

James Madison to William Cogswell, March 10, 1834. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO WILLIAM COGSWELL. MAD. MSS.

Montpellier, March 10, 1834.

Dear Sir, —Your letter of the 18th Ult. was duly received. You give me a credit to which I have no claim, in calling me “ *the* writer of the Constitution of the U. S.” This was not, like the fabled Goddess of Wisdom, the offspring of a single brain. It ought to be regarded as the work of many heads & many hands.

Your criticism on the Collocation of books in the Library of our University, may not be without foundation. But the doubtful boundary between some subjects, and the mixture of different subjects in the same works, necessarily embarrass the task of classification.

Being now within a few days of my 84th year, with a decaying health & faded vision, and in arrears also of the reading I have assigned to myself, I have not been able sooner to acknowledge your politeness in sending me the two pamphlets. The sermon combats very ably the veteran error of entwining with the Civil an Ecclesiastical polity. Whether it has not left unremoved a fragment of the argumentative root of the combination is a question which I leave others to decide.

With friendly respects & salutations