

Jefferson the Deist?

Post by “Cassius” of January 17, 2018 at 4:20 PM

I think that is a great question and I agree with the concern. Given that Jefferson clearly understood Epicurus and Epicurus' contentions about the universe being eternal, I would not think that Jefferson thought of himself as a deist, and I bet a lot of the commentary just comes from the lack of familiarity people have with the Epicurean position - they don't know of any alternative to (1) Theist , (2) Deist, or (3) Atheist. I think we'd have to dig into Jefferson's own letters to determine what he thought, so maybe over time as people come across this thread they can suggest cites. But I do recall reading that Jefferson was very concerned about his words being used against him, so it may always be difficult to be sure of what he really thought, as opposed to what he wrote. Hopefully others can clarify this over time.