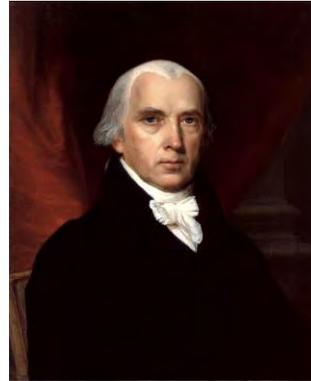
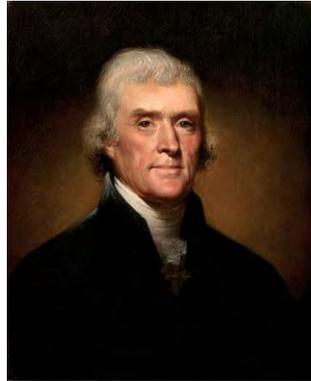


Humanism and the Founding Fathers of the United States



Tony Martin

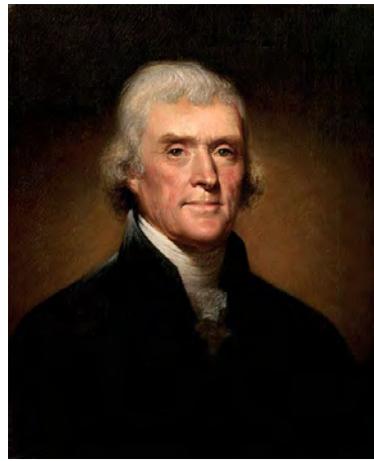
October 8, 2014



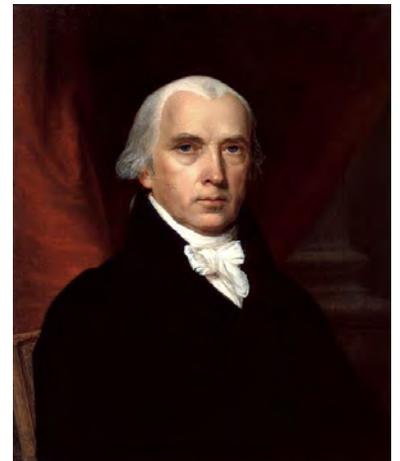
Washington



Adams



Jefferson



Madison



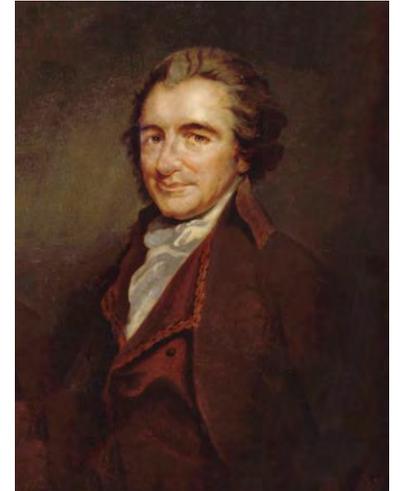
Jay



Franklin



Hamilton



Paine



Thomas Paine

“Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good.”

-- *The Rights of Man*

Thomas Paine

"My country is the world; my religion is to do good," said Thomas Paine, a remarkable and courageous radical thinker who defended the French Revolution and the American War of Independence in his pamphlets and books such as *Common Sense*. He wrote *The Rights of Man*, supporting, amongst other things, written constitutions to limit the power of governments, and "natural rights" to education, pensions and welfare.

In *The Age of Reason* he attacked traditional Christianity and revealed religion, though he retained a belief in God: "The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion..."

His books were burned in England, he spent some time in prison in France, and he died in New York, poor, ill and unfairly despised for what people thought was his atheism, though in fact he was a deist.



John Adams

“The question before the human race is, whether the God of nature shall govern the world by his own laws, or whether priests and kings shall rule it by fictitious miracles?”

-- **John Adams**, letter to Thomas Jefferson, June 20, 1815



Benjamin Franklin

"As to Jesus of Nazareth...I think his system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is like to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present Dissenters in England, some doubts as to his Divinity."



Benjamin Franklin

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"I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed."

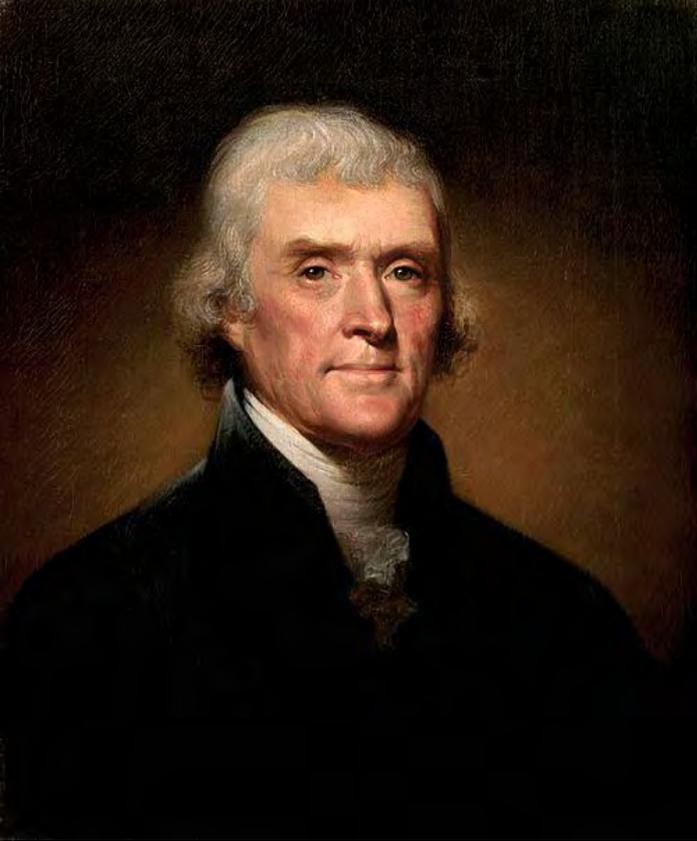


Benjamin Franklin

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"I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed;

"...it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and I think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble."



Thomas Jefferson

“...the greatest enemies to the doctrines of Jesus are those calling themselves the expositors of them, who have perverted them for the structure of a system of fancy absolutely incomprehensible, and without any foundation in his genuine words.”



John Adams

“Without the pen of Paine the sword of Washington would have been raised in vain.”



Thomas Hobbes

“The effects we acknowledge naturally, do include a power of their producing, before they were produced; and that power pre-supposeth something existent that hath such power; and the thing so existing with power to produce, if it were not eternal, must needs have been produced by somewhat before it, and that again by something else before that, till we come to an eternal, that is to say, the first power of all powers and first cause of all causes; and this is it which all men conceive by the name of God, implying eternity, incomprehensibility, and omnipotence.”

—Thomas Hobbes, a description of 17th century Deistic thought from his *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 59–60; quoted in John Orr, *English Deism*, p. 76

My Heritage

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Detroit, Michigan



My twin sister Antoinette and I were baptized here as infants in the fall of 1950

My Paternal
Grandparents

Georgianna Beatrice Martin
née Gordon

Both Immigrated to
the the U.S. from the
British West Indies,
entering at Ellis Island
shortly after the turn
of the 20th century.



William Arthur Martin

My Maternal
Grandparents

Berry Booker



Lillian Booker
née Thompkins

My Parents

Doris Martin
née Booker



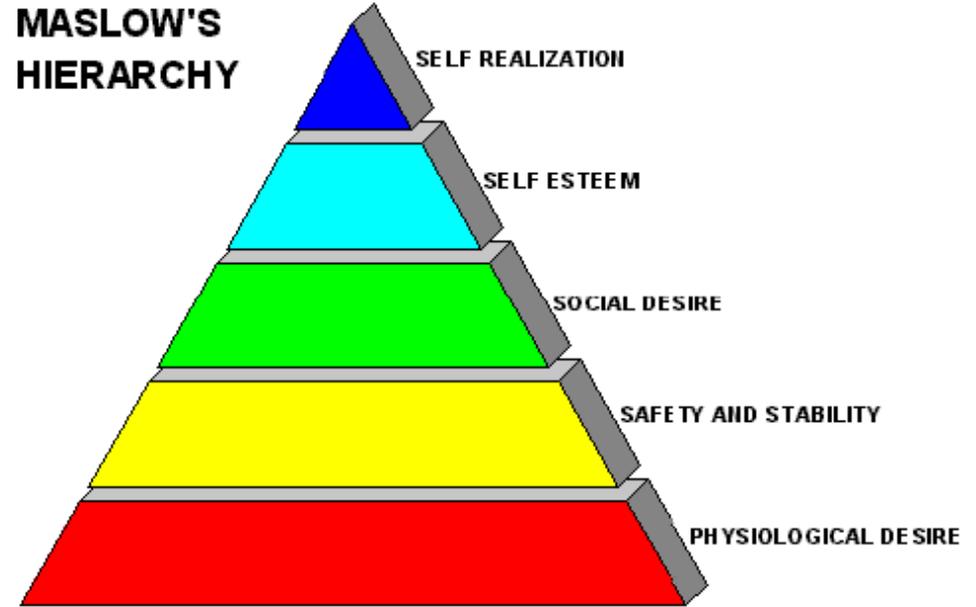
Thomas Lawrence Martin

Influences

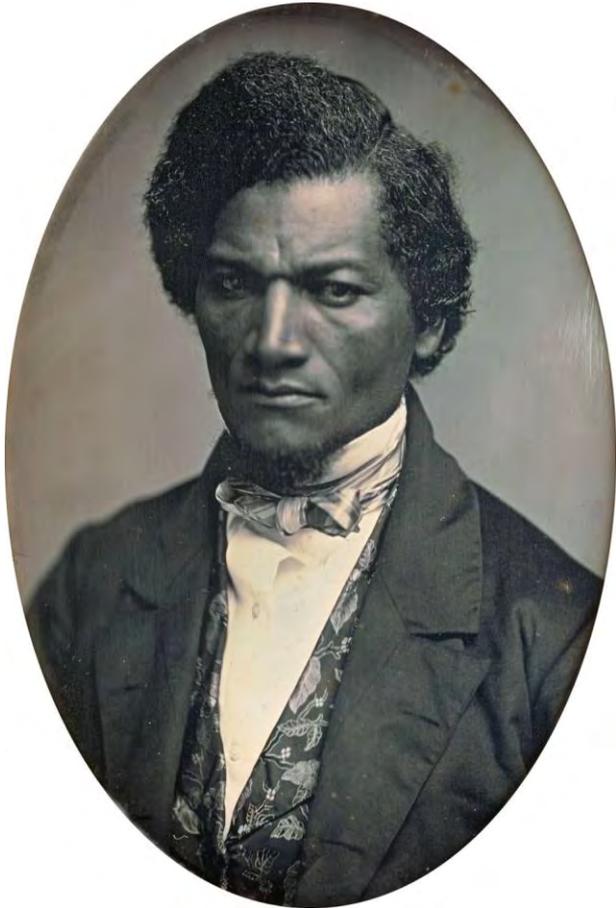
Abraham Maslow



Founder of Humanist Psychology



Hierarchy of Needs



Frederick Douglass

Fugitive Slave

Author, Newspaper Editor

Orator

Police Commissioner

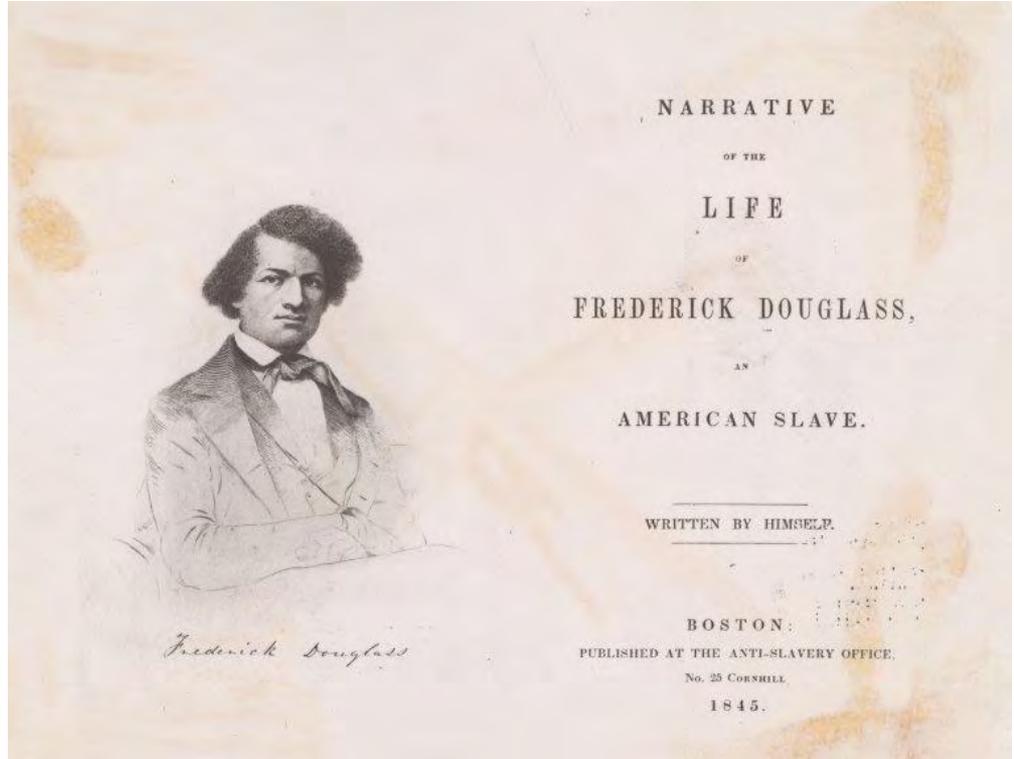
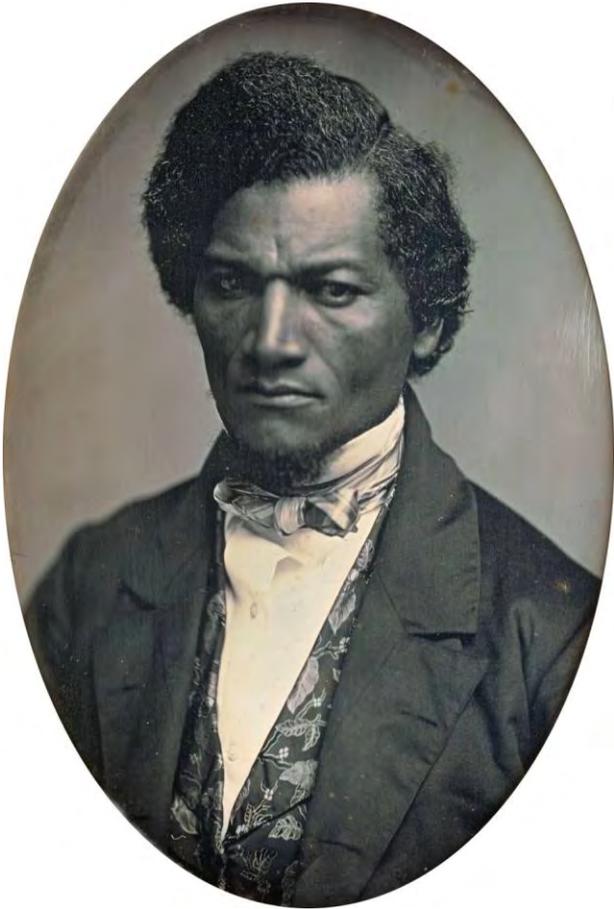
U.S. Marshall

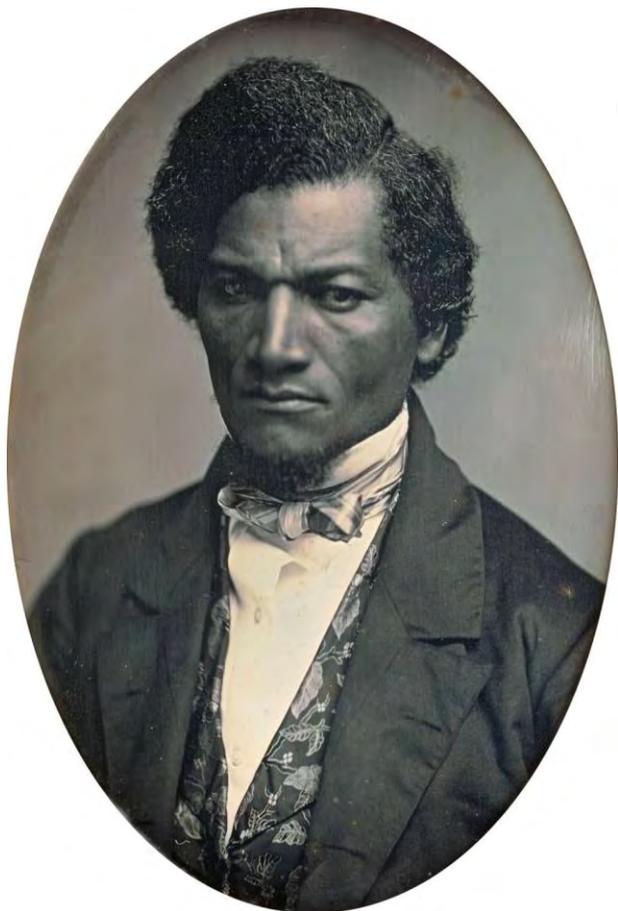
Diplomat

Advisor to President Abraham Lincoln

In the development of his Humanist Self Actualization theory, Abraham Maslow studied the life experiences of what he called exemplary people. Frederick Douglass was one of those chosen for this purpose, along with Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, et al.

Frederick Douglass

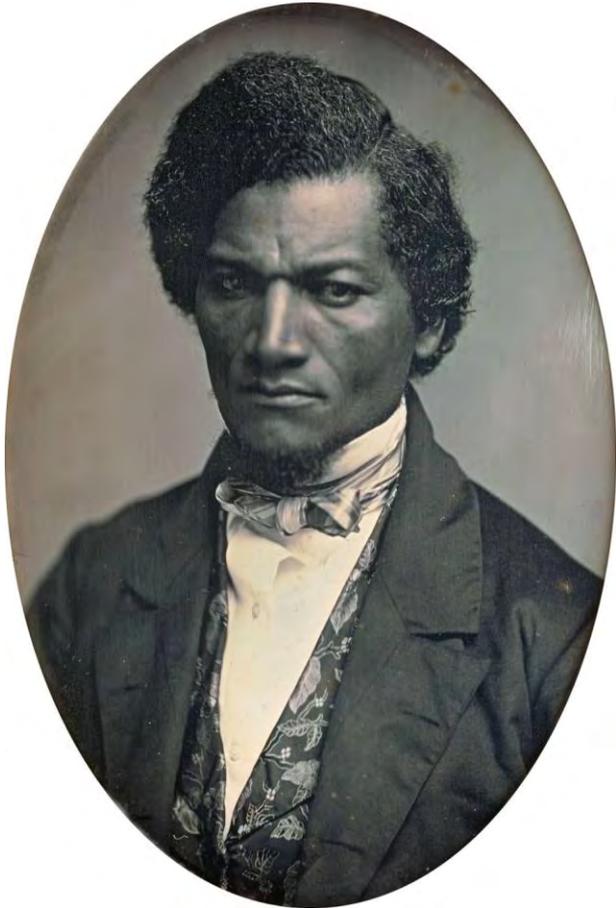




Frederick Douglass

"Right is of no sex, Truth is of no color, God is the Father of us all, and we are all Brethren."

- *Frederick Douglass*

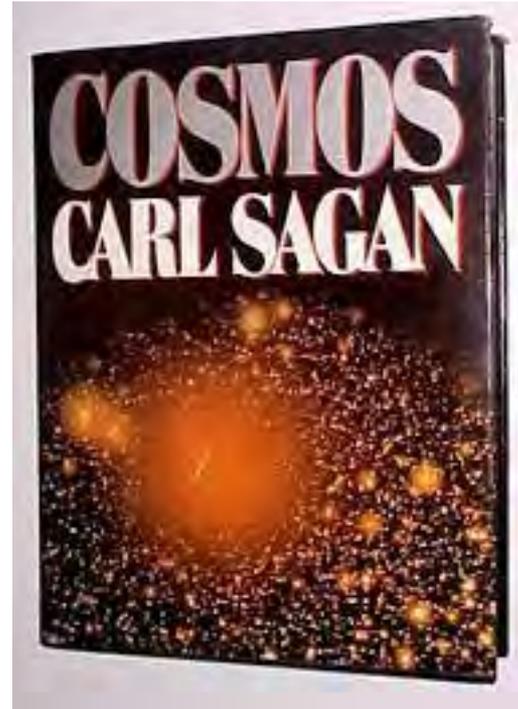


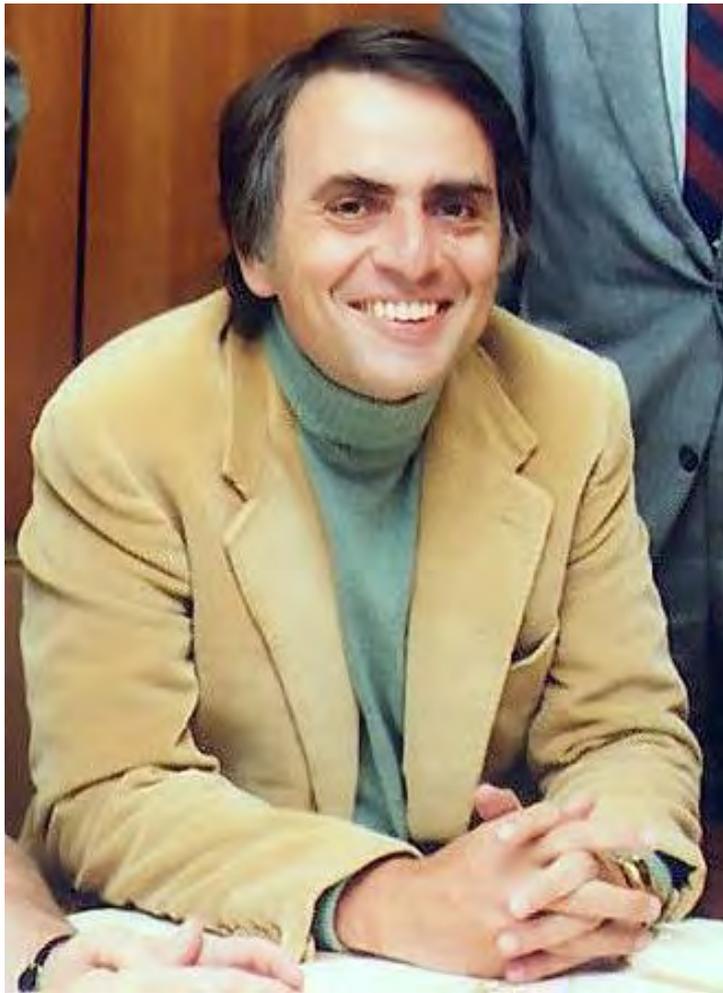
Frederick Douglass

"I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the South as I have observed it and proved it is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes; a justifier of the most appalling barbarity; a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds; and a dark shelter, under which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal abominations fester and flourish."

"Were I again to be reduced to the condition of a slave, next to that calamity, I should regard the fact of being the slave of a religious slaveholder, the greatest that could befall me."

Carl Sagan

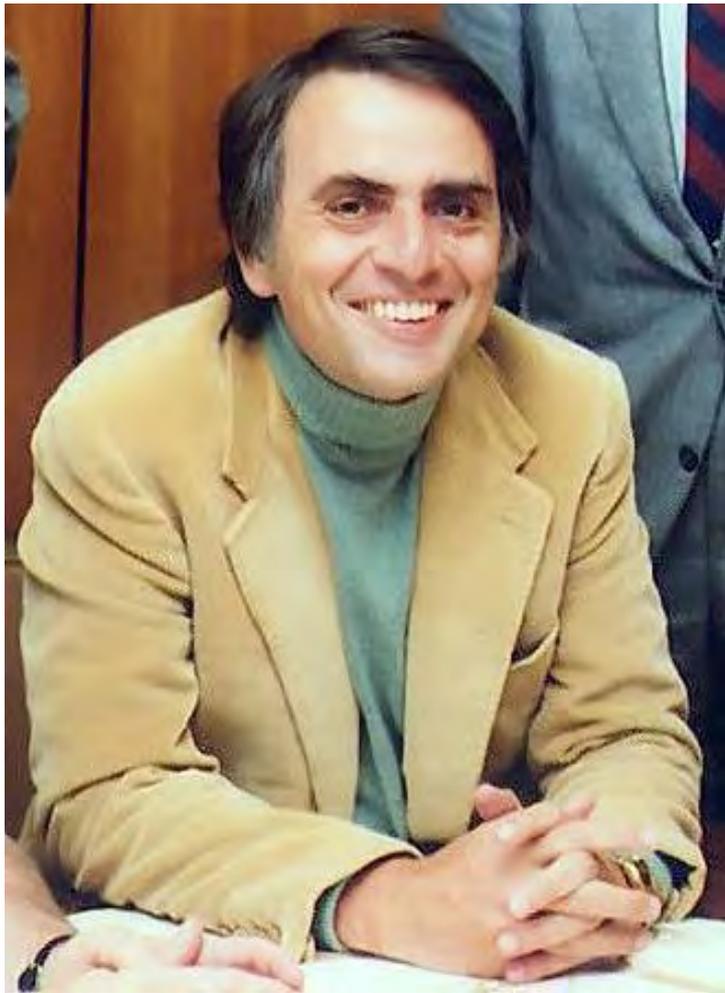




Carl Sagan

“The fact that religions can be so shamelessly dishonest, so contemptuous of the intelligence of their adherents, and still flourish does not speak very well for the tough-mindedness of the believers. But it does indicate, if a demonstration was needed, that near the core of the religious experience is something remarkably resistant to rational inquiry”.

- From *Broca's Brain*



Carl Sagan

“The idea that God is an oversized white male with a flowing beard who sits in the sky and tallies the fall of every sparrow is ludicrous. But if by God one means the set of physical laws that govern the universe, then clearly there is such a God. This God is emotionally unsatisfying... it does not make much sense to pray to the law of gravity.”



Photographer: Iain Macmillan / © Yoko Ono

John Lennon

Imagine

Imagine there is no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky

Imagine all the people
Living for today

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too

Imagine all the people
Living life in peace



Richard Wright

Author, Poet, Novelist

“Don’t leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented.”



"Morality is doing right, no matter what you are told. Religion is doing what you are told, no matter what is right."

H. L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)



“No one ever went broke
underestimating the intelligence
of the American public.”

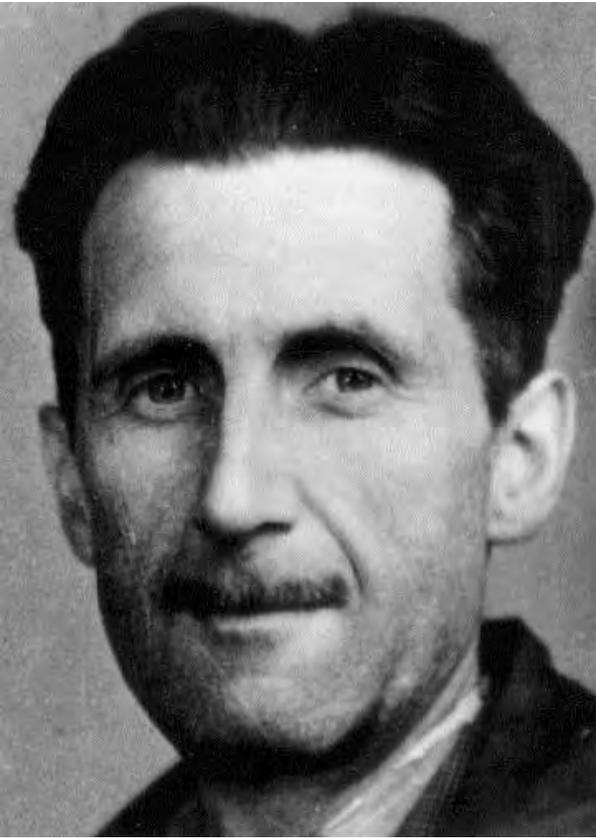
H.L. Mencken

(Traditional Paraphrase)

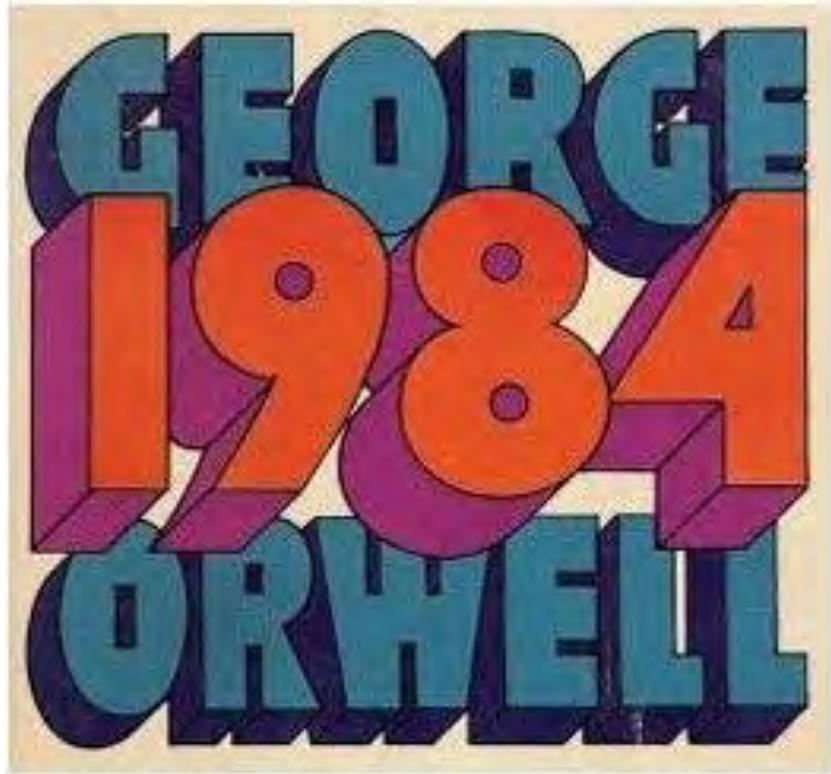
Actual quote:

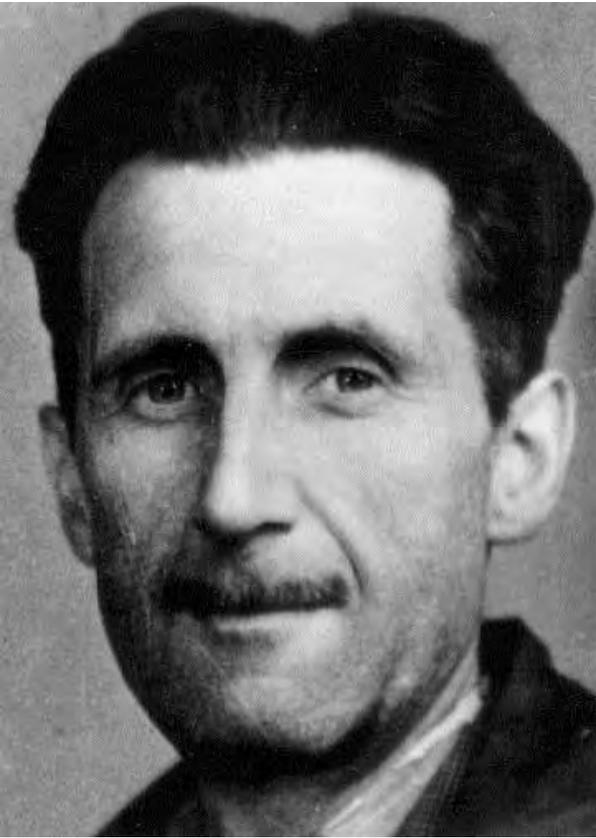
“No one in this world, so far as I know — and I have searched the records for years, and employed agents to help me — has ever lost money by underestimating the intelligence of the great masses of the plain people. Nor has anyone ever lost public office thereby.”

- Chicago Daily Tribune, September 19, 1926



George Orwell





George Orwell

“We are all equal, but some are more equal than others.”*

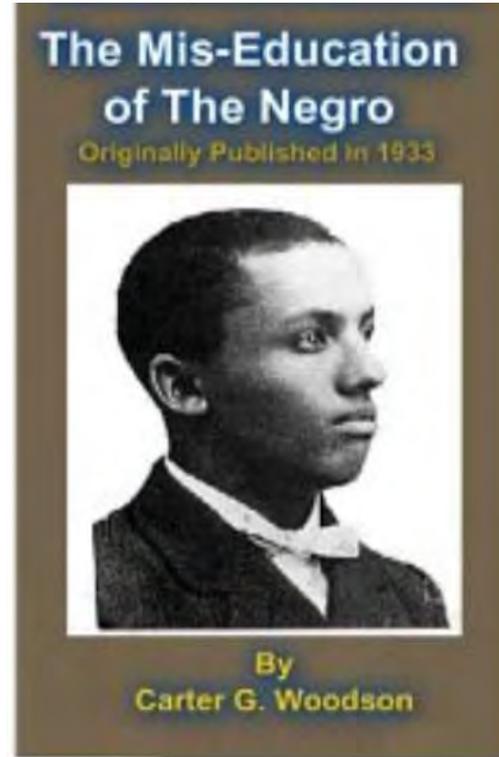
** An allusion to the opening line of the United States' Declaration of Independence, penned principally by Thomas Jefferson, which reads: “We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal...”.*

The original text from the book Animal Farm reads: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others".



Carter G. Woodson

2nd person of colour to earn Ph.D. at
Harvard University -1912





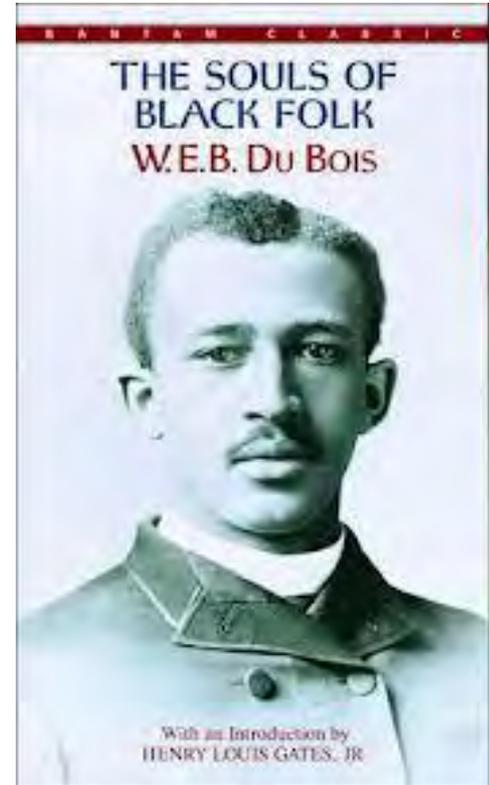
Carter G. Woodson

“In chameleon-like fashion the Negro has taken up almost everything religious which has come along instead of thinking for himself. The English split off from the Catholics because King Henry VIII had difficulty in getting sanction from the church to satisfy his lust for amorous women, and Negroes went with this ilk, singing “God save the King.” Others later said the thing necessary is baptism by immersion; and the Negroes joined them as Baptists. Another circle of promoters next said we must have a new method of doing things and we shall call ourselves Methodists; and the Negroes, then, embraced that faith. The Methodists and Baptists split up further on account of the custom of holding slaves; and the Negroes arrayed themselves on the respective sides. The religious agitators divided still more on questions beyond human power to understand; and the Negroes started out in similar fashion to imitate them.”



W.E.B. Du Bois

1st person of colour
to earn Ph.D. at
Harvard University
1895





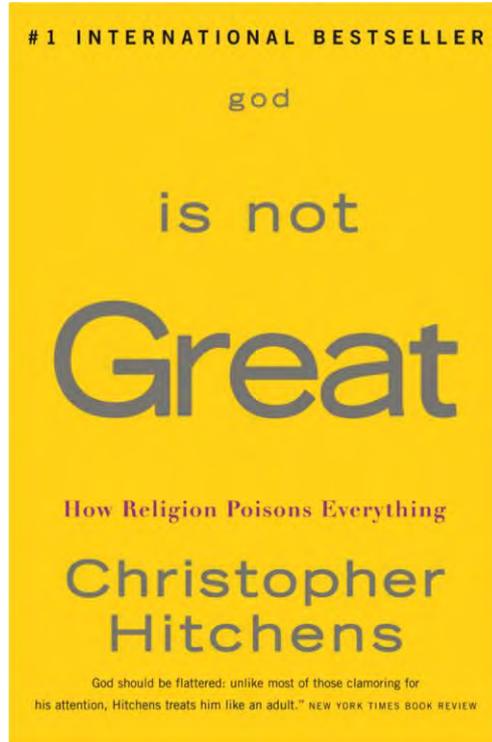
H.G. Wells

“Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was the founder of the science of dynamics. He made what was almost the first telescope, and he developed the astronomical views of Copernicus; but the church, still struggling gallantly against the light, decided that to believe that the earth was smaller and inferior to the sun made man and Christianity of no account, and diminished the importance of the Pope; so Galileo, under threats of dire punishment, when he was an old man of sixty-nine, was made to recant this view and put the earth back in its place as the immovable centre of the universe. He knelt before ten cardinals in scarlet, an assembly august enough to over-awe truth itself, while he amended the creation he had disarranged. The story has it that as he rose from his knees, after repeating his recantation, he muttered, *Eppursi Muove – It moves nevertheless.*”

- *Outline of History, Vol. II, Pg. 336. (1920)*



Christopher Hitchens



“If you are a religious apologist invited to debate with Christopher Hitchens, decline.”

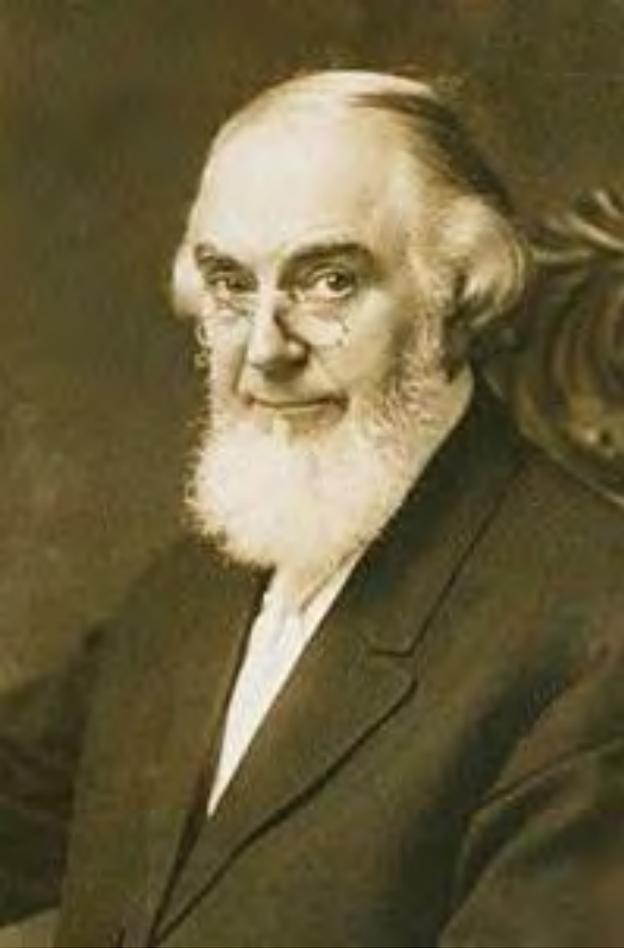
- *Richard Dawkins*



Christopher Hitchens

“That which can be asserted without evidence can be dismissed without evidence.”

- Hitchen's Razor

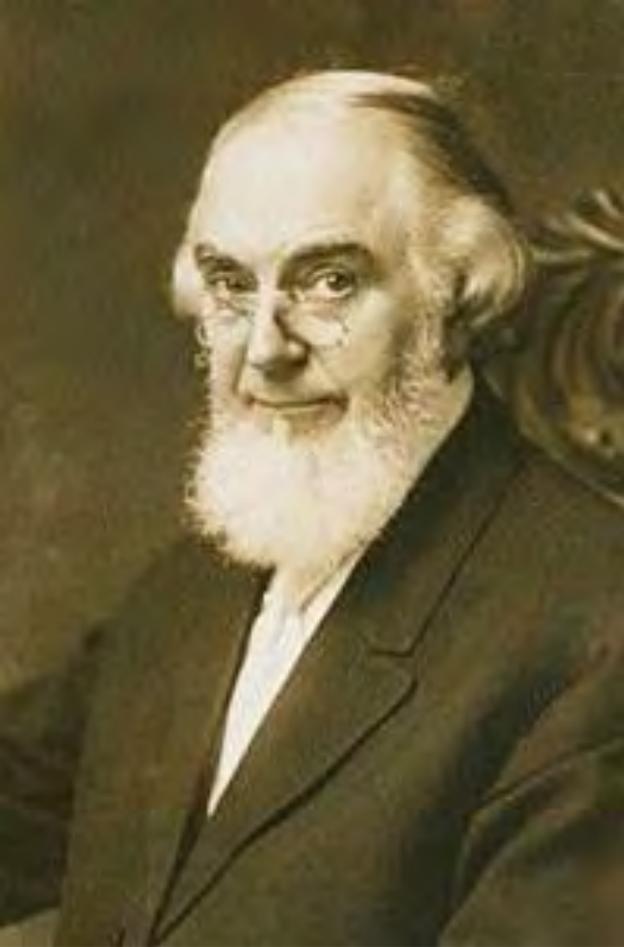


Charles Taze Russell

Founder of Watchtower, Bible and Tract
Society (1884)

Jehovah's Witnesses

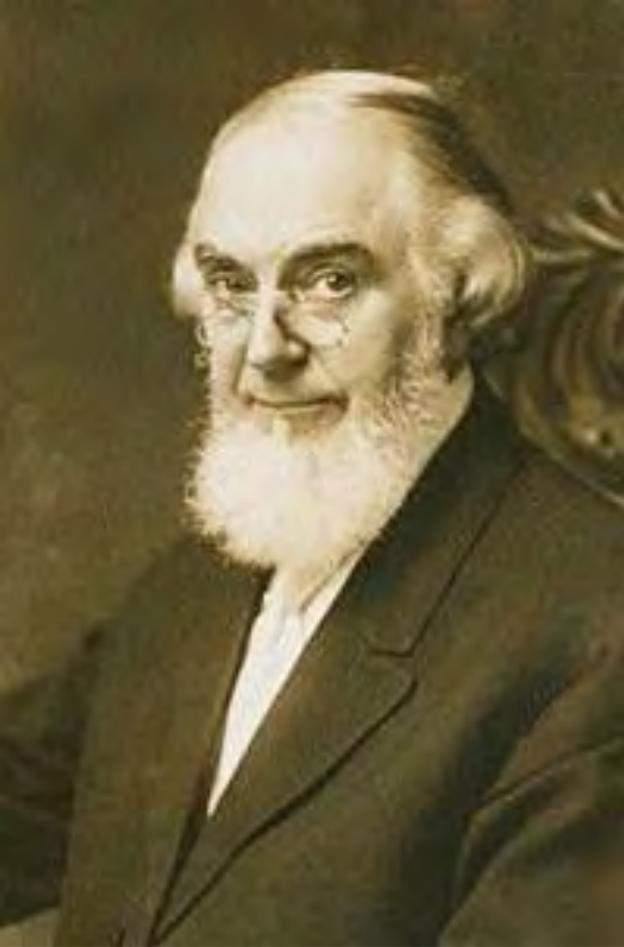
1862 1916



Charles Taze Russell



Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. I - VI



Charles Taze Russell

Studies in the Scriptures.

Christian people are becoming more and more awake to the fact that a great tidal wave of unbelief is sweeping over Christendom;—not the blasphemous kind voiced by Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll, but the cultured kind represented in the scholarship of our day, which makes the danger all the more insidious.

*Denunciation of Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll
from Vol. III, Pg. 1. (1889)*



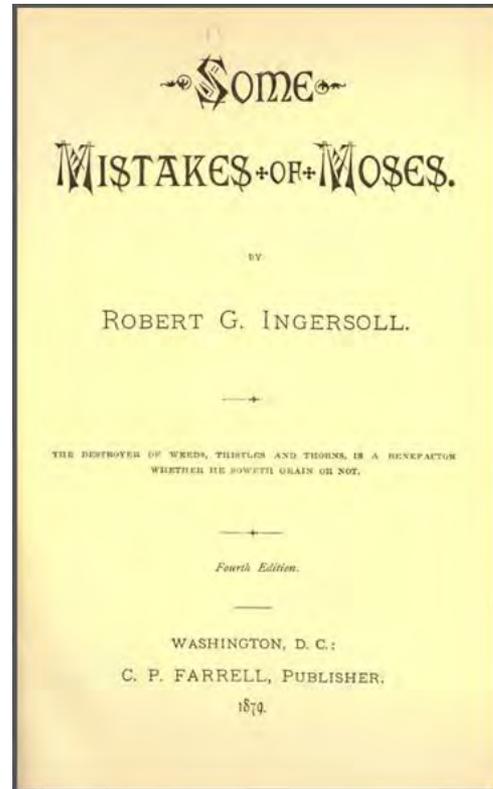
Robert G. Ingersoll

Lawyer, Civil War Veteran,
Free Thinker

(1879)



Robert G. Ingersoll



(1879)



Robert G. Ingersoll

“If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish--if a little more enlightened, religion would perish!”



Robert G. Ingersoll

“If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish--if a little more enlightened, religion would perish!”

“In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences.”



Robert G. Ingersoll

“If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish--if a little more enlightened, religion would perish!”

“In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences.”

“Happiness is the only good. The time to be happy is now. The place to be happy is here. The way to be happy is to make others so.”



Robert G. Ingersoll

“The Declaration of Independence announces the sublime truth, that all power comes from the people. This was a denial, and the first denial of a nation, of the infamous dogma that God confers the right upon one man to govern others. It was the first grand assertion of the dignity of the human race. It declared the governed to be the source of power, and in fact denied the authority of any and all gods. Through the ages of slavery — through the weary centuries of the lash and chain, God was the acknowledged ruler of the world. To enthrone man, was to dethrone God.”



Thomas Paine

Author of:

- *Common Sense*
- *The Rights of Man*
- *The Age of Reason*



Benjamin Franklin

To Thomas Paine on *The Age of Reason*:

Part I

“I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundations of all religion. For, without the belief of a Providence that takes [cognizance] of, guards, and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his displeasure, or to pray for his protection.”



Benjamin Franklin

To Thomas Paine on The Age of Reason...

Part II

“I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my opinion that, though your reasons are subtle, and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject, and the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others.”



Benjamin Franklin

"Heavenly Father, may all revere thee, and become thy dutiful children and faithful subjects. May thy laws be obeyed on earth as perfectly as they are in Heaven. Provide for us this day as Thou has daily done. Forgive us our trespasses and enable us likewise to forgive those that offend us. Keep us out of temptation and deliver us from evil."

- Franklin's personalization of the Lord's Prayer



John Jay

"Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest, of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

Note: Chief Justice Jay was probably the only orthodox Christian among the principal founders.



Alexander Hamilton

Presbyterian, Deist (with Theistic leanings) Episcopalian (convert)



Alexander Hamilton

“I have carefully examined the evidences of the Christian religion, and if I was sitting as a juror upon its authenticity I would unhesitatingly give my verdict in its favor. I can prove its truth as clearly as any proposition ever submitted to the mind of man.”



Alexander Hamilton

“I have carefully examined the evidences of the Christian religion, and if I was sitting as a juror upon its authenticity I would unhesitatingly give my verdict in its favor. I can prove its truth as clearly as any proposition ever submitted to the mind of man.”

“I have a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am a sinner. I look to Him for mercy; pray for me.”

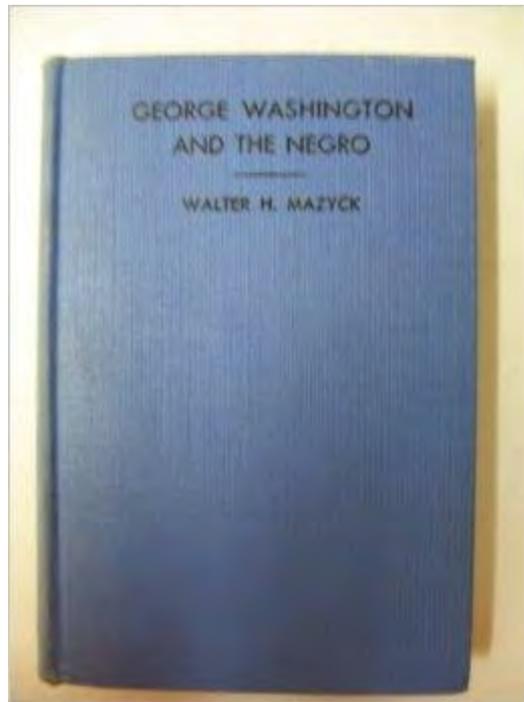


George Washington

Anglican, Episcopalian, Deist, Free Mason



George Washington



(This book I found in an abandoned garage, and from which I learned much about the early life of Washington and his relationship with the slave.)



George Washington

"In politics as in religion my tenets are few and simple."

First, Washington believed that religion served as the necessary defender of morality in civic life.

Second, he maintained that the moral law defended by religion was the same moral law that can be known by reason.

Third, he saw religious liberty as a natural right of all human beings."



George Washington

“In this enlightened age and in the land of equal liberty it is our boast that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the law, nor deprive him of the right of attaining and holding the highest offices that are known in the United States.”



John Adams

Unitarian Universalist, Deist.



John Adams

"As the government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion; as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen [Muslims] ... it is declared ... that no pretext arising from religious opinion shall ever product (*sic*) an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries....

"The United States is not a Christian nation any more than it is a Jewish or a Mohammedan nation."

-- Treaty of Tripoli (1797), carried unanimously by the Senate and signed into law by John Adams (the original language is by Joel Barlow, U.S. Consul at Algiers, 1795-1797)



John Adams

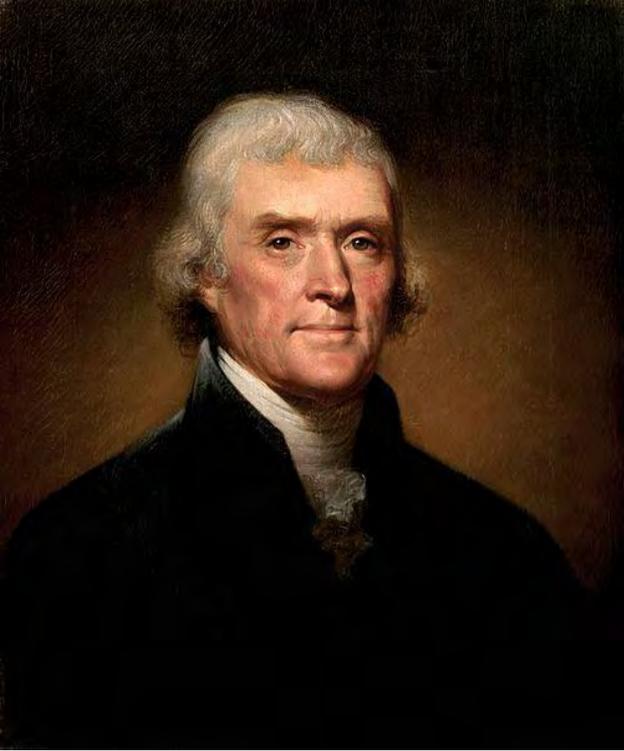
“Twenty times in the course of my late reading have I been on the point of breaking out, *“This would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!*”

“But in this exclamation I would have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in polite company, I mean Hell.”



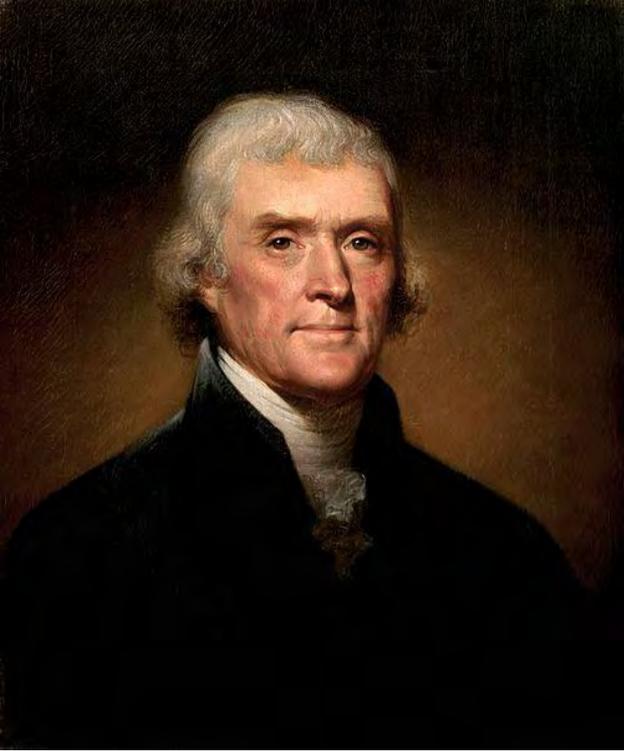
John Adams

“I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation. For as I believe the most enlightened men of it have participated in the amelioration of the philosophy of the age, once restored to an independent government & no longer persecuted they would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character [and] possibly in time become liberal Unitarian Christians, for your Jehovah is our Jehovah and your God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is our God.”

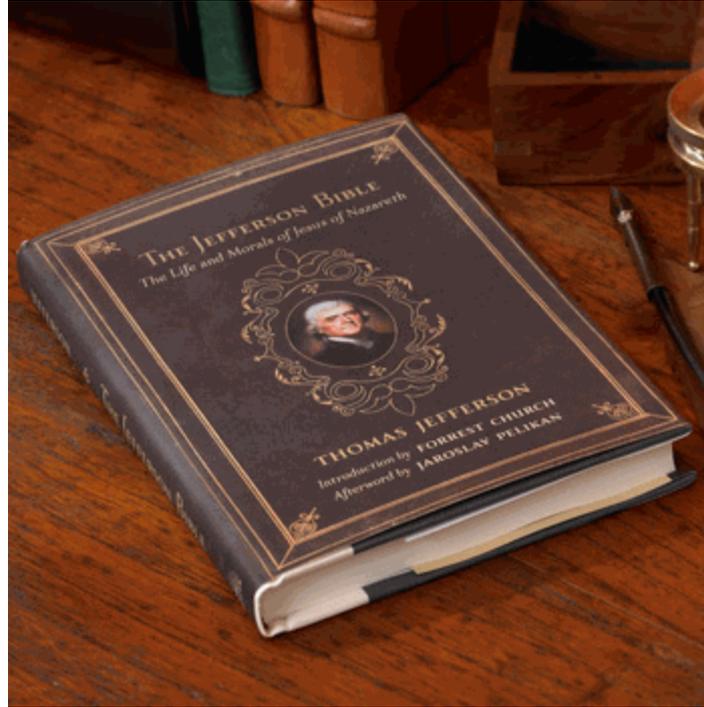


Thomas Jefferson

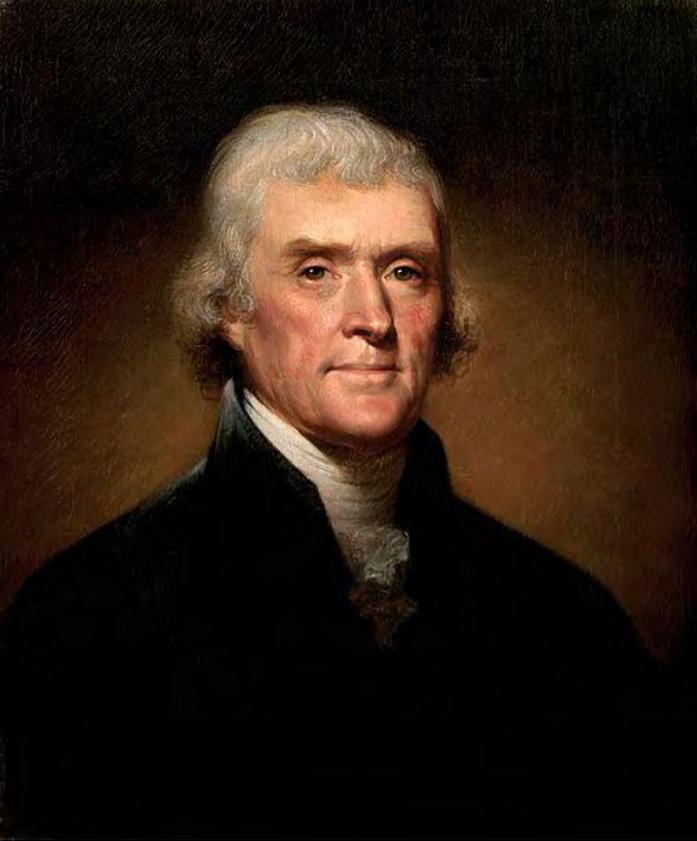
Unitarian, Deist, Enlightenment Thinker



Thomas Jefferson

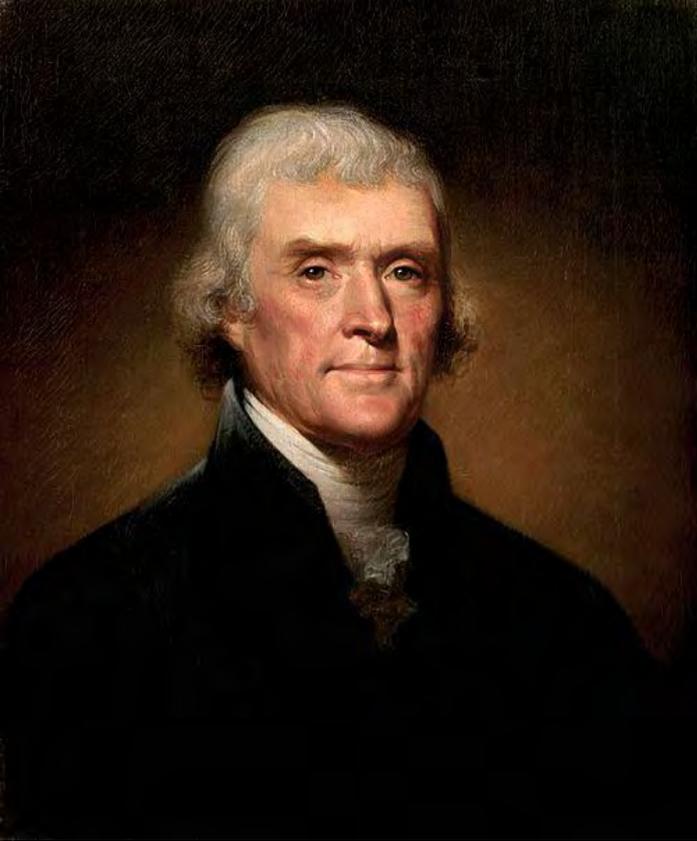


The Jefferson Bible



Thomas Jefferson

“...the greatest enemies to the doctrines of Jesus are those calling themselves the expositors of them, who have perverted them for the structure of a system of fancy absolutely incomprehensible, and without any foundation in his genuine words. And the day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the supreme being as his father in the womb of a virgin will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter. But we may hope that the dawn of reason and freedom of thought in these United States will do away with all this artificial scaffolding, and restore to us the primitive and genuine doctrines of this the most venerated reformer of human errors.”



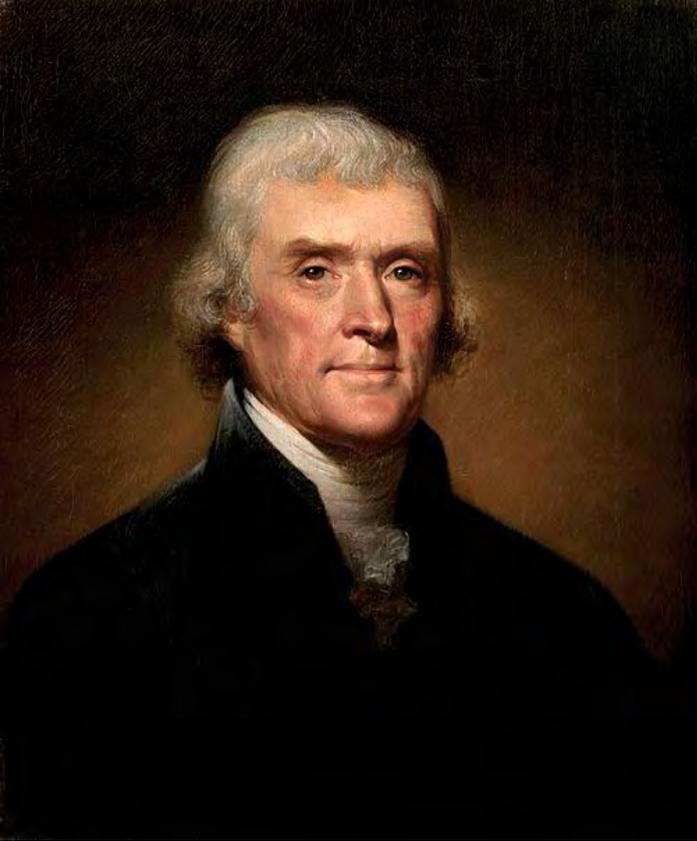
Thomas Jefferson

Notes on the State of Virginia

On the negro

“In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. To this must be ascribed their disposition to sleep when abstracted from their diversions, and unemployed in labour. An animal whose body is at rest, and who does not reflect, must be disposed to sleep of course. Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.”

1791-1793



Thomas Jefferson

“SIR, — I have received the favor of your letter of August 17th, and with it the volume you were so kind as to send me on the "Literature of Negroes." Be assured that no person living wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a complete refutation of the doubts I have myself entertained and expressed on the grade of understanding allotted to them by nature, and to find that in this respect they are on a par with ourselves. My doubts were the result of personal observation on the limited sphere of my own State, where the opportunities for the development of their genius were not favorable, and those of exercising it still less so. I expressed them therefore with great hesitation; but whatever be their degree of talent it is no measure of their rights. Because Sir Isaac Newton was superior to others in understanding, he was not therefore lord of the person or property of others. On this subject they are gaining daily in the opinions of nations, and hopeful advances are making towards their re-establishment on an equal footing with the other colors of the human family. I pray you therefore to accept my thanks for the many instances you have enabled me to observe of respectable intelligence in that race of men, which cannot fail to have effect in hastening the day of their relief; and to be assured of the sentiments of high and just esteem and consideration which I tender to yourself with all sincerity.”

- To Henri Gregoire, February 25, 1809



James Madison

James Madison wrote in 1785:

"It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage, and such only, as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent both in order of time and degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society. Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the Universe."



James Madison

Of the founders, Madison was probably the foremost advocate of separation of church and state, although his specific thoughts about religion during the period of his greatest political leadership are largely unknown.

Religion scholar David L. Holmes wrote: "Like so many other founding fathers, James Madison seems to have ended up in the camp affirming the existence of a Deistic God."



James Monroe

"The religious conviction of President James Monroe is best classified as 'decision by indecision....No records offer any evidence that Mr. Monroe rejected the Anglican faith; at the same time, we have no record that he endorsed it, either."

- *The Founders' Faith*, by Richard J. Behn

James Monroe



The soldier holding the Star-Spangled Banner in this famous painting of Washington crossing the Delaware is said to be future President James Monroe.





Tadeusz Kościuszko

Served under George Washington as Colonel. Promoted to Brigadier General in 1783. He is called The Father of West Point and the Father of American Artillery.

A friend of Thomas Jefferson, he donated money to free and educate Jefferson's slaves, though ultimately, the funds were never used for the intended purpose.

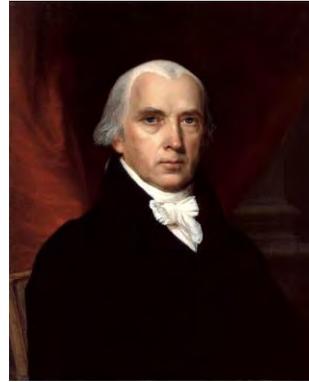
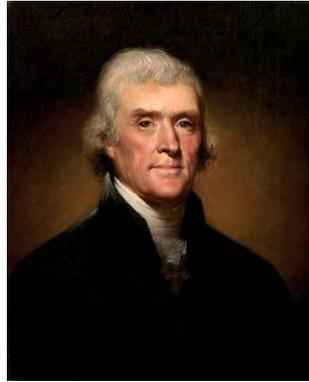


Lafayette

Following the demolition of the Bastille, he gave the key to Thomas Paine to bring to the United States as a gift. It can still be seen displayed on a wall at the Mt. Vernon home of George Washington.

A friend of Thomas Jefferson, he returned to visit the new nation in 1824 when invited by then President James Monroe. He used that occasion to urge Jefferson to free his slaves and abolish the slave trade in the United States. Jefferson agreed in principle, but deferred to a later time in the young nation's future.

Humanism and the Founding Fathers of the United States



The End

Tony Martin
October 8, 2014