

Foundations of Freethought

Thomas Jefferson

—“Notes on the State of Virginia” (1781-82)

“The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.”

“Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error.”

—Letter to his nephew Peter Carr, August 10, 1787

“Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the existence of a god; because, if there be one, he must more approve the homage of reason, than that of blindfolded fear.”