



Quotes of the Founding Fathers

Ross Milner

Albuquerque, NM 87190

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This is an election year and politicians of all stripes are either claiming to be followers of God, or they are remaining silent on the Religious Right's unscrupulous attempts to establish a theocracy in this country. It is, therefore, appropriate to present some quotes of the Founding Fathers.

Benjamin Franklin

"Revelation indeed had no weight with me."

"The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason."

"When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself, and God does not take care to support it so that its professors are obliged to call for help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one."

John Adams

"The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."

"Let the human mind loose. It must be loose. It will be loose. Superstition and dogmatism cannot confine it."

"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."

"Remember the *Index Expurgatorius*, the inquisition, the stake, the axe, the halter, and the guillotine; and, oh! horrible, the rack!"

"Have you considered that system of holy lies and pious frauds that has raged and triumphed for 1500 years."

"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."

Thomas Paine

"The age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system."

"Belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man."

George Washington

"The United States of America should have a foundation free from the influence of clergy."

"Religious controversies are always productive of more acrimony and irreconcilable hatreds than those which spring from any other cause."

James Madison

~~"The purpose of separation of church and state is to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries."~~ This quotation is probably not authentic. See <http://members.tripod.com/~candst/quotpurp.htm> for an explanation.

"The civil Government, though bereft of everything like an associated hierarchy, possesses the requisite stability, and performs its functions with complete success, whilst the number, the industry, and the morality of the priesthood, and the devotion of the people, have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the church from the State." [March 2, 1819]

"Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect."

"Ecclesiastical establishments tend to great ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitate the execution of mischievous projects."

"What influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments had on civil society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instances have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people."

"During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What has been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry, and persecution."

Thomas Jefferson

"On the dogmas of religion, as distinguished from moral principles, all mankind, from the beginning of the world to this day, have been quarreling, fighting, burning and torturing one

another for abstractions unintelligible to themselves and to all others, and absolutely beyond the comprehension of the human mind."

"Question with boldness even the existence of a God; because if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear."

"We discover in the gospels a groundwork of vulgar ignorance, of things impossible, of superstition, fanaticism and fabrication."

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

The above selected quotes are available from innumerable historical and biographical sources; but the most convenient source I know of is *2000 Years of Disbelief* by James A. Haught, the editor of the *Charleston Gazette*.

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