

Religious Freedom

In 1802, Thomas Jefferson explained his understanding of the First Amendment's religion clauses as reflecting the view of "the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall between church and State" (Free Speech Center at Middle Tenn. State University).

Today, individuals will, with great vehemency, declare that the phrase "The separation of church and state is in the Constitution."

It is not unusual for people (and all humans are people), to believe something simply because it has been affirmed to be true: even when it is not true.

When individuals pickup on a phrase that suits their political ends, so also does it take place in religion. How many times have you heard the phrase "the Bible says," when the Bible does not say what is being affirmed? One example of this is with the phrase "The Battle of Armageddon", i.e., "At the very moment of the Second Coming of our Lord, 'all nations' shall be gathered 'against Jerusalem to battle' (Zech. 11; 12; 13; 14), and the battle of Armageddon (obviously covering the entire area from Jerusalem to Megiddo, and perhaps more) will be in progress" (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 3, pg. 45) (Mormon Doctrine, pg. 74).

The same error is true with "building a wall between church and state" (Ibid). Did the framers of the nation seek to keep religion out of government, or keep the government out of religion?

When "Jefferson explained his understanding of the First Amendment's religion clauses as reflecting the view of 'the whole American people' which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall between church and State" (Ibid), it was not to keep religion out of the State, but to keep the State out of religion.

In an early Pennsylvania decision it is said, "The declaration that Christianity is part of the law of the land is a summary description of an existing and very obvious condition of our institutions. We are a Christian people...(1855) Biblical Law, pg. 46. ret