

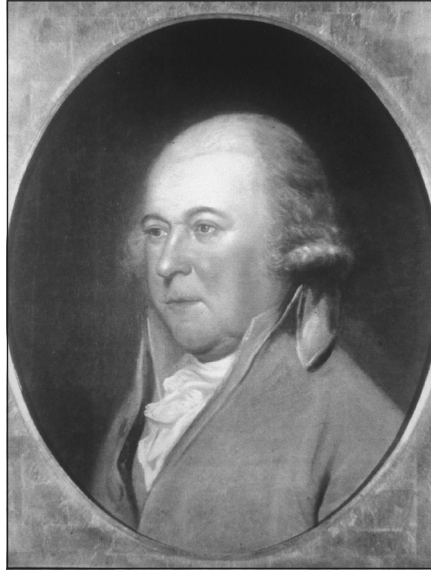
# JOHN ADAMS

## Signer of the Declaration of Independence and Author of the Massachusetts Constitution.

Excerpted from, *The Truth about the Founding Fathers of the American Republic*,  
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Frequently asked questions about John Adams:

1. A 1998 exhibit at the Library of Congress displayed the title page of a 1696 book by *John Toland*, their caption reading: “*John Toland (1670-1722)* was one of a school of English and continental writers, loosely called deists, who commanded a following in eighteenth-century America, especially among statesmen like *John Adams* and *Thomas Jefferson*, who were receptive to Enlightenment ideas. *Toland* and like-minded writers held that religion was true only insofar as it was consistent with reason and that the mysterious and miraculous dimension of faith must be questioned. This position appealed to no more than a small minority of eighteenth-century Americans, whose sympathies lay overwhelmingly with the opposing evangelical view.” Was John Adams a deist?



Portrait of John Adams, founding father,  
by Charles Willson Peale. Independence National  
Historical Park Collection.

As already established, “a deist” in Webster’s 1828 Dictionary is:

One who believes in the existence of a God, but denies revealed religion; one who professes no form of religion, but follows the light of nature and reason, as his only guides in doctrine and practice; a free-thinker.

Webster’s Dictionary describes “The Enlightenment” in these terms:

An 18th-century European philosophical movement characterized by rationalism, an impetus toward learning, and a spirit of skepticism and empiricism in social and political thought.

And “rationalism” as:

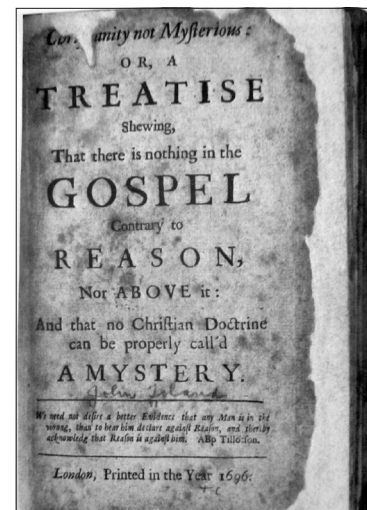
In theology, the doctrine that rejects Revelation and the supernatural, and makes reason the sole source of knowledge.

The definition for “empiricism” is:

In philosophy, the theory that sensory experience is the only source of knowledge.

Had the writer of this Library of Congress exhibit displayed the contents of John Toland’s 1696 book entitled: “*Christianity not Mysterious: or, A Treatise showing, That there is nothing in the GOSPEL contrary to REASON, nor ABOVE it: And that no Christian Doctrine can be properly call’d A MYSTERY*, with its quotation from *Archbishop Tillotson*; thousands of visitors would have understood that the book was neither deistic, nor from “Enlightenment” (atheistic) ideas, but instead, profoundly Scriptural in doctrine and faith. Following are excerpts from this valuable Treatise:

“...Since therefore, the perfection or soundness of our reason is so evident to ourselves, and *so plainly contained in Scripture*, however wrested by some ignorant persons, we should labour to acquire knowledge with more confident hopes of success. Why should we entertain such mean and unbecoming thoughts, as if TRUTH, like the Almighty, dwelt in Light inaccessible, and not to be discover’d by the sons of men? Things are always the same, how different soever the conceptions of men about them may be; and what another did not, I may happily find out. That nothing escaped the sight of former ages is to be told where one person only speaks, and nobody present must contradict him. The slips and errors which are taken notice



Title page of John Toland’s 1696 book, “Christianity not Mysterious.”  
Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection.

of in the world every day, serve only to put us in mind that many able men did not examine the Truth with that order and application they should or might have done. There are a thousand things in our power to know, of which, through prejudice or neglect, we may be, and frequently remain ignorant all our life; and *innumerable difficulties may be made by imagining mysteries where there are none*, or by conceiving too discouraging and unjust an opinion of our own abilities: whereas, by a parity of reason, we may hope to outdo all that outdid others before us, as posterity may exceed both. 'Tis no presumption, therefore, for us to endeavor setting things in a better light; as to know what we are able to perform is not Pride, but foolishly to presume none else can equal us, when we are all upon the same level: For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou had'st not received it? (I Corinthians 4:7). Have we not all the same sure and certain promises of light and assistance from above, as well as the privilege of reason in common? If any lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. (James 1:5)...

To conclude, let nobody think to be excused by this imaginary corruption, but *learn from the Scripture*, our infallible oracle, that *the Gospel, if it be the Word of God*, is only contrary to the opinions and wishes of lewd men, that love to walk after their own lusts; (2 Peter 2:13); of those that speak evil of the things which they understand not, and debauch themselves in what they know in common with Brutes. (Jude 5-10). It is hid to them whose minds are blinded by the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:3,4); and to those who live by the ignorance and simple credulity of the brethren. To be brief, it is contrary to the false reasoning of all that will not know what it is to reflect or consider; but it is not above the possibility of the reason when they shall better improve their faculties. The Creation of the world was against the System of Aristotle, the Immortality of the Soul, against the Hypothesis of Epicurus, and the Liberty of the Will was impugned by many Philosophers. But is this to be contrary to Reason? Have not these men been quite baffled by as very heathens as themselves? And are not their other errors since detected and exploded by most of the learned? Besides, they wanted a principal mean of information, viz. *Revelation*.

But the scope of *the Apostles* was very different: piety towards God, and the peace of mankind, was their gain, and *Christ and His Gospel* their glory. They came not magnifying, nor exalting themselves, not imposing but declaring the Doctrine. They did not confound and mislead, but convince the mind. They were employ'd to dispel Ignorance, to eradicate superstition, to propagate Truth and Reformation of manners; to preach deliverance to captives (Luke 4:18), i.e. the enjoyment of Christian Liberty to the slaves of the Levitical and Pagan priesthoods, and to declare Salvation to repenting sinners. I shall add here some of the characters which *David* gives of the Law and Word of God, that we may admit nothing as the will of Heaven but what is agreeable to them: The Law of the Lord, says he, is perfect, converting the Soul. The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy Testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path. The New Testament is so full of this language, and the contents of it are everywhere so conformable to it*, that I shall refer the reader to the particular discussion of the whole in the second Discourse...

The natural man, that is, he that gives the swing to his appetites,

counts Divine things mere folly, calls Religion a feverish dream of superstitious heads, or a politick trick invented by Statesmen to awe the credulous vulgar. (Romans 8:5,7). For as they that walk after the flesh mind the things of, so their carnal wisdom is enmity against God. (Romans 6:12). Sin easily besets us. There is a Law in our members or body, warring against the Law of our minds or Reason. And when we would do good, evil is present with us. (Romans 6:13). *If thus we become stupid and unfit for earthly speculations, how shall we believe when we are told of Heavenly things? (John 3:12).*

But these disorders are so far from being REASON, that nothing can be more directly contrary to it. We live under no necessary fate of sinning. There is no defect in our Understandings but those of our own creation, that is to say, vicious habits easily contracted, but difficultly reformed. 'Tis just with us as with a drunkard, whose "I cannot give over drinking" is a deliberate "I will not." For upon a wager, or for a reward, he can forbear his cups a Day, a Month, a Year, according as the consideration of the value or certainty of the expected gain does influence him. Let no man therefore say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For as God cannot be tempted to evil, so neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away and entic'd of his own lust (James 1: 13,14)...<sup>18</sup>

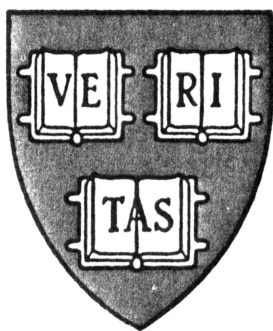
John Toland's 1696 "*TREATISE showing that there is nothing in the GOSPEL contrary to REASON*" is a brilliantly written admonition on the need for every true Christian to use God-given reason in "studying the Scriptures to show oneself approved," which **John Adams** and **Thomas Jefferson** did, as true followers of Christ, rather than believing cleverly-devised fables.

## 2. Where was John Adams educated?

**John Adams** graduated from *Harvard College*, Massachusetts, in 1755. This prestigious College, first in America, was established in 1636 on the following foundations:

AFTER GOD had carried us safe to New England, and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the Civill Government: One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance *Learning* and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust. And as wee were thinking and consulting how to effect this great Work; it pleased God to stir up the heart of one *Mr. Harvard\** (a godly Gentleman, and a lover of Learning, there living amongst us) to give the one halfe of his Estate (it being in all about 1,700 pounds) towards the erecting of a Colledge: and all his library: after him another gave 300 pounds and others after them cast in more, and the publique hand of the State added the rest: the Colledge was, by common consent, appointed to be at *Cambridge*, (a place very pleasant and accommodate) and is called (according to the name of the first founder) *Harvard Colledge*.<sup>19</sup>

\* *Rev. John Harvard*: 1607-38 and his wife, Ann Sadler (b. 1614) emigrated to Charlestown, New England in 1637. Educated at *Emmanuel College, Cambridge* (B.A. 1632; M.A. 1635), *Rev. Harvard* was the son of an affluent family in London. He was an assistant-preacher at Charlestown church; his bequest and library founding *Harvard College*.



Seal of Harvard College. Motto: "Veritas" translated from Latin to mean: "Truth."

The *Harvard Charter of 1650*, commences thus:

Whereas through the *good hand of God* many well devoted persons have been and daily are moved and stirred up to give and bestow sundry gifts, legacies, lands and revenues for the advancement of all good literature, arts and sciences in *Harvard College in Cambridge in the County of Middlesex* and to the maintenance of the President and Fellows and for all accommodations of buildings and all other necessary provisions that may conduce *to the education of the English and Indian youth of this Country in knowledge and godliness*. It is therefore ordered and enacted by this Court and the Authority thereof that for the purposes aforesaid from henceforth that the said Colledge in Cambridge in Middlesex in New England shall be a Corporation consisting of seven persons...<sup>20</sup>

One of great accomplishments of **John Adams** was the drafting of the 1780 *Massachusetts Constitution*, of which Chapter V, Section I is entitled, *The University*. It reads as follows:

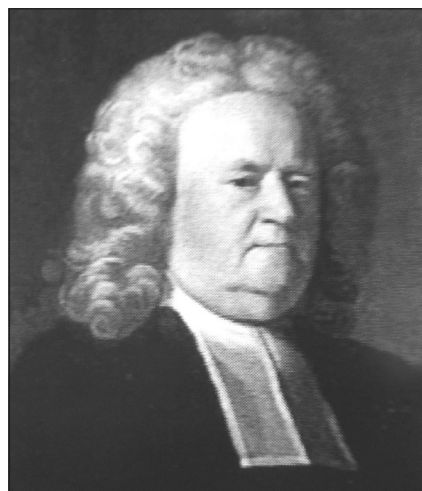
I. **Whereas our wise and pious ancestors**, so early as the year one thousand six hundred and thirty six, laid the foundation of Harvard College, in which university many persons of great eminence have, **by the blessing of GOD**, been initiated in those arts and sciences, which qualified them for public employments, both in Church and State: And whereas the encouragement of arts and sciences, and all good literature, tends to the **honor of GOD, the advantage of the Christian religion**, and the great benefit of this and the other United States of America – It is declared, that the PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF HARVARD COLLEGE, in their corporate capacity, and their successors in that capacity, their officers and servants, shall have, hold, use, exercise and enjoy, all the powers, authorities, rights, liberties, privileges, immunities and franchises, which they now have or are entitled to have, hold, use, exercise and enjoy: And the same are hereby ratified and confirmed unto them, the said President and Fellows of Harvard College, and to their successors, and to their Officers and servants, respectively forever...

Section II of the Massachusetts Constitution bears the title, *The Encouragement of Literature, etc.*, and from the pen of Adams, we read:

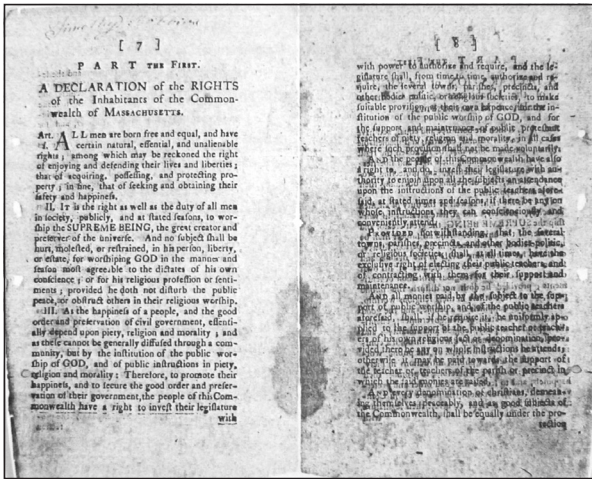
**WISDOM, and knowledge, as well as virtue**, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of Legislatures and Magistrates, in all future periods of this Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the university at Cambridge, public schools and grammar schools in the towns; to encourage private societies and public institutions, rewards and immunities, for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and **general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings; sincerity, good humour, and all social affections, and generous sentiments** among the people.

Constitution of Massachusetts  
Part 2, Chapter V.  
Declared ratified 15 June 1780.

Having been educated at Harvard College, **John Adams'** 1780 *Constitution of Massachusetts*, in Chapter V, Section I, entitled – *The University* – praises his *wise and pious ancestors* in laying the foundation of his alma mater, which he states, has educated many persons of great eminence, who have *by the blessing of GOD*, been qualified for service in Church and State; and that the education they received *tends to the honor of GOD – the advantage of the Christian religion*, and subsequently, to the great benefit of Massachusetts and the nation as a whole.



Rev. Edward Holyoke, D.D., President of Harvard College, under whom John Adams received his degree. Dr. Holyoke's 1737 Installation marked the first singing of Harvard's Hymn "Give Ear, O my people, to my Law, incline your ears to the Words of my Mouth"...(from Psalm 78).



The Massachusetts Constitution (1780).  
Library of Congress, Rare Book Collection.

Furthermore, Adams' famed 1780 *Massachusetts Constitution* states that,

As the happiness of the people, and the *good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality*; and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community, but by *the institution of public worship of GOD*, and of public instructions in piety, religion and morality: Therefore, to promote their happiness, and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this Commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require, and the legislature shall, from time to time, authorize and require, the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense for the institution of the *public worship of GOD*, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily.

Hence, we understand that alumni **John Adams, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Elbridge Gerry, Rufus King, and Robert Treat Paine** together with many other eminent founding fathers of the American Republic, were heirs of the teachings of the Christian religion at *Harvard College*.

3. Adullam Films' 2010 production states that, "During the presidency of John Adams the Treaty of Tripoli was signed. The Treaty of Tripoli bears perhaps the most contrary statement against the idea of the United States as a Christian nation: 'That the government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion. Treaty of Tripoli, June 7, 1797.' And the Treaty of Tripoli is the clearest declaration that the original founders of the United States of America did not believe that they were setting forth a Christian nation..." Is this a fact?

*The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and subjects of Tripoli of Barbary*, was signed at Tripoli on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1796; and at Algiers, on January 3, 1797. According to the National Archives' records,\* **Article 11**, from which the above-cited statement is derived, **does not exist**. Of the 12 Articles in the Tripoli Treaty, this statement is found in the 11<sup>th</sup> Article:

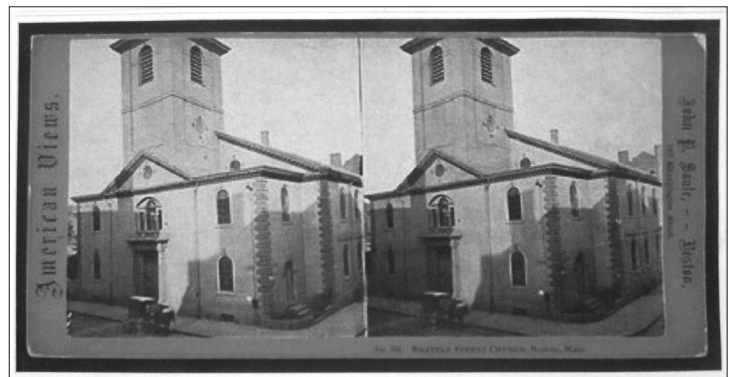
"This translation from the Arabic by Joel Barlow, Consul General at Algiers, has been printed in all official and unofficial treaty collections since it first appeared in 1797 in the Session Laws of the Fifth Congress, first session. In a 'Note regarding the Barlow translation.' '...Most extraordinary (and wholly unexplained) is the fact that Article 11 of the Barlow translation, with its famous phrase, – the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion – **does not exist at all. There is no Article 11.** The Arabic text which is between Articles 10 and 12 is in form of a letter, crude and flamboyant and withal quite unimportant, from the Dey of Algiers to the Pasha of Tripoli. How that script came to be written and to be regarded, as in the Barlow translation, as Article 11 of the treaty as there written, is a mystery and seemingly must remain so. Nothing in the diplomatic correspondence of the time throws any light whatever on the point."

As Article 11 of the *Tripoli Treaty* does not exist, we again see an agenda to discredit **John Adams'** Protestant Christian faith and his public stand for the Christian religion – the *1780 Constitution of Massachusetts*, testifying against Adullam Films' statement.

4. **The 2010 Production by Adullam Films states that, "John Adams was a well-known Unitarian and did not believe the Holy Ghost existed." Is this true? What church did John Adams attend, and who was his pastor?**

Unitarianism was first introduced into New England *after 1805*.

John Adams and his family attended the famous *Brattle Square Congregational Church, in Boston*, (c. 1698-1805) together with fellow-worshippers, Samuel Adams and John Hancock; their pastor being *Rev. Samuel Cooper, D.D.*, who was chosen by **John Hancock**, Speaker, the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts to preach a Sermon on the first day of General Election under the new Constitution – October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1780. His Sermon was based upon Scripture – **Jeremiah, chapter 30, verses 20, 21** – "Their congregation shall be established before Me: and their Nobles shall be of themselves, and their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them."



Brattle Street Church, designed in 1772 by Thomas Dawes.  
New York Public Library.