

B

QUOTES FROM THE FOUNDING ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND STATE

Directions: Read the quotes and explain whether the quote supports a strong relationship between church and state or whether it supports a separate relationship between church and state.

MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE III, 1780

“As the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion and morality; and as these cannot be generally diffused through a community, but by the institution of the public worship of God, and of public instructions in piety, religion and morality: Therefore, to promote their happiness and to secure the good order and preservation of their government, the people of this commonwealth have a right to invest their legislature with power to authorize and require . . . the several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, to make suitable provision, at their own expense, for the institution of the public worship of God, and for the support and maintenance of public Protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality, in all cases where such provision shall not be made voluntarily.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON, NOTES ON THE
STATE OF VIRGINIA, 1781

“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.”

PATRICK HENRY, “A BILL
ESTABLISHING A PROVISION FOR
TEACHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION,” 1784

“Whereas the general diffusion of Christian knowledge hath a natural tendency to correct the morals of men, restrain their vices, and preserve the peace of society . . . It is judged that such provision may be made by the Legislature . . . for the support of Christian teachers.”

GEORGE WASHINGTON LETTER TO GEORGE MASON, 1785

“Altho, no man’s sentiments are more opposed to any kind of restraint upon religious principles than mine are; yet I must confess, that I am not amongst the number of those who are so much alarmed at the thoughts of making people pay towards the support of that which they profess, if of the denomination of Christians; or declare themselves Jews, Mahomitans or otherwise, and thereby obtain proper relief. As the matter now stands, I wish an assessment had never been agitated, and as it has gone so far, that the Bill could die an easy death; because I think it will be productive of more quiet to the State, than by enacting it into a Law; which, in my opinion, would be impolitic, admitting there is a decided majority for it, to the disquiet of a respectable minority.”

JAMES MADISON, MEMORIAL AND REMONSTRANCE AGAINST RELIGIOUS ASSESSMENTS, 1785

“Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other Religions, may establish with the same ease any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other Sects? That the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever?”

NORTHWEST ORDINANCE, 1787

“Article I: No person, demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship, or religious sentiments, in the said territory.

Article III: Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

OLIVER ELLSWORTH, LANDHOLDER, No. 7, 1787

“A [religious] test in favour of any one denomination of Christians would be to the last degree absurd in the United States. If it were in favour of either Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists, or Quakers, it would incapacitate more than three-fourths of the American citizens for any public office; and thus degrade them from the rank of freemen.”

JOHN LELAND, "RIGHT OF
CONSCIENCE INALIENABLE, AND
THEREFORE RELIGIOUS OPINIONS NOT
COGNIZABLE BY THE LAW," 1791

"Is conformity in matters of religion essential to the happiness of civil government? Not at all. Government has no more to do with the religious opinions of men than it has with the principles of mathematics."

THE FIRST AMENDMENT, 1791

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."