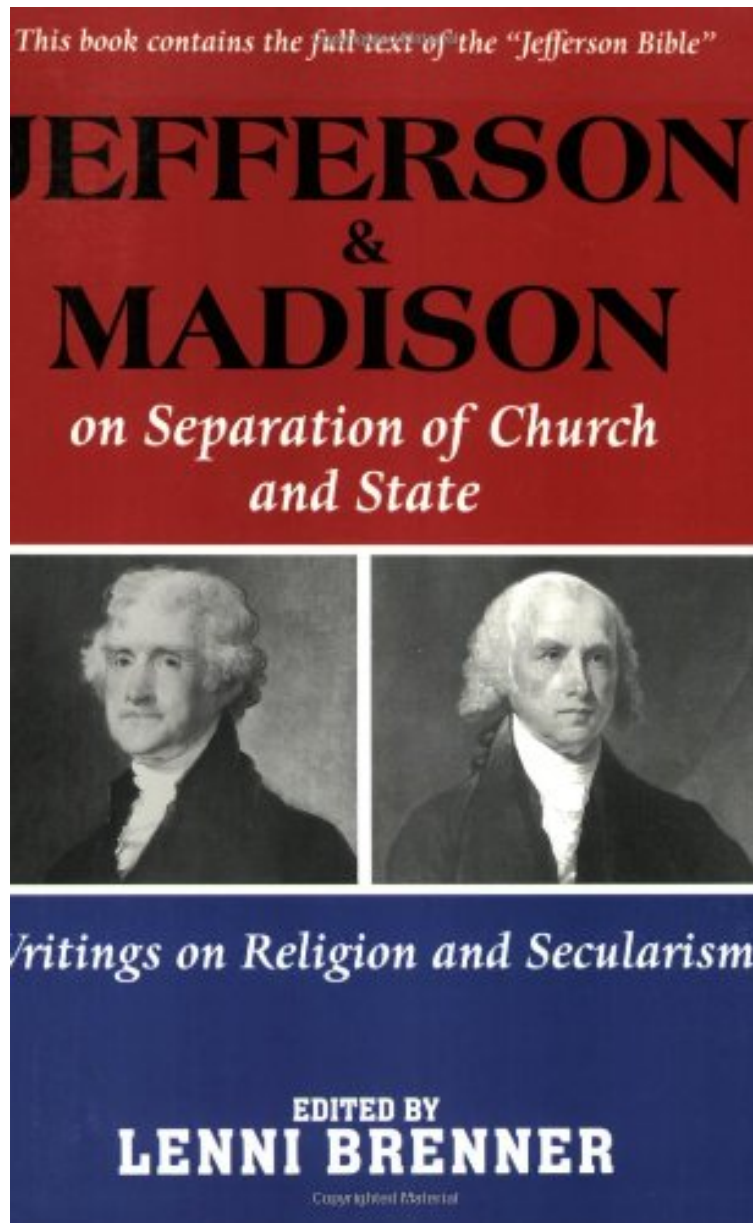


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Jefferson and Madison on the Separation of Church and State

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From Brand: Barricade Books : Jefferson and Madison on the Separation of Church and State before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jefferson and Madison on the Separation of Church and State:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Beautifully DoneBy The SpinozanatorThere's nothing like reading

original documents. Jefferson and Madison both seemed more religious than I had thought they were - but there was never any question about their unrelenting devotion to the idea of separation of church and state. These opinions were solidified well before 1776. Their only evolution of thought was in the phraseology finally settled on by each of them. They each repeated their chosen phraseologies about both religion and the necessity of its separation from governance many times in letters to different people. After the constitution was written and ratified, the states began to give up their endorsements and support of one denomination or another until in the 1830's, when the last official state religion fell. One could not read this book and still believe Madison, Jefferson, and most of the Founding Fathers; did not mean what was said in the Bill of Rights about religion. They were religious men but not all believed the same way about their God. They particularly didn't want their new government to favor one sect over another - for Jefferson, even if it was Muslim or Hindu. They had evidence of a Europe that had been awash with blood for centuries because of religion and government patronizing each other. They were determined to not let that happen to their new country. The bulk of the book is the letters and a few speeches, presented in chronological order. Brenner provides an opening chapter, helpful scattered explanatory notes, and a summary. This is indeed a beautiful collection and a great example of why original sources are so important...but if you just disagree, that's OK - "it neither breaks my leg nor picks my pocket" - a famous line from Jefferson, who, in turn, borrowed the idea for that line from Voltaire, as I learned in a wonderful book about the Enlightenment written by Peter Gay in 1995. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Priceless By Paradigm Pretty much your one essential stop for everything they themselves said on religion. Very valuable collection. 14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. An Important Read By El Gigante Brenner is not without some bias in this, but he is also not without some scholarship. It would be difficult for him, as an atheist, to not receive criticism as having an agenda with this book, but even in spite of this the work itself seems to hold up rather well. The letters are compiled accurately as far as other readings I have done, and if they are "cherry-picked" as some reviewers say, it is only for relevancy. I have to admit that the attack I am seeing on the book here is either outright ranting about him being a Trotsky loving Marxist, (as if this ruined his credibility in some way) or just a denial of the evidence being presented in his text. The lines of the letters are rather plainly spoken; an issue with this book is more likely a discomfort with what Jefferson and Madison were saying. For the more conservative bent, this is borne out in the recent textbook revisions in Texas that minimize Jefferson's role as a founder. Probably has a lot to do with the "wall of separation" and things like these letters. Bummer that he wrote the Declaration of Independence while Madison wrote the Bill of Rights, and father'ed the Constitution. Seems that the two most important document writers in American history were not the god-fearing Christian paragons that fox news may wish you to believe.

A complete selection of writings from Thomas Jefferson and James Madison focusing specifically on their very forward thinking beliefs in the separation of church and state.