TO WILLIAM KETeltas . . . . .	22
<b>1813.</b>		
January	5. TO J. B. VARNUM . . . . .	24
	24. TO JOHN LANGDON . . . . .	27
	27. JOHN LANGDON TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	28
	28. TO ELBRIDGE GERRY . . . . .	29
February	11. TO ELBRIDGE GERRY . . . . .	30
	23. TO JAMES MONROE . . . . .	32
March	22. TO JOHN LATHROP . . . . .	38
	28. TO WILLIAM PLUMER . . . . .	35
April	14. TO ELBRIDGE GERRY . . . . .	36

		PAGE.
1813.		
June	5. TO BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE . . . . .	38
	10. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	40
	14. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	42
	28. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	43
	30. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	46
July	9. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	49
	13. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	52
	17. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	54
	18. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	56
August	16. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	58
	20. THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	60
	31. TO THOMAS MCKEAN . . . . .	62
September	2. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	64
	14. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	66
	15. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	69
	22. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	71
	28. THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	73
October	4. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	75
November	12. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	78
	THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	80
December	25. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	82
1814.		
January	THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	87
March	14. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	89
April	9. TO JOHN TAYLOR . . . . .	94
May	30. TO RICHARD RUSH . . . . .	96
July	15. TO MRS. MERCY WARREN . . . . .	98
	16. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	100
November	28. TO JAMES MADISON . . . . .	105
December	2. TO RUFUS KING . . . . .	106
	17. JAMES MADISON TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	107
1815.		
January	TO JAMES LLOYD . . . . .	108

CONTENTS.

vii

1815.	PAGE
February	6. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 114
	11. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 116
	14. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 120
	7. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 123
	21. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 126
March	3. To WILLIAM CRANCH . . . . . 131
	4. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 133
	6. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 134
	12. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 136
	26. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 139
	27. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 143
	29. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 146
	30. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 149
	31. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 152
April	5. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 155
	5. To RICHARD RUSH . . . . . 159
	24. To JAMES LLOYD . . . . . 162
July	6. To THOMAS MCKEAN . . . . . 166
	13. To F. A. VANDERKEMP . . . . . 168
	30. To THOMAS MCKEAN . . . . . 171
August	24. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . . 172
November	13. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . . 174
	20. THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . . 176
	20. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 178
	26. To THOMAS MCKEAN . . . . . 180
	29. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 182
December	2. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 185
	5. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 188
	22. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 192
1816.	
January	1. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 197
	5. To DR. J. MORSE . . . . . 201



		PAGE
1816.		
January	20. To Dr. J. MORSE . . . . .	204
March	2. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	210
May	3. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	213
	6. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	216
	26. To F. A. VANDERKEMP . . . . .	219
August	1. THOMAS JEFFERSON TO JOHN ADAMS . . . . .	222
	9. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	224
September	9. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	226
	30. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	227
November	4. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	228
	16. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	230
December	12. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	232
	18. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	232
	27. To F. A. VANDERKEMP . . . . .	234
1817.		
January	24. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	236
February	4. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	241
March	29. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	244
April	15. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	249
	19. To THOMAS JEFFERSON . . . . .	253
	22. To JAMES MADISON . . . . .	256
June	1. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	258
	5. To WILLIAM TUDOR . . . . .	262
	13. To HENRY COLMAN . . . . .	266
	17. To JAMES MADISON . . . . .	267
December	30. To JOHN M. JACKSON . . . . .	269
1818.		
January	5. To WILLIAM WIRT . . . . .	271
	9. To JOHN JAY . . . . .	272
	14. To H. NILES . . . . .	274
	23. To WILLIAM WIRT . . . . .	277
	30. To BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE . . . . .	279
February	6. To BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE . . . . .	280



In my next, I may give you more proofs of his "good judicial character," in the trial of Michael Corbet and his three mess-mates, for killing Lieutenant Panton, the commander of a press-gang from the *Rose* frigate.<sup>1</sup> When courts of justice dare not speak in open air, nor see the daylight, where is life, liberty, or property?

Were I writing history, I should not write in this style. I should study a language of more philosophical moderation and dignity. But I now express to you the feelings of my friends and myself at those times, and our opinions too.

---

TO F. A. VANDERKEMP.

Quincy, 27 December, 1816.

I do declare that I can write Greek better than you do, though I cannot say, so well as you can if you will. I can make nothing but pothooks and trammels of the frontispiece of your amiable letter of the 15th. If you had quoted your authority, I might have found it.

Jesus is benevolence personified, an example for all men. Dupuis has made no alteration in my opinions of the Christian religion, in its primitive purity and simplicity, which I have entertained for more than sixty years. It is the religion of reason, equity, and love; it is the religion of the head and of the heart.

It would be idle for me to write observations upon Dupuis. I must fill thirteen volumes. If I was twenty-five years old, and had the necessary books and leisure, I would write an answer to Dupuis; but when, or where, or how should I get it printed? Dupuis can be answered, to the honor and advantage of the Christian religion as I understand it. To this end I must study astrology as well as astronomy, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, and Sanscrit.

But to leave Dupuis to be answered or reviewed in Edinburgh or London, I must inquire into the attributes given by

<sup>1</sup> This letter is printed in vol. ii. p. 224, note.

the ancient nations to their divinities; gods with stars and new moons in their foreheads or on their shoulders; gods with heads of dogs, horns of oxen, bulls, cows, calves, rams, sheep, or lambs; gods with the bodies of horses; gods with the tails of fishes; gods with the tails of dragons and serpents; gods with the feet of goats. The bull of Mithra; the dog of Anubis; the serpent of Esculapius!!!!

Is man the most irrational beast of the forest? Never did bullock, or sheep, or snake imagine himself a god. What, then, can all this wild theory mean? Can it be any thing but allegory founded in astrology? Your Manilius would inform you as well as Dupuis.

The Hebrew unity of Jehovah, the prohibition of all similitudes, appears to me the greatest wonder of antiquity. How could that nation preserve its creed among the monstrous theologies of all the other nations of the earth? Revelation, you will say, and especial Providence; and I will not contradict you, for I cannot say with Dupuis that a revelation is impossible or improbable.

Christianity, you will say, was a fresh revelation. I will not deny this. As I understand the Christian religion, it was, and is, a revelation. But how has it happened that millions of fables, tales, legends, have been blended with both Jewish and Christian revelation that have made them the most bloody religion that ever existed? How has it happened that all the fine arts, architecture, painting, sculpture, statuary, music, poetry, and oratory, have been prostituted, from the creation of the world, to the sordid and detestable purposes of superstition and fraud?

The eighteenth century had the honor to discover that Ocellus of Lucania, Timæus of Locris, Aristotle, Tacitus, Quintilian, and Pliny, were in the right. The philosophy of Frederic, Catharine, Buffon, De la Lande, Diderot, d'Alembert, Condorcet, d'Holbach, and Dupuis, appears to me to be no more nor less than the philosophy of those ancient men of science and letters, whose speculations came principally from India, Egypt, Chaldea, and Phœnicia. A consolatory discovery, to be sure! Let it once be revealed or demonstrated that there is no future state, and my advice to every man, woman, and child would be, as our existence would be in our own power, to take opium.



For, I am certain, there is nothing in this world worth living for but hope, and every hope will fail us, if the last hope, that of a future state, is extinguished.

I know how to sympathize with a wounded leg, having been laid up with one for two or three months, and I have felt the delightful attentions of a daughter. May you have the felicity to celebrate as many more lustres of Madam Vanderkemp as human nature can bear.

---

TO WILLIAM TUDOR.

Quincy, 24 January, 1817.

Bernard, Hutchinson, Oliver, the commissioners of the customs, and their satellites, had an espionage as inquisitive as zealous, and as faithful as that in France, before, during, or since the revolution, by which the Tories were better informed of the anecdote which I am about to relate to you, than the Whigs themselves were in general. That the Tory histories may not hereafter misrepresent it without detection, I will now state the facts in writing, that they may remain in your archives and mine, to be used as an antidote to the poison that may hereafter appear.<sup>1</sup>

The public had been long alarmed with rumors and predictions that the king, that is the ministry, would take into their own hands the payment of the salaries of the Judges of the Supreme Court. The people would not believe it; the most thinking men dreaded it. They said, "With an executive authority in a Governor possessed of an absolute negative on all the acts of the legislature, and with Judges dependent only on the Crown for salaries as well as their commissions, what protection have we? We may as well abolish all limitations, and resign our lives and liberties at once to the will of a prime minister at St. James's." You remember the controversy that General Brattle excited concerning the tenor of the Judges' commissions, and the universal anxiety that then prevailed on this subject. The des-

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this letter appears in another form in this work, but as there is an interval of fifteen years in the date of the two compositions, it may be interesting to the curious to compare them. See vol. ii. pp. 328 - 332.