

of disagreement proceeded, largely due to Williams' intransigency regarding the government. In 1634 he was before the General Council, in 1635 before the roll of the magistrates, and in Oct. 1635 he was given six weeks to sign an oath of fidelity...and when he did not comply he was ordered deported to England in January of 1636... but avoiding this he spent "14 weeks in the wilderness" and eventually wound up in Rhode Island...obtaining a deed to the Providence territory in 1638.

In 1639 Williams announced himself to be a Baptist and declared the church at large to be apostate. In 1643 he went to England for a charter (eventually obtained by Clark) for which a temporary charter was given in 1644. In 1644 he issued the BLOODY TENANT OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION which was answered and reanswered several times with larger and more notable titles. The thrust of the BLOODY TENANT can be oversimplified somewhat by noting that it chiefly espoused the ideas that:

- the state had no authority over conscience
- the church had no conscientiable link with the state
- Biblical state examples were only in local setting
- true freedom is the cross

But at this point we note that those who argued against Williams did so on the ground that confusion and rebellion would rule if every man had this sort of freedom.

It must also be noted that Williams, though the best identified of the group, was only one of many voices that sought this sort of freedom. The Quakers were loud in the call (and they were willing to grant it to others!) and the pioneer spirits of Anne Hutchinson, etc., were on a similar key. What they were pursuing was the right of individuality in regard to conscience...a right of individuality lived in an agreed on society. Defiance of law was not the issue...the limits of law were the issue.

We have earlier noted the development of Rhode Island and the difficulties felt there and in the other colonies with regard to this conscience right to know God. We will not repeat that discussion nor that of the establishments in the various states. But this was foundational to the problem and it is the clearest expression of the anguish that existed between people and their needs and people and their constitutional allegiance.

b. The Outcome:

- The result of the Williams conflict did not end all religious persecution but it paved a way, particularly in the middle colonies, for people of different convictions to live in acceptance of each other. And that probably was the first step that eventually gave a full freedom of soul in this land.