

Thomas Jefferson quotes on the bible

The whole history of these books [the Gospels] is so defective and doubtful that it seems vain to attempt minute enquiry into it: and such tricks have been played with their text, and with the texts of other books relating to them, that we have a right, from that cause, to entertain much doubt what parts of them are genuine. In the New Testament there is internal evidence that parts of it have proceeded from an extraordinary man; and that other parts are of the fabric of very inferior minds. It is as easy to separate those parts, as to pick out diamonds from dunghills.

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, January 24, 1814

Christianity neither is, nor ever was a part of the common law.

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Dr. Thomas Cooper, February 10, 1814

You say you are a Calvinist. I am not. I am of a sect by myself, as far as I know.

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to Ezra Stiles Ely, June 25, 1819

Among the sayings and discourses imputed to him [Jesus] by his biographers, I find many passages of fine imagination, correct morality, and of the most lovely benevolence; and others again of so much ignorance, so much absurdity, so much untruth, charlatanism, and imposture, as to pronounce it impossible that such contradictions should have proceeded from the same being.

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to William Short, April 13, 1820

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 Minerve in the brain of Jupiter. But may we hope that the dawn of reason and freedom of thought in these United States will do away with this artificial scaffolding, and restore to us the primitive and genuine doctrines of this most venerated reformer of human errors.

-Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams, April 11, 1823

It is between fifty and sixty years since I read it [the Apocalypse], and I then considered it merely the ravings of a maniac, no more worthy nor capable of explanation than the incoherences of our own nightly dreams.

-Thomas Jefferson, letter to General Alexander Smyth, Jan. 17, 1825

JESUS AND THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

"There are, I acknowledge, passages [in the Bible] not free from objection, which we may, with probability, ascribe to Jesus himself; but claiming indulgence from the circumstances under which he acted. His object was the reformation of some articles in the religion of the Jews, as taught by Moses. **That sect had presented for the object of their worship, a being of terrific character, cruel, vindictive, capricious and unjust.** Jesus, taking for his type the best qualities of the human head and heart, wisdom, justice, goodness, and adding to them power, ascribed all of these, but in infinite perfection, to the Supreme Being, and formed him really worthy of their adoration. Moses had either not believed in a future state of existence, or had not thought it essential to be explicitly taught to his people. Jesus inculcated that doctrine with emphasis and precision. Moses had bound the Jews to many idle ceremonies, mummeries and observances, of no effect towards producing the social utilities which constitute the essence of virtue; Jesus exposed their futility and insignificance. The one (i.e. Moses) instilled into his people the most anti-social spirit towards other nations; the other preached philanthropy and universal charity and benevolence. The office of reformer of the superstitions of a nation, is ever dangerous. **Jesus had to walk on the perilous confines of reason and religion: and a step to right or left might place him within the grip of the priests of the superstition, a blood thirsty race, as cruel and remorseless as the being whom they represented as the family God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, and the local God of Israel.**"

Source: [Letter of Thomas Jefferson to William Short, August 4, 1820.](#)

"I never submitted the whole system of my opinions to the creed of any party of men whatever in religion, in philosophy, in politics, or in anything else where I was capable of thinking for myself. Such an addiction is the last degradation of a free and moral agent."

Source: Letter of Thomas Jefferson to Francis Hopkinson, March 13, 1789.