

**Hutchinson Monologue  
(Individual Freedom)  
By Richard Atkins  
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My name is Anne Hutchinson. I am not a Baptist, but I helped Baptist in America develop one of their main doctrines, that of soul freedom. How did I do this, you may ask? Well, I will tell you that I was a teacher and a very influential supporter of Roger Williams.

I was born Anne Marbury in Lincolnshire, England, in 1600. It's the same place where John Smyth preached before he became a Baptist. I married my husband, William Hutchinson, in 1634, and we sailed to America and landed in Boston, Massachusetts.

My beliefs were questioned by the leaders in Boston, and I was not admitted to the church at first. Then I organized meetings for the women in the town, and my ability as a teacher became known. After a while, some men started coming to my classes, and later even ministers and magistrates came to learn from me. I discussed recent sermons and gave my own views on them. One of the members of my Monday Bible school class was a bright young preacher, about my same age, by the name of Roger Williams. His views on freedom of conscience and religious tolerance were like mine, and he took my teachings to heart, and went on to establish the first really free territory in America, the Rhode Island colony. My sister Catherine was a Baptist, and she urged Roger to act upon his Baptist convictions, even though he was not a Baptist at that time. Even then, "freedom of conscience" was being recognized as a Baptist hallmark.

I felt that I had a special inspiration, a "peculiar indwelling of the Holy Ghost," and I taught that many ministers in the colony were only preaching under a "covenant of works," not a "covenant of grace." In fact, the Puritan religion said little about faith and mainly consisted of enforcing strict living according to the church covenant rules.

What I was really doing was voicing a protest against the legalism of the Puritans and questioning their authority. This was the serious matter of church freedom, which says no leader in the church can give orders about what everybody has to believe. I was opposed to any clergyman taking away my individual freedom to think for myself. As a result, the whole colony became divided into two factions. I was supported by the majority of the Boston church, but opposed by the country magistrates. Because I resisted authority and because I taught that faith alone was necessary for salvation, I was called an "antinomian," which had the meaning of being a lawless person.

Finally I was brought to trial and banished from the colony. I took some of my followers to Aquidneck in Rhode Island in 1638, because I knew that I was welcome in the territory established by Roger Williams. Four years later, when my husband died, I moved to Long Island where I was killed by Indians there in 1643.

Some of my students and followers became Baptist because of my insistence upon salvation by grace and freedom of conscience, but others became Quakers, because I believed that a person should follow his inner light, disregard outward ordinances, and live under a covenant of grace even without the authority or support of Scripture.

My insistence upon individual freedom and a religion that was inward and mystical was a threat to the authority of the Puritans. And, I will make no apology for the trouble I caused the old stuffed shirts in Boston. They needed to know that their coming to America for religious freedom did not allow them to take it away from others whose theology differed from their own.