

1. There are two issues:

(1) Whether religious proposals, like any other, are subject, finally, to common experience and reason; and

(2) Whether such fundamental grounds for evaluation as public purposes imply can only be grounds determined by common experience and reason.

2. The affirmative position on the first issue is, in fact, an Enlightenment conviction shared by the founders. But it is really only the affirmative position on the second issue that one is committed to upholding as an American citizen who proposes to believe and act in accordance with the Constitution.

3. Thus whether or not the fundamental grounds for evaluation that public purposes imply are properly religious, they are, in any event, restricted to such grounds as can be validated by common experience and reason through public debate. They cannot be grounds derived from, or, better, validated by, any other authority. Therefore, religious persons of whatever persuasion cannot expect their beliefs to be generally accepted as providing such fundamental grounds for evaluating public policies unless their beliefs themselves can be validated by common reason and experience.