

A. Religious Liberty

1. The ideal:

One may not like to face it but the obvious end of liberty of conscience is the end that men may use their available liberty for the development of things that are not so plainly given to liberty. In other words, freedom may move one to a position not like by the very givers of freedom. Yet it is true that if one seeks freedom and seeks to act on freedom, the risk that is involved is worth the price of the outcome, I think. For the opposite to freedom (liberty) of conscience and the exercise of religious faith is a mandated, state-controlled, and individual exercise curbing sort of tyranny. So freedom runs the very risk of allowing to grow underneath its banners the very forces that may harm or destroy it. Our intent is to track out the battle of liberty of conscience in religious affairs...the ideal being that of every person having the inherent right of liberty of soul and the expression of that liberty in guarded individualism. This will lead to many strange ends at which we are not going to look in this class but the overall outcome is one of great benefit to us all.

2. Some preliminary notes...things you should either know or guess at!

- a. The early New England (et al) idea of theocracy
- b. The diversity of religious bodies developed in this hemisphere.
- c. The Hopes of a "Gospel AGE" or "Kingdom on earth" in the minds of many of our founders.,
- d. The American Dream:
 - (1) the nature of the patents (charters)
 - (2) changes in toleration
 - (3) the Declaration of Independence
 - (4) the American Constitution
 - (5) the dream in the reality of life
- e. Various interpretations of "religious freedom"
 - (1) to be or not to be religious
 - (2) to choose or not to choose a form of religion