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THE RHETORIC OF A COLONIAL CONTROVERSY:
ROGER WILLIAMS VERSUS THE MASSACHUSETTS
BAY COLONY.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1966
Speech

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THE RHETORIC OF A COLONIAL CONTROVERSY:
ROGER WILLIAMS VERSUS THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of
The Ohio State University

By

John William Reed, B.A., B.D., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1966

Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
Department of Speech
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VITA

December 14, 1927  Born - North Fairfield, Ohio

1951 ............ B.A., Bryan College, Dayton, Tennessee

1954 ............ B.D., Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana

1955-1959

1960-1961 ....... Instructor, Stryker High School, Stryker, Ohio

1960 ............ Teaching Assistant, Department of Speech, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

1961 ............ M.A., Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

1961-1966 ....... Assistant Professor, Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Speech

Studies in Public Address. Professor Paul A. Carmack

Studies in General Communication. Professor Keith Brooks

Studies in Radio-Television-Speech Education. Professor I. Keith Tyler
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Origins of the Study

An interesting generalization is suggested by George V. Bohman in his study of the Colonial Period in A History and Criticism of American Public Address. In listing the "front rank" of early Colonial speakers he names "Thomas Shepard (1605-1649), Thomas Hooker (1586?-1647), Charles Chauncy (1592-1671/2), and John Cotton (1585-1652)." This listing is followed by what Bohman infers constitutes the second rank of Colonial greats: "John Norton (1606-1663), Jonathan Mitchell (1621-1668), and Richard Mather (1596-1669) were also good speakers." The generalization concludes by stating: "But the reputations of such men as Roger Williams seem to have been based on abilities other than preaching."

On the basis of this open-ended statement one could infer that Roger Williams was too significant a figure to be left completely out of such a list but that no adequate evidence seemed to exist for his inclusion.

Blair, Hornberger, and Stewart in their anthology and history

of American Literature faced a similar problem. While they include Williams in their anthology and quote fragments from some of his works, they seem forced to conclude: "Roger Williams the man is much better remembered than Roger Williams the writer."²

Thus the dilemma of Roger Williams seems to expand. He apparently does not deserve a place as a speaker and does not really belong as a writer. A quotation from Perry Miller, Cabot Professor of American Literature at Harvard University, adds some light to the situation.

Possibly no figure out of the American past today enjoys a greater prestige than Roger Williams—and for none is esteem based on so little familiarity with his deeds or so comprehensive an ignorance of his words. All but one of his books were hastily put through the press during his two brief and crowded returns to London; not only are they now so scarce that they can be consulted nowhere but in special libraries, but they are, even by the baroque standards prevalent during the English Civil Wars, egregious examples of slipshod printing, eccentric spelling, wild use of italics and of barbarous paragraphing. Scholars familiar with seventeenth-century style have difficulty with them, while for the ordinary reader, even if he can come on them, they present formidable terrors.³

These comments helped to stir the writer's deep personal interest in Roger Williams and to present an open challenge for a search of the facts. This challenge was further increased by reading the scholarly biography of Williams written by Ola Elizabeth Winslow who


made the prospect of studying Roger Williams quite exciting through the following candid statement:

Like other men whose thought has at some point been built into a nation's way of life, he has laid on his posterity an obligation to try to understand him, first, in the context of his own time, and then to test the validity and continuing relevance of his thought for later times. After nearly three hundred years we still know less about him as a man among men than about almost any other man of comparable importance in the America of his own time. As to understanding him, now that the romantic cobwebs are being brushed aside, we have made only the merest beginning. For these reasons and many others which come readily to mind, the passing years are not likely to let Roger Williams alone. He belongs in the sparse category of those for whom no generation speaks the last word.  

The writer is one of those of the present generation who desires to speak at least a few words about Roger Williams. However, for such a study there has to be a point of focus. There is little doubt that the total life and influence of Roger Williams is too great an undertaking for a study of this nature. The usual approach for a research paper in the field of speech would have been to study Williams as a speaker and analyze rhetorically some of his speeches or sermons. The problem that hinders such a study is simply that no speeches or sermons delivered by Williams are extant.

Late in his life (1682) Roger Williams wrote to Governor Bradstreet concerning the publication of some sermons:

By my fire-side I have recollected the discourses which (by many tedious journeys) I have had with the scattered English at Narragansett, before the war and since. I have reduced them unto those twenty-two heads, (enclosed) which is near thirty sheets of my writing: I would send them to the Narragansetts and others; there is no controversy in them,  

only an endeavor of a match of each poor sinner to his Maker.
For printing, I am forced to write to my friends at Massachu-
setts, Connecticut, Plymouth, and our colony, that he that
hath a shilling and a heart to countenance and promote such a
soul work, may trust the great Paymaster (who is beforehand
with us already) for an hundredth for one in this life.5

Evidently Williams' friends did not have the money or the de-
sire to promote such "soul work" by assisting in the publication of
the sermons. As far as is known, they were never published. Some un-
published sermons were part of the Prince Collection of Manuscripts as
late as 1829, but have long since disappeared.6 These very possibly
may have been the sermons that Williams had spoken of in his letter of
1682. The writer spent several days in New England in June of 1963
consulting the leading archivists in Providence and Boston, but not a
trace of the lost manuscripts could be found.

In subsequent research the writer found what may be the only
existing text of an actual speech by Roger Williams. It is included
in his A Key into the Language of America. The Key was published in
London in 1643 after having been written by Williams on his first trip
back to England in an attempt to obtain a royal charter for the Provi-
dence Colony. The Key was written for the purpose of helping Williams
retain the Indian language and to help the people of England gain some
insight into the language and customs of the Indians.7 In the chapter
concerning the religion of the Indians, Williams presented a short

5The Complete Writings of Roger Williams (7 vols.; New York:

6Oscar S. Straus, Roger Williams: The Pioneer of Religious

7Williams, I, 78.
discourse in which he set down the content of a short sermon both in English and in the native tongue. Since the Indians would not have been preaching sermons to Williams, it seemed safe to conclude that it was a sermon that Williams preached to them. However, this sermon is so brief that a full study would not allow sufficient conclusions for the purpose of this paper. Therefore, the writer felt compelled to search in other areas for the major thrust of the study.

In the letter quoted above, Williams mentions that the sermons he hoped to have published contained no controversy. This reference is a clear allusion to the fact that during his long career he was perhaps most remembered as a controversialist. This aspect of his communicative life was both oral and written.

The written aspects of his debates ranged from brief letters to the prolonged published debate with John Cotton over liberty of conscience, which he engaged in during the height of his influence, and to the Quaker debates that he participated in during the twilight of his life.

That these debates had an oral aspect is made quite clear in Williams' letter to Mrs. Sadler, an old friend who lived in England, written in 1652.

I have been formerly, and since I landed, occasioned to take up the two-edged sword of God's Spirit, in the word of God, and to appear in public in some contests against the ministers of Old and New England, as touching the true ministry of Christ and the soul freedoms of the people.®

Perry Miller says that "Williams was always convinced that

®Ibid., VI, 238.
rational argument could settle everything," and Edmund Carpenter in his biography of Williams states:

The reader who has followed closely the career of Mr. Williams while in the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, can but be struck with one trait of character which predominated all. This was the intense love of controversy and forensic argument. Whatever was the subject which had been brought forward for discussion, he was foremost among the disputants, excelling all others in the intensity of his argumentation. So fully did this trait dominate his character that neither his own personal well-being, nor the public welfare, served to check his impetuosity.10

It is unfortunate that the texts of these oral debates were not recorded and preserved, but the primitive conditions of those early days in the Colonies give ample reasons why they were not. However, there is evidence of the nature of their issues and arguments in the literature of the period. The published works of Roger Williams and John Cotton in their debate over soul freedom might logically be assumed to have a very direct relationship to the content of the oral debates.

In 1961 a Master's thesis was written by Leon Raymond Camp of Indiana University. The study sought to investigate and evaluate by rhetorical criticism the debates engaged in by Roger Williams and some of the leading members of the Quaker movement in 1672 when Williams was in his last years of life. While the study is well done and the conclusions are tenable, the writer did not feel justified in letting the matter of Roger Williams' place in the history of public address

9 Miller, p. 243.

rest without an analysis of the great debate over soul liberty that Williams engaged in during his most productive and significant years. Thus, this study of the debate of Roger Williams with the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony concerning the great principle of freedom of conscience seems justified.

Materials for the Study

The difficulty of obtaining primary sources for the study of Roger Williams was indicated by Perry Miller as quoted above. However, ten years after Miller first published his book on Williams (1953), Russell and Russell published a reprint of the Narragansett Club's six-volume edition of Williams' works, which had been originally published almost a century ago with fewer than 200 sets printed. The publishers included a seventh volume which contained material that had come to light since the earlier publication. The writer was able to obtain a set of the reprinted works of Williams and was able to use them freely throughout the study. The volumes also contain reprints of the original publications of John Cotton that were most pertinent to the debate concerning liberty of conscience. The editor affirmed that the texts of Williams' and Cotton's writings are "literal and authentic" and since they are duplications of the original publications and papers, there seems to be no reason to doubt the editor's affirmations.

Perry Miller, in his book cited above, Roger Williams: His
 Contribution to the American Tradition, editorialized and reprinted many of the works of Roger Williams. Concerning these republications of Williams' works, Miller states:

The words on the page are exactly those of Williams, with the omission of a few such distractions as his nervous habit of tacking "etc" to the ends of his sentences, some parenthetical Biblical references and some merely local interruptions. Major excisions are indicated by the conventional ellipses (...), but for those of a word or a line I have assumed that the reader is too intent on the discourse to care. Otherwise, in matters of spelling, capitalization, punctuation and abbreviation, I have exercised the prerogative of a modern editor. I have striven to produce a text as clear as is consistent with absolute fidelity to the language Williams actually wrote. Titles, however, I have kept in their original form.13

As a result of Miller's qualifications and the wide acceptance of his work, the writer feels justified in quoting from Miller's revised texts when it seems helpful to do so.

The writer also had the opportunity of working with many of the original materials in the John Carter Brown and John Hay Libraries at Brown University, the Harvard University Libraries, The Boston Public Library, the Archives of Massachusetts and of the Rhode Island Historical Society, and the New York Public Library.

Little work has been done by speech scholars in this early part of the history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and Rhode Island. The opening chapter to A History and Criticism of American Public Ad-
dress proved very helpful as did the background studies by Wilbur Samuel Howell, Warren Guthrie, and George V. Bohman in the book,

13 Miller, p. vi.
History of Speech Education in America.\(^\text{14}\) Howell's book *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700*\(^\text{15}\) provided excellent orientation for rhetorical backgrounds of the day as did other works on the period. An article by Roy Fred Hudson proved especially helpful in the consideration of the rhetorical concept of Invention as it related to the debate.\(^\text{16}\) The writer was also helped by the work of Leon Raymond Camp cited above, especially for the excellent material concerning the education of Roger Williams. A number of historical works proved helpful as did the work of the many biographers who wrote concerning Roger Williams and John Cotton.

**Methods for the Study**

It became apparent early in the research of the controversy that the usual form for the study of a speaker, his speaking, his audience, and his impact would not be suitable for this paper. The greatest amount of material for investigative purposes was the extensive pamphlet controversy between Roger Williams and John Cotton. Since Williams' controversy over freedom of conscience was the beginning of the tradition of radicalism and dissent in America and embodied a principle that became a basic element of the American way of life, the writer felt justified in making the most extensive critical

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examination relate to the debate itself and to the elements of Williams' pioneer methods of radicalism and dissent. The extensive dialectic of the debate was analyzed and the basic contentions of the affirmative and negative sides were set forth. An analysis was made of the use of logic and strategy by the debaters. A number of current debate texts were consulted for the criteria and terminology of judgment concerning debate.17

The debate was evaluated less extensively in the light of the rhetorical practices of the day in which it took place and was then evaluated by the standards of contemporary rhetorical criticism.

The study of Roger Williams' "rhetoric of dissent" as related to the beginning of the tradition of radicalism and dissent in America was reserved until the end of the chapter on effects because it seemed in the writer's view to be the most significant contribution of the study to the current rhetorical scene.

Because the historical backgrounds for understanding the debate and its effects were quite complex, the writer sought to develop these foundational concepts in sufficient detail to provide an understanding of the involvements of the controversy. The particular backgrounds and motivations of the prime figures in the debate, Roger

Williams and John Cotton, were examined. The emergent and enduring issues of the debate were noted. The writer also sought to bring to light the particular audiences of the communications of the debate and to note the impact upon these audiences.

Ernest J. Wrange in his article "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History" states:

Man's intellectual activities may result in ideas which clarify his relationships with his fellow men and to the cosmos, or in ideas which close minds against further exploration in favor of blind conformity to tradition and authority. It is axiomatic that the extant records of man's responses to the social and physical world as expressed in formulations of thought provide one approach to a study of the history of his culture.18

In the controversy between Roger Williams and the Massachusetts Bay Colony blind conformity to tradition and authority was met in collision course by the startling new idea of complete freedom in matters of conscience concerning religion. The controversy itself helped to cast the American experience in a mold of agitation for change and constant modification of existing institutions that has helped to make America the leading nation in our present world. Although this tangled maze of seventeenth-century dialectic often leaves the modern reader exhausted, one reads with a spirit of expectancy--for here were minds in conflict over the primary issues of American freedom. After reading and reviewing the ebb and flow of this colonial controversy, an inescapable concept emerges. This concept affirms simply--this is worth the time spent in study--for the America

we know began here. Our America began with the birth of freedom and freedom was born in Rhode Island, the child of conformity and authority. Rhode Island was considered by the Massachusetts Bay Colony to be a disinheritson—unworthy of status or consideration. Yet freedom in America saw its first day there. The controversy that gave freedom its initial impetus is certainly a worthy subject for rhetorical study.

In discussing the vast hosts of documentation that must be re-searched to properly evaluate the development and influences of ideas, Wragge states:

It is at once apparent that the delineation of an American intellectual tradition calls for division of labor. It is not only the magnitude in task but diversity in data and in media of expression which invites specialization and varied technical skills in scholarship.\(^{19}\)

This paper deals in detail with the emergence of the idea of freedom of conscience into the "American intellectual tradition." Since the idea emerged as the result of oral and written debate—the expression and repression of radicalism and dissent—it seems to the writer that it is primarily a field of investigation for rhetorical evaluation. This writer agrees with Wragge when he maintains that the value of a study such as this must not exist for its own sake—"its value is instrumental . . . meaning apart from application is sterile."\(^{20}\) Therefore, the writer attempts an investigation, conclusions, and application with meanings relevant to life today.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 453.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
A statement by the editor of Volume III of A History and Criticism of American Public Address helps to clarify the acceptability of the present study for rhetorical criticism:

I use the term "rhetoric," . . . to apply to verbal activity primarily concerned with affecting persuasion, whether it is done by writing or speaking. Rhetoric operates in the area of the contingent, where choice is to be made among alternative courses of action. Its concern is with substance as well as with form, if any arbitrary distinction is to be made.21

Later the same writer states that rhetoric "is a process of so embodying truth as to govern relationships between men. It is a means of so ordering discourse as to produce an effect on the listener or reader."22 In speaking of approaches to the study of public address, Professor Nichols gives additional insight for a critical perspective:

I believe that the study of public address should be concerned with the free man in his moments of decision, in those moments when he is faced with many alternatives. Great speeches reveal man at the intellectual crossroads of his public life. They are responses to situations that man has had to confront rather than flee. The study of the ideas and forms that reflect the rhetorical occasion in its full scope and form requires breadth and comprehensiveness of learning.23

Closely aligned with defining the concept of rhetoric is an allied concept. It involves purpose. It asks the important question, "Why criticize rhetoric? Is there a reason for making such an effortful study?" Professor Nichols feels that one must be motivated


23Ibid., p. 64.
by a higher purpose than amusement or working for one's own astonishment. She refers to Kenneth Burke's analysis of Hitler's Mein Kampf and his desire to see if he could find the powers wielded by Hitler so that a guard might be placed against such efforts in the future.\(^2\)

Certainly such a study of the powers of Roger Williams could lay claim to an even higher motivation, especially in the light of the current interest in the backgrounds and motivations of radicalism and dissent in America. The editor of Volume VII of *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams* gave a sense of purpose to these considerations:

> No century is likely to speak the last word about Roger Williams. To his contemporaries he was the arch-radical of his time, 'a dissenter, a non-conformist. The nineteenth century revered him as a prophet of religious liberty who dared test his principles in a small corner of America. Now in our own time his definition of freedom needs re-examination. Against the mass conformity pressing upon us from every side, modern man may be forced to erect the barrier of Williams' central idea, the sanctity of the individual and his inviolable conscience.\(^2\)

The writer concluded that such a study of the great debate over freedom of conscience is a timely topic and worthy of the present study.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 72.

\(^2\)Williams, VII, 3.
CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTROVERSY

New England—Seed Bed for Controversy

When Roger and Mary Williams stepped ashore in Boston on February 5, 1631, they could hardly have expected the eventful life that would characterize their existence in New England. Roger had been born, probably in 1603, in London. He was the son of a shopkeeper. Sometime during his teens he had learned shorthand and became the protege of one of England's greatest lawyers, Sir Edward Coke. Through the influence of Coke he had entered Charterhouse School in 1621. He did so well there that he won a scholarship. As a capable and energetic student he had been able to take his B.A. degree in 1627 as a member of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, subscribing, as he was required to do, to the authority of the King, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Thirty-Nine Articles (the accepted body of divinity) in the Church of England.

After taking his degree, Williams continued at Cambridge as a student of divinity. Charles I had commissioned Archbishop Laud to suppress all of those that refused to bow to the supremacy of the Church of England. This necessarily meant that Puritanism was to

1Blair, Hornberger, and Stewart, p. 137.
undergo a great deal of pressure to conform. Already Puritan in his sympathies, Williams was apparently unable to accept the prospect of such intentions. Therefore, in the winter of 1628-1629, he left Cambridge to become the household chaplain of an Essex country gentleman, Sir William Masham, who had connections with a number of the leading promoters of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. While serving as chaplain, he fell in love with one of the young ladies of the household and suffered the humiliation of having his proposal of marriage rejected by her aunt on the ground of his low social rank. In December, 1629, he married one of the maids, Mary Barnard.2

By this time his Puritan sympathies had matured and he was carrying his rejection of Anglican ceremonial and church government further than most of the party cared to go publicly. Williams was moving toward the position of Separatism, which meant simply that he believed it to be impossible to reform the Church of England from the inside. In his view the true Puritan must separate completely from the mother church and establish a new, independent and pure church. He evidently had spent a great deal of time considering these matters and also considering migration to New England. In December of 1630 he sailed for Massachusetts, arriving with firmly fixed Separatist convictions; "he believed, that is to say, that the individual congregation should be the ultimate authority in church government and that the civil state should not be permitted to enforce uniformity."3

2 Winslow, p. 87.

3 Blair, Hornberger, and Stewart, p. 137.
In New England Roger Williams found a situation that he perhaps had not expected. The "Puritan Oligarchy" was already firmly established. That he had seen no real counterpart of this Puritan experiment back in England was soon apparent.

It is to New England we must turn if we are to study the true Puritan State with all its distinctive features—congregations whose autonomy was derived from a covenant with God, a civil government in which only Church members participated, an educational system designed to buttress the orthodox religion, a rigid code of morals, the suppression of heresy. In fact, New England may be considered a laboratory of Puritan civilization.

The New England of 1631 was decidedly regimented. The state was an agent of leadership, discipline, and wherever necessary, of coercion. This authority reached into the intimate areas of human conduct and sought not only to regulate misconduct but to inspire and direct all conduct. The basic desires of the people were considered irrelevant to the policy of the commanders. The course had been set and the efforts of all were to fall in line with this predetermined course.

There was no idea of the equality of all men. There was no questioning that men who would not serve the purposes of society should be whipped into line. The objectives were clear and unmistakable; any one's disinclination to dedicate himself to them was obviously so much recalcitrancy and depravity. The government of Massachusetts, and of Connecticut as well, was a dictatorship, and never pretended to be anything else; it was a dictatorship, not of a single tyrant, or of an economic class, or of a political faction, but of the holy and regenerate. Those who did not hold with the ideals entertained by the righteous, or who believed God had

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5 Ibid., p. 108.
preached other principles, or who desired that in religious belief, morality, and ecclesiastical preferences all men should be left at liberty to do as they wished—such persons had every liberty, as Nathaniel Ward said, to stay away from New England. If they did come, they were expected to keep their opinions to themselves: if they discussed them in public or attempted to act upon them, they were exiled: if they persisted in returning, they were cast out again; if they still came back, as did four Quakers, they were hanged on Boston Common. And from the Puritan point of view, it was good riddance.6

It was clear that whatever rights the individual colonists may have had, the right to dissent was not one of them. George V. Bohman gave proper evaluation of this factor in his perceptive account of colonial backgrounds of American public address.

The degree to which the colonists had attained recognition of the right to free speech determined the extent and influence of oral communication, much as the recognition of freedom of the press did for written communication. Recognition of the right of free speech came slowly and with varying success from colony to colony and from year to year. In general, the earliest governments of Massachusetts Bay and Virginia made little distinction between criticism of the government, its officers, and its laws or the church and its official acts on the one hand, and treason or heresy on the other. In effect, then, prosecutions of those who differed either with the church or state greatly limited freedom of discussion in all colonies except Pennsylvania and Rhode Island during the seventeenth century.7

Roger Williams was one who differed, and he was to taste the consequences.

The First Clash at Boston

When John Winthrop recorded the arrival of the ship Lyon on February 5, 1631, he mentioned by name only four of the twenty

7Brigance, I, 5.
passengers. The first one named and the only one receiving any type of evaluation was "Mr. Williams (a godly minister,) with his wife." Such a recommendation made Williams a person to be looked to by the colonists. Capable ministers were always needed in New England and especially in Boston since John Wilson, Teacher of the Church there, planned to return to England for a time when the Lyon returned. On March 29, John Wilson gave formal notice of his intentions. Shortly after Wilson's departure Roger Williams was "unanimously chosen teacher at Boston" in his place. This appeared to be a golden opportunity for the young Williams. Here was a chance to take up the mantle, if only briefly, of one of the leading divines of the colonies and to hew out a place in the Puritan hierarchy. Roger Williams evaluated the situation carefully and turned it down. "I conscientiously refused . . . because I durst not officiate to an unseparated people, as, upon examination and conference, I found them to be." Thus the Separatist views of Williams came to light and in like manner for him the door of successful leadership in the Massachusetts Bay Colony was closed forever. The magistrates of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were puzzled. Here was a young man to be watched, and watch him they would.

9 Williams, VI, 356.
10 Ibid.
Rumblings at Plymouth and Salem

The record seems to indicate that shortly after this Williams was invited to become the Teacher at Salem. He accepted the post and moved to Salem.

Promptly alert orthodox townsmen reported the fact to Governor Winthrop, who on April 12th called the General Court in session to consider the matter. The Court at once dispatched a letter to Governor Endecott, recalling Roger Williams' refusal either to join with the Boston congregation or to serve them, and detailing his "dangerous opinions." Why had Salem chosen him without first advising with the Council? Boston's magistrates "marvelled" at such precipitate action and warned Salem "to forbear to proceed until they had conferred about it." But it was too late: Roger Williams had already been elected to the post. Shortly thereafter, on May 18, 1631, he signed the Freeman's Oath and was admitted a freeman of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Henceforth they would deal with him not as a stranger, but as one of themselves.11

In the next few months he appeared to have approved himself as a preacher and to have made many friends in the town of Salem. However, he shortly left Salem and went to Plymouth. What the circumstances were never reached official records that have survived.

In Plymouth he was among other Separatists. He worked in his fields, preached as often as he could, and opened a trading station with the Indians. There were many indications that Williams had a facility with the study of languages,12 and he quickly learned to converse with the Indians. He came to know many of them personally, and many Indians evidently learned to trust him as a friend. One good example of this was an Indian who lived near Williams' later home at Providence. Roger Williams stated concerning Oufamaquin "that he was

11Winslow, p. 100.

12Williams, I, 84-85, and VI, 261.
pleased that I should here be his neighbor, and that rather because he and I had been great friends at Plymouth. The motivation for the interest that Williams had in the Indians was not primarily financial. He had a deep desire to preach to them and to see them converted to Christianity. To this end he labored throughout his life.

He was admitted to the church in Plymouth and later made an assistant to the Rev. Ralph Smith, the pastor. He seems to have had ample opportunity to preach over a period of many months. Things seemed quiet for some time. But the rumbling finally began to cause concern. One basic issue that seemed to stir controversy at Plymouth was the fact that Williams had written a Treatise concerning the King's Patent. He evidently felt that the Indians' grievances over losing their land had some merit, and he was quick to remonstrate with the authorities for taking that which was not rightfully theirs.

Whatever additional issues were present is not clearly known, but Williams left Plymouth and went back to Salem. Governor Bradford spoke of Williams and his ministry at Plymouth in doubting terms:

He is to be pitied, and prayed for, and so I shall leave ye matter, and desire ye Lord to shew him his errors, and reduce him into ye way of truth, and give him a settled judgment and constancie in ye same: for I hope he belongs to ye Lord, and yt he will shew him mercie.

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13 Ibid., VI, 317.
14 Ibid., I, 3-5.
15 Winslow, pp. 104-105.
Williams was followed to Salem by a few ardent disciples and by some cautions concerning him.

To return to Salem was to invite further trouble, as he must certainly have known, but where else could he go? He had warm friends there, and now with a group of adherents coming with him, he already had an audience, if not an office, and at the 1633 temperature of his zeal, an audience was imperative. He bought a house, as though intending permanent residence and once more took up his daily life in this frontier settlement. Very soon after he arrived, and presumably on invitation, he began to "exercise his gifts" publicly on the Sabbath, with the result that his audience grew, to the deep distress and worry of Massachusetts Colony officials. 17

Governor Winthrop requested a copy of Williams' Treatise condemning the Patent. Roger Williams willingly sent a copy to him. Winthrop called the members of the Council together to consider what Williams had written. 18 It appeared that Williams had made accusations against the King which could have involved the whole colony in controversy. The Treatise is no longer extant, but Winthrop's observations clarified the meaning of the central issue and seemed to infer that there were other trouble areas. Williams was summoned to appear before the next session of the General Court to receive censure.

Williams appeared, was submissive, and the Court was satisfied at least for the moment. But more rumblings would soon be heard.

Roger Williams' attack on the Patent could hardly have been more ill-timed than in 1633. The order to revoke the royal charter of Massachusetts Bay Colony and to empower a royal governor to assume complete management of the colony was pending. Archbishop Laud headed the commission to carry out the new policy in detail. . . . As announced on paper, Archbishop Laud's policy would cut the very taproot of New

17 Winslow, p. 107.
18 Winthrop, I, 145.
England independence in church polity as well as civil government and put worship once more strictly in line with English practice and under English supervision.  

Williams stated in one of his latter writings, The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody, that he had also written a letter to the King concerning the matter of the Patent. The statement was included in a dialogue between Truth and Peace. Williams is the "Discusser."

Truth: I know those thoughts have deeply possessed, not a few, considering also the sinne of the Pattents, wherein Christian Kings (so called) are invested with Right by virtue of their Christianitie, to take and give away the Lands and Countries of other men. . . .

And I know these thoughts so deeply afflicted the Soule and Conscience of the Discusser in the time of his Walking in the Way of New Englands Worship, that at last he came to a presuasion, that such sinnes could not be Expiated, without returning againe into England: or a publike acknowledgement and Confession of the Evill of so and so departing: To this purpose before his Troubles and Banishment he drew up a letter (not without the Approbation of some of the Chiefs of New England, then tender also upon this point before God) directed unto the King himselfe, humbly acknowledging the Evill of that part of the Pattent which respects the Donation of Land, etc.  

Whoever the sympathizing "Chiefs" were is not known. That they were not members of the General Court of Massachusetts was quite obvious. Williams came under great suspicion. The unrest in England kept the magistrates especially wary of those who might stir up trouble for them with the King or with Archbishop Laud. The Bay Colony Puritans realized that to exist, even across the Atlantic from the mother country, required a delicate balance of foreign policy. Their policy was that of compromise and negotiation—Roger Williams was one

19 Winslow, p. 113.

20 Williams, IV, 461-62.
whose radical views might upset this carefully structured balance.
The problem deepened in the fall of 1634 when, upon the death of John
Skelton, Teacher at Salem, Roger Williams was invited to take the post
of Teacher. He accepted the position. This acceptance placed not
only Williams but also the Salem church under contempt of the Boston
magistrates—they had accepted a man who was under judgment of the
General Court. Prior to this event some of the men at Salem had filed
a petition for a piece of land on Marblehead Neck. Their petition was
to be ignored until the church cleared itself of the charge of con-
tempt.21 The angry church responded by writing a letter to other
churches of the Bay asking that the magistrates be brought to task for
this injustice. At the next meeting of the General Court the magis-
trates refused to receive the Salem deputies until the matter of the
letter was clarified. Since Williams was Teacher at Salem, he shared
in the responsibility. When the elders of the Boston church refused
to allow the letter to be read to their congregation, Williams and
Samuel Sharpe offended again by writing a second letter of protest.
This letter is extant and included among Williams' writings.22 The
clash of issues was direct and abrasive, and relations became quite
strained.

The problem was augmented several weeks later when Governor
Endecott of Salem defaced the royal ensign by cutting out the red
cross of St. George:

21Winslow, p. 114.
22Williams, VI, 71-77.
An idolatrous symbol, he declared, and struck it out with his sword. By this rash act he put himself under charge of treason. King James had placed the red cross there in 1606, thinking by joining the red cross of St. George with the white cross of St. Andrew to denote the union of England and Scotland. Endecott's boldness made local turmoil for many months and greatly worried the Bay authorities, not only because of the already strained relations with the Crown, but because many people, including some of the magistrates, thought Endecott had been right. The fact that this disturbance was another Salem affair, threw suspicion in Roger Williams' direction, although there is nothing to show that he was back of it in any way.23

Roger Williams continued to preach in Salem. The rumblings continued. He was summoned to appear before the General Court on April 30, 1635, for publicly declaring that a magistrate had no right to tender an oath to an unregenerate man. This was an oath of allegiance--promising to obey the common laws of the Bay Colony. The oath in Williams' eyes was an act of worship and should not be used to establish communion with unsaved men. Governor Winthrop's account indicated that the magistrates and ministers listened to Williams' arguments and sought to refute them. Even Governor Endecott, who was in sympathy with Williams, upon hearing the ministers "gave place to the truth."24

The affair of the oath, like that of the Patent, was at the moment a topic of current concern to every freeman and to the magistrates, and a ticklish one. In May, 1634, the General Court had revoked the former oath which one had been free to take or not to take, and on March 4, 1634/35, they had replaced it by the Residents' Oath, which they had made obligatory on every man over sixteen years of age. It was against this new oath that Roger Williams had preached in Salem, thereby giving some standing ground to those who were objecting to take it. The magistrates had been disturbed by

24 Winthrop, I, 158.
a rather sudden and a large influx of strangers with no intent to settle in the colony, and they had devised the Residents' Oath in order to meet what seemed to them a threat to future peace. Roger Williams had spoken out with apparently no recognition of the problem the magistrates were attempting to meet.25

Williams returned to Salem unshaken in his convictions. None of the evidence put forth by the ministers seemed relevant to his mind. He continued to preach, and the situation worsened.

The Debate before the General Court at Massachusetts

At the General Court session of July 5, 1635, charges were again made against Roger Williams. He heard the charges and was given time to consider until the next meeting of the Court in a few weeks. At that time he must "give satisfaction to the court, or else expect the sentence."26 John Cotton, who was to emerge as the voice of the magistrates in the prolonged written debate, attempted to convince Williams of his errors. Letters were exchanged, but Roger Williams refused to flinch.

However, the people of Salem were beginning to quail under the firm pressure of the magistrates. Their protests softened, and Roger Williams wrote to them stating that if they did not stand with him all the way and separate from the Churches of the Bay, he would have to withdraw communion from them. The people of the church, perhaps feeling the need of the land at Marblehead Neck, or perhaps just wishing to avoid further controversy, did not commit themselves to a firmly

25 Winslow, pp. 116-17.

26 Winthrop, I, 163.
separated stand. Roger Williams had meant what he said. As far as it
is known, he did not preach in Salem again.27

On October 8, 1635, the General Court of Massachusetts opened
its next session. All of the ministers of the Bay Colony had been
summoned. Governor Haynes was the presiding officer. Roger Williams
was charged with the two letters he had written. The one had been to
the Churches of the Bay and the other to his own church at Salem. He
maintained before the Court the truth of all that he had asserted.
The Court was willing to let him take consultation and consider the
matter further. He was asked if he wished to return in a month and
debate the issues. Williams refused both the opportunity for counsel
and the month's respite. He was ready to debate on the spot. Thomas
Hooker, a friend of former days, was called upon. The debate was on!
Unfortunately, no record of the debate proceeding was kept. All that
really has come down to us is the fact that Roger Williams did not
move from any of his opinions and that the Court also refused to
yield.

The Decree of Banishment

On the following morning, October 9, 1635, in the midst of
other business, Roger Williams was called forward and the verdict was
read:

Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the
church of Salem, hath broached & dyvulged dyvers newe & dan­
gerous opinions, against the authoritie of magistrates, as
also writt l/ett/res of defamacon, both of the magistrates &
churches here, & that before any conviccon, & yet maintaineth

27 Winslow, p. 118.
the same without retraccon, it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall dep/er/te out of this jurisdicticcon within sice weakes nowe nexte ensuing, wch if he neglect to p/er7 forme, it shalbe lawfull for the Govnr & two of the magis­trates to send him to some place out of this jurisdicticn, not to returne any more without licence from the Court.28

The ultimatum had been given and Roger Williams returned to Salem. The Salem church had turned from Williams and was back in the fold of the Bay Colony. Before a month had gone by, the word was received in Boston that Roger Williams was not keeping the agreement of the decree. He was openly preaching wherever he could get an audience and his following was increasing. The patience of the magistrates was clearly exhausted. They ordered Williams before the Court. He replied that he was grievously ill and could only come at great hazard to his life. The magistrates sent men to fetch him and put him on the ship that was ready to depart for England. When they arrived at Williams' door, they found that he was gone into the New England winter to the refuge of Indian homes and ultimately the new colony of Providence. The magistrates could relax for awhile. At last the troubler of the peace was gone.

The Great Debate

During the long New England winter Roger Williams stayed with the Indians. They nursed him back to health, and the warm regard of the Indians for Williams was intensified. In the spring Roger Williams went to the Narragansett Bay. There he purchased land from the Narragansett Indians and established the Providence Colony. The years

28 Winthrop, I, 204 (1853 Edition), quoted in Winslow, pp. 119-120.
of founding the new colony might be regarded as silent years as far as
the controversy was concerned. There was much to do to win the land
from the wilderness and very little opportunity for writing. Since he
was not allowed back into the Massachusetts Bay Colony, there was no
opportunity for the continuance of the controversy on an oral basis.

Williams did have occasion to write to the Colony several
times concerning matters of Indian affairs, and at times the contro-
versy appeared in various forms in his letters. In October, 1636,
Governor Winthrop, who apparently was uneasy in his mind about the
banishment, sent Williams a series of questions concerning his feel-
ings about the matter. Williams' letter of October 21, 1636, to Win-
throp answers the questions briefly but seems to reserve a fuller re-
sponse for a later time.

As remembrances of his former life in Massachusetts, Roger
Williams had in his possession three documents that he must have spent
a great amount of time meditating on in the wilderness. The first is
aptly described by Perry Miller:

He had a manuscript which John Cotton had written during the
winter (either when Williams was in the thick of his fight
at Salem or else when he was shivering in the wilderness),
the "Answer" to four chapters in a book presented to him for
comment by one John Hall, of Roxbury. A Humble Supplication
of the King's Majesty's Loyal Subjects was printed (no doubt
surreptitiously) in 1620, purporting to be written by an Ana-
baptist imprisoned as he said, "for his conscience," in New-
gate. Deprived of ink, he penned his thoughts with milk and
smuggled out the pages to his fellows. Cotton, newly installed
in the foremost position in the colony--teacher of the Church
of Boston--pontifically replied in accents revealing that he
already assumed himself dean of the colonial clergy; his reply
did not quite satisfy Hall (who later moved to Connecticut), and so Hall sent the manuscript to Williams, who had time to ponder it.29

The second document had been prepared by the associated ministers of Massachusetts Bay and was sent to the people of Salem in the fall of 1635. It was a treatise of eleven points or "heads," each profusely supported by quotations from Scripture. It was entitled A Model of Church and Civil Power and contained a statement of the position to which the Bay Colony had come in respect to church and state. It confirmed the Colony's position on the basis of Nonseparatist orthodoxy—a position that sought a compromise satisfactory at home in England and in the New World. Roger Williams felt that John Cotton had had a great share in writing it, although there are indications that he did not. Williams also felt that the document had been used to turn the Salem church against him. He had wished to see a copy, and during his first summer in Providence Elder Sharpe of the Salem church sent him one.30

The third document was perhaps the most influential on Williams' desire to answer all charges and to keep the controversy alive. It was a letter written to Williams by John Cotton during the same summer. It was haughty in its nature, pointing out the reasons for banishment, rejoicing in the sentence, and calling on Williams to repent.

The three documents were important to an understanding of the

29 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 74.

30 Ibid., p. 75.
controversy because they gave Williams a clear statement of Bay Colony positions and also provided him with a target for his future controversy. The target was John Cotton, and the battle was to be a long one.

For seven years Williams was too occupied with earning a bare living, and then with trying to control the mob which year after year descended on his colony, to find time for replying to the three documents. Besides, there would be no way of publishing anything in the wilderness, and not enough of an audience for him to have any effect on his day and age. However, in order to prepare in his mind what he might say if he ever got the chance, he needed no library beyond his Bible and no study beyond his canoe or his nights of meditation by Indian fires. There is something both sublime and pathetic in his cherishing these documents long after the authors had forgotten them, hoarding his thoughts until God's providence gave him his opportunity. He must have mulled them over until he knew every paragraph by heart.31

Williams' opportunity to answer came as a result of troubles at home. Many of the settlers in the Providence Plantations were outcasts from other areas and some were trouble makers. There was a need to find some type of authority for the colony. In addition, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was looking southward for more lard. In 1643 the Providence Plantations sent Roger Williams to London to seek a charter for their colony. On board ship Williams found time that he had not had in the wilderness. He used the time to write his first book, A Key into the Language of America. It was not a controversial treatise but a dictionary of Indian language and customs written for the purpose of helping Williams remember the tongue that he had worked so hard to acquire. A second purpose stated was to provide insight for

31Ibid., p. 77.
interested individuals concerning the customs of the Indians. It may have had the added motivation of encouraging others to make contact with the Indians for purposes of Christianizing them. The impact of Williams' book was important:

On arriving in London, he evidently gave his first thought to printing the Key, which appeared on September 7, 1643. He could hardly have made a cleverer tactical move, for the book made him an overnight voice in the metropolis. At this moment the Puritans, fighting a war that was not going well, had appealed to the Scots, who were demanding a large price for their assistance. On July 1 Parliament had summoned the Westminster Assembly, to consist of leading divines of both kingdoms, commissioned to prepare a model of orthodox polity and doctrine—to do so on a large scale what the Massachusetts clergy had done in preparing for Salem's benefit the Model Williams was still preserving. On September 25 Parliament signed the Solemn League and Covenant, which definitely committed it to impose by force on all England (or on as much as Parliamentary troops could wrest from the Cavaliers) an ecclesiastical regime similar to that of Scotland.

In the Parliament complications arose due to the dissent of

32 Williams, I, 79.

33 A note concerning the English scene may be helpful here. Queen Elizabeth had died in the year of Williams' birth, 1603. She had been a strong Queen and had been able to keep adverse pressures from upsetting the national balance. Her successor, James I, was not so politically astute. A prolonged struggle broke out between Parliament and the Crown. The Puritans were seeking predominance, and many dissident religious groups were crying for toleration. Under Charles I a civil war broke out in 1642. The forces of Crown and Parliament fought it out for seven years. Parliamentary forces finally were triumphant, and the king was beheaded in 1649. England was a republic under Cromwell for eleven years, and the Puritans proved to be more autocratic than had the Crown. In 1660 the monarchy was restored and Charles II became king.

34 Miller, Roger Williams, pp. 77-78.
five leading Independents who refused to accept Presbyterianism and advocated instead the type of Congregational structure being used in New England. They were not Separatists and were apparently proposing to make England another Massachusetts with all of its authority and suppression of dissident voices. To this Williams objected and penned *Queries of Highest Consideration*, addressed to the five Independents, and published it February 9, 1644.  

Circumstances and the narrowness of his range make the entire writings of Roger Williams a single, sustained oration, of which the key may be viewed as a sort of Overture. The *Queries* proclaim at once his major themes. To the majority in Parliament, to all Presbyterians, and as yet to most Independents, the book would seem a weird production, asserting in the disarming form of questions that not only should Presbyterians and Independents refrain from cutting each other's throats, but that even Catholics should be tolerated. It suggested that the very effort to set up the pure church—even assuming one knew what a pure church ought to be—was unchristian, that it was in effect to reconstitute the Court of High Commission which Parliament had exultantly abolished in July 1641.  

Roger Williams' reaction to the confusion of the English civil war scene was characteristic of his response to any form of attempted establishment of religious power. His approach was highly individualistic and novel for his day. The basic principle of the separation of political and ecclesiastical powers which Williams consistently advocated went further than his peers could see as possible for their

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*Independency might be called a leftward step from conformity but was short of downright separation from the Church of England. Presbyterianism was a form of church government through representatives—while congregational government placed the emphasis on strong individual members who voiced individual opinions.*

*Williams, II, 250.*

*Miller, *Roger Williams*, pp. 79-80.*
time, yet Williams never seemed to be the least discouraged in his attempts to set this principle forth clearly and forcefully.

Shortly after the Key had been published in September of 1643 and as if by act of Providence, someone published A Letter of Mr. John Cottons, Teacher of the Church in Boston, in New England, to Mr. Williams a Preacher there. Williams stated clearly in his Answer published the following February that he was not responsible for the publication of the letter.

This Letter I acknowledge to have received from Mr. Cotton (whom for his personal excellencies I truly honour and love.) Yet at such a time of my distressed wanderings amongst the Barbarians, that being destitute of food, cloths, of time I reserved it (though hardly, amidst so many barbarous distractions) and afterwards prepared an answer to be returned.

Some letters then past between us, in which I proved and exprest, that if I had perished in that sorrowfull Winters flight; only the blood of Jesus Christ could have washed him from the guilt of mine.

His finall Answer was, had you perished, your blood had been on your own head: it was your sinne to procure it, and your sorrow to suffer it.

Here I confesse I stopt, and ever since supprest mine Answer: waiting if it might please the Father of mercies, more to mollifie and soften, and render more humane and mercifull, the eare and heart of that (otherwise) excellent and worthy man.

It cannot now, be justly offensive, that finding this Letter publike (by whose procurement I know not) I also present to the same publike view, my formerly intended Answer.38

Roger Williams' reply to John Cotton was published just four days before the Queries, giving them the effect of an almost simultaneous impression. It was entitled: Mr. Cottons Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered. Cotton indicated that he believed that Williams had not been personally responsible for publication of his

38 Williams, I, 315-16.
Letter but did berate him for taking advantage of the publication to
resurrect the issue and that at a very embarrassing time for Massachu-
setts.

Despite admiring tributes in the Apologetickall Narration
to the orthodoxy of New England, it was already becoming ap-
parent to many Independents (particularly to General Oliver
Cromwell) that if they were to survive against the Presbyter-
ian majority, they would have to construct a working alliance
with the now numerous and vigorous sects. Every one of these
gloried in the name of Separatist, and for the Independents
to close with them would mean to loosen, if not more, their
ties with New England. To bring Cotton's rigorous Nonsepara-
tism, along with its consequent intolerance, to light in the
London of 1643 was at one and the same time to strike a blow
against the more dogmatic Independents and against orthodox
New England. It was also to gain the greatest possible pub-
licity for Roger Williams.40

The fact that Williams' writings jabbed Cotton into reply and
the enlargement of the controversy was evidence of John Cotton's inse-
curity on the issues that Williams raised. He apparently felt that he
had to defend his position.

The Parliament granted Rhode Island a charter on March 14,
1644, in which they guaranteed to the limit of their ability the inde-
pendence of the colony. Williams had fulfilled his purpose in London
but before he left he published his greatest work: The Blody Tenent,
of Persecution, for cause of Conscience, discussed, in A Conference
betweenee Truth and Peace.

The Blody Tenent was divided into two parts. It first

39. It is quite possible that the letter was published by one of
Williams' well-meaning friends without his knowledge. There is noth-
ing to indicate that Williams was not sincere in his statement.

40. Miller, Roger Williams, p. 87.
addressed Cotton's "Answer" to the Anabaptist tract mentioned above, and then made reply to the ministerial model prepared for the Salem church. It was a lengthy, wordy and rambling discourse in extended dialogue form, at times almost impossible for a modern reader to digest. Williams' preface was addressed to the Parliament, who Williams later said burned The Bloudy Tenent. He follows this with an address to "every courteous reader." Among the readers, although he may not have been courteous, was John Cotton. His answer would be made.

Williams returned in triumph to Providence in September, 1644, and immersed himself in the complex affairs of the colony. The government of Rhode Island was so loose as almost to be no government at all, and various internal problems were needing attention. The Massachusetts and Connecticut colonies were constantly seeking to evade the fragile charter and grasp some of Rhode Island's land.

One of the local groups that had gained attention was that of the Anabaptists, or Baptists as they are now called. Williams had at their first arrival in 1639 been convinced that they were the true church for which he had sought. He was baptized and with a few others organized the Baptist church in Providence. In a few months, however, he came to the conviction that while he had found no better way he still was not satisfied. In a letter to John Winthorp he made this clear:

At Seekonk a great many have lately concurred with Mr. John Clarke and our Providence men about the point of a new Baptism, and the manner of dippings: and Mr. John Clarke hath been there lately (and Mr. Lucar) and hath dipped them.

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41 Williams, III, 11.
I believe their practice comes nearer the first practice of our great Founder Christ Jesus, then other practices of religion do, and yet I have not satisfaction neither in the authority by which it is done, nor in the manner; nor in the prophecies concerning the rising of Christ's Kingdom after the desolations of Rome, etc.42

At this point in his life Williams became a Seeker, but he remained close friends with the Baptists and particularly with John Clarke of Newport.

The rebuttal of John Cotton was published in 1647. His A Reply to Mr. Williams his Examination went carefully over the banishment in an attempt to exonerate himself and to clear the air concerning both Williams and the Anne Hutchinson case of 1637. The Blody Tenent was apparently a more compelling target, for Cotton went through it chapter by chapter to prove his basic proposition that it was lawful to punish a conscience that sinned against itself. The book that he published was: The Blody Tenent, Washed, and made white in the bloud of the Lambe: Being Discussed and Discharged of Bloud-guiltinessse by just Defense. His book and the Reply were paged separately but bound in a single volume.

In July of 1651 John Clarke and a colleague, Obadiah Holmes, went secretly to Lynn in Massachusetts to bring comfort to an Anabaptist who was dying. John Winthrop had died in 1649, and John Endecott was now governor.

Clark and Holmes were arrested, forced to listen to a sermon by John Cotton justifying the severest inflicted, were struck in the face by John Wilson, and cursed by both him and

42 Ibid., VI, 188.
Endecott: they were fined and sentenced to be whipped. Friends paid Clarke's fine, but Holmes was lashed thirty times with a three-pronged whip.\(^3\)

When Clarke and Holmes returned to Rhode Island, Williams was outraged at the injustice. He sent a letter of disapproval to Endecott and the next year when he and Clarke went to England to seek a more stable charter for Rhode Island and to settle a problem arising from the claims of a resident named Coddington, he carried the letter to Endecott along to add as an appendix to his answer to Cotton.

In England the climate was changing. The English Independents, especially the great leader Cromwell, were becoming advocates of freedom of conscience, or at least to the extent that such freedom would be available to Puritanism in all its forms. John Milton, who was known personally to Roger Williams, was making his ideas known concerning freedom of the press. For Williams the change was to be of great benefit and provide him with a wider hearing.

The eight years since his last visit had ended the monarchy, brought victory to Cromwell and also nourished his ambitions. The House of Commons was now reduced to only a fragment of its former self and a House of Lords did not exist. Young Charles II was safe in France, but already eyes were beginning to turn in his direction. During this interregnum the Council of State constituted the ruling majority in Commons and whatever passed its table was sure of Parliamentary approval. It was virtually the power in the land. Cromwell was its chairman, Sir Harry Vane, Cornelius Holland and William Masham were among its members. The position of these influential friends in high places gave Roger Williams' plea a better chance to be heard favorably than would be likely after Commons was once again an elected body in full numbers.\(^4\)

\(^3\)Miller, Roger Williams, p. 157.
\(^4\)Winslow, p. 236.
The Coddington claim to a part of Rhode Island was soon negated, but unfortunately for Williams and Clarke the situation did not remain so stable. Internal unrest cost long delay in making decisions on the new Rhode Island charter. However, the delay did provide for the continuance of the controversy. John Clarke first published, on May 13, 1652, *Ill Newes from New-England: or a Narrative of New-Englands Persecution*. Shortly thereafter Williams published his answer to Cotton’s answer: *The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody: By Mr. Cottons endeavours to wash it white in the Blood of the Lambe*.

The modern mind finds this succession of "bloody tenents," with their lengthening titles, infinitely comic (Cotton would surely have had to come back with a still longer one had he not died in 1652, probably before he saw Williams’ book), but an age that reveled in technical disputations relished the spectacle.45

To conclude the structure of the controversy Williams jumped into another aspect of the fray. He was opposed to the compulsory payment of the tithe to support the state church. Others of the radical sort were of the same opinion and were seeking to bring pressure on Cromwell to abrogate the tithe. Cromwell was not willing to go so far, and pamphlet literature was being published to put pressure on him. One of the radicals was a Major William Butler, who like Williams was a friend of the Vanes and of John Milton. Butler had published some papers on the subject and under the authorship of Roger Williams there appeared, *The Fourth Paper, Presented by Major Butler, To the Honourable Committee of Parliament*. The main thrust of the paper was that no soul should be forced to pray or pay otherwise than

45 Miller, *Roger Williams*, p. 166.
his soul believed and consented. On the same theme Williams published

The Hireling Ministry None of Christs.

But the Protector became occupied in foreign policy and
the war with Holland; on April 29 the Independents—liberal
men—decided that the tithes should be collected. Radicals
like Major William Butler, John Milton, Roger Williams were
left to contemplate a revolution that stopped short of com-
pletion; but Williams, having struck three blows for the
cause, could see that nothing more was to be expected from
Cromwell. He had checked Coddington, and in February 1654
he sailed for America, once more armed with a safe conduct
through Massachusetts. Again he voluntarily, deliberately,
returned to the wilderness.46

Roger Williams returned to a confused and disunited colony
that had virtually turned their backs on him. He wrote a letter to
the divided towns and they were reunited. They rewarded Williams by
electing him president. During the years that followed, until his
death in 1683, he carried on an active life in Rhode Island. He
helped in various aspects of civil government, preached when opportu-
nity was provided, continued as a trader and mediator of Indian prob-
lems, and labored with his hoe. The Quaker Debates mentioned earlier
came late in his life and were expressive of a different theme. Many
of his letters contained fragments of the controversy, but the basic
issue of the great debate over liberty of conscience would continue to
cast its long shadow across three hundred years of American history.

46 Ibid., p. 195.
CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF THE CONTROVERSY

The controversy over the basic motivations behind Roger Williams' radicalism and dissent is almost as interesting as the actual controversy in which Williams engaged. Few American historical figures have had so many divergent interpretations promoted on their behalf. LeRoy Moore, Jr., cites three dominant approaches to the study of Williams.

Generally speaking, there are three major interpretative approaches to the person and work of Roger Williams. The first in time is the negative approach, most fully developed by the orthodox Puritans. The second, long accepted as squaring with orthodox Americanism, is the romantic approach, through which Williams is made over into an enlightened secular democrat. Third is what may be termed the realistic approach, whereby an attempt is made to come to grips with Williams on his own terms and to strike a balance with sincere critiques directed against him.1

The prevailing view of those who heeded the critical or negative view was simply that Williams was a promoter of "dangerous opinions" and very little that was good could be said about him. The romantic view may have come about partially as a reaction to the Puritan influence in American History. In an attempt to debunk the Puritans, Williams was set forth as a great liberal political hero and

1LeRoy Moore, Jr., "Roger Williams and the Historians," Church History, XXXII (December, 1963), 432.
progressive thinker. This view prevailed during most of the nine-
teenth century and during most of the first half of this century. Of
recent origin, the realistic approach basically concluded that while
Williams did hold certain basic political views, the dominant cast of
his thinking was always religious. He was a Puritan who was thor-
oughly Calvinistic in his theology. Rather than being a progressive
liberal, he was a Christocentric Biblicist whose motivation was pri-
marily to promote a more Scripturally pure Puritanism than the Massa-
chusetts Bay Colony was willing to establish.2

The Issues at Boston

Roger Williams' first clash with the Massachusetts Bay Colony
was clearly over the issue of Separatism versus Non-Separatism. What
Williams expected to find in New England in 1631 may be inferred from
the context of his refusal to become Teacher at Boston because the
Boston church was "an unseparated people."3 This issue formed the ba-
sis for the ensuing controversy in its various ramifications.

An understanding of the Puritan spirit is perhaps an essential
antecedent to understanding the Separatist mold of Williams' position
and the reason that the Boston audience for his views found him a man
to be watched. Morison stated:

Puritanism was a way of life based on the belief that the
Bible was the Word of God, and the whole word of God. Purit-
ans were the Englishmen who endeavored to live according to
that light. Having been so round, I must shade off, for

2For a thorough treatment of these views, see the above men-
tioned article by LeRoy Moore, Jr.

3Williams, VI, 356.
Puritanism has had various meanings at different times. Originally a nickname... flung about on the theological controversies of the late Roman Empire, it was revived in Queen Elizabeth's reign to describe that party of English Protestants who wished to carry out the Reformation to its logical conclusion, and purge the Anglican Church of forms and ceremonies for which there was no warrant in the Bible: or, to use a phrase of Cartwright which became a watchword for one party and a jest for their opponents, to restore the Christian Church "pure and unspotted."\(^4\)

It should be noted here that this urge to reform the church all the way to perfection was to form the backdrop for Williams' conception of what life was all about. It is evident that such a passion was in large measure responsible for his migration to America and for his willingness to tangle with the autocracy of Massachusetts Bay when he found them lacking this great ideal. Morison summarized the development of Puritanism with this helpful appraisal:

At first it was applied only to persons within the Church of England: but by 1630, the term puritan had been stretched to include separatists like the Pilgrims who obtained purity outside the Anglican communion, and even the Scots Presbyterians, who had a different organization. Further, the Church of England puritans were divided into non-conformists, who disobeyed the law rather than compromise with conscience, and the conformable puritans like John White and John Winthrop who performed or attended the prescribed services according to the Book of Common Prayer, while hoping for better things.\(^5\)

The Puritans of New England differed from the main body of Puritans in the mother country in that they had agreed upon a Congregational polity which declared the churches were equal in status. This allowed no ecclesiastical hierarchy of bishops or presbyteries. The congregations were composed of the "visible" saints who by


\(^5\)Ibid., p. 55.
confession and conduct could prove that they belonged. In contrast the main body of Puritans in England were Presbyterian in church structure and were less restrictive in their membership.

In spite of these differences in matters of church polity, the Bay Colony was basically of the same mind as their English contemporaries in relation to their views of government:

They were entirely at one with both their Presbyterian brethren and their Anglican enemies in believing that in any society only one orthodox regime should be allowed and that the civil magistrate should suppress and, if necessary, extirpate every form of ecclesiastical or doctrinal dissent. They were legitimists, wanting to be law-abiding, conservative; they held it axiomatic that the state should protect the orthodox doctrine and way of life (once the clergy had defined it), punish heresy and compel all inhabitants, whether church members or not, to attend services and pay taxes for the support of the ministry.

It was this firm position of an interrelated church and government that found its expression in A Model of Church and Civil Power—the statement of faith and practice drawn up by the colonial magistrates. It might best be described as a Nonseparatist orthodoxy. It must have seemed the political thing to do—although the New England Puritans certainly held deep convictions about their position—for the tie with the mother country and church was important to the struggling colony in the wilderness. To Roger Williams this position was compromise and unworthy of the name of Puritan.

The Separatist spirit originated at Cambridge which may indicate Williams' beginnings in the view. Williams apparently felt that

6 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 23.
the Bay Colony Puritans had done wrong in holding communion with those who were crushing the spirit of true piety in England.

It was, in his estimation, allowing a compromise with sin. It was lending an indirect sanction and connivance to a church, whose usage he deemed corrupt and whose government he regarded as tyranny.8

Other men might seek a compromise but "a golden mean could never appease a man like Roger Williams."9

The Issues at Plymouth and Salem

As Williams moved on into his ministry at Plymouth and Salem, the basic issue remained unchanged. Perry Miller explains this clearly in relation to his Salem experiences:

All his troubles at Salem from 1633 to 1635—the political heresies he there devised—were consequences of his effort to impose Separatism on Massachusetts or, failing that, to force Salem to separate from the rest of Massachusetts.10

It is evident that his Plymouth experience differed little. Williams' audience at Plymouth was, in Haller's words, "a distinctly moderate congregation of separatists."11 It was possible that the Plymouth people were interested in having Williams among them because of the boldness of his stand. The fact that Williams continued there for some time may be due to this compatibility, but perhaps even more important was the very necessary adjustment that Williams had to make

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10Miller, Roger Williams, p. 25.

11Haller, p. 17.
to the wilderness life and his strong motivation toward learning the
Indian language and pursuing his ministry among them. This certainly
must have taken much of his time. In the end, however, Williams was
too much even for Plymouth. Governor Bradford summarizes Williams' minis
try at Plymouth and gives a first-hand account dated 1633:

Roger Williams, a godly and zealous man, with many rare qualities but a very unstable judgment, who settled first in Massachusetts but owing to some discontent there, came here about this time, where he was made welcome according to their poor ability. He exercised his gifts among them, and after some time was admitted as a member of the church; and his teaching was highly approved, and for its benefit I still bless God and am thankful to him even for his sharpest admonitions and reproofs, so far as they agreed with the truth.12

Bradford freely admitted the capability of Williams and inferred that his preaching was beneficial even though it was often quite sharp. However, the hard line of Williams' divergent ideas was too brash for even the most separated colony in America. Bradford concluded:

This year [1633] he began to hold some strange opinions, and from his opinion proceeded to practice. This caused some controversy between the church and him, and in the end some discontent on his part, so that he left them somewhat abruptly. Afterward he applied for his dismissal, to transfer himself to the church at Salem, which was granted, with some caution to them about him. But he soon fell into more trouble there, to the disturbance of the church and government. I need not give particulars, for they are too well known to all; though for a time the church here received some hard censure through him and at the hands of those who afterwards smacked themselves.13

One might wish that Governor Bradford had taken the time to

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13Ibid., pp. 308-309.
indicate the reasons for the difficulty between Williams and the Plymouth congregation. The fact that they were "too well known to all" indicates the depth of the impression that Williams left on his Plymouth audience. It seems logical to conclude that Williams carried the same basically divergent views to Salem.

The Salem audience was composed of people who had strong Separatist leanings. They had had a brief encounter with Williams before he went to Plymouth, and many of them had remembered him and were friends. In addition Williams brought some followers with him from Plymouth. There were indications that the Salem church had previously been influenced by the Plymouth stand on separation and therefore the ground was fertile and ready for the planting of Williams' ideas. This was noted by the Boston authorities, and they kept a close watch on Salem and Roger Williams.

The matter of the Treatise written by Williams concerning the King's Patent certainly must have been one of the basic issues at Plymouth and Salem.

In challenging the Crown's right of patent as he had done in this Treatise and he would soon do again, he was taking a strange view for a seventeenth century Englishman. For nearly a century and a half now the figure of John Cabot standing at the shore line of the New World, and taking a possession in the name of his king, Henry VII, had been a vivid picture in the imagination of Englishmen everywhere. . . . They had grown up knowing that his discovery and the priority of claim which it had established for England was an event of vast significance to England and the world.\nas

\as Winslow, p. 107.
\as Morison, p. 39.
\as Winslow, p. 109.
Perry Miller concluded that Williams' views concerning the Patent were based on his Separatist convictions. Williams argued "that the King of England had no title to the land of the Indians and so no right to issue a charter; wherefore, the colony had no warrant to enforce conformity to Nonseparatism."\(^7\)

This naturally led to Williams' conclusion that a people who placed such extreme emphasis on a regenerated membership could not logically expect that an unregenerated man was capable of swearing and obeying an oath made in the name of God. In addition there was no right to demand that regenerate and unregenerate alike should be punished by the civil magistrates for disobedience to the first table of the Ten Commandments which dealt with a man's relationship to God. The civil authorities could and should punish breaches of the second table--man's relationship to other men--but punishment of the first table must ever be left in the hand of God.

Had this limitation been approved, the bulk of town books and sessions records would have shrunk appreciably during the lifetime of the first and second generations, for it was the profane swearerers and Sabbath breakers who took the time of the magistrates and filled the pages of the official records. The power to enforce this portion of the Decalogue had also given them a hold on the common life which it would be hard to measure. No wonder they were unwilling to relinquish it. Had Roger Williams' view prevailed, the magisterial figure of colonial times would have lost much of its terror, and the Monday morning victims for the whipping post, the stocks and the cage would have dwindled to a minority.\(^8\)

These "dangerous opinions" were slashing at the very foundation of all that the New England magistry had built so carefully.

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\(^7\)Miller, Roger Williams, p. 25.

\(^8\)Winslow, p. 117.
Williams was to come before the General Court of Massachusetts repeatedly and finally be banished on the basis of these issues.

The Issues before the General Court of Massachusetts

Williams had backed down on the Patent issue at an early appearance before the General Court even though the issue would emerge in his later controversy with John Cotton. Now he must face the remaining charges of the Court. John Winthrop summarized the charges as follows:

At the general court, Mr. Williams of Salem was summoned, and did appear. It was laid to his charge, that, being under question before the magistracy and churches for divers dangerous opinions, viz. 1, that the magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the first table, otherwise than in such cases as did disturb the civil peace; 2, that he ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man; 3, that a man ought not to pray with such, though wife, child, etc.; 4, that a man ought not to give thanks after the sacrament nor after meat, etc.19

The last two of his "errors" were less important than the first but were clear indications of the fact that Roger Williams was going in a direction that would never be compatible with the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The spirit of conformity among the magistrates was very strong. The backgrounds and previous inclinations of many of the men who sat in judgment of Williams had been precisely in the direction of his separatism. Even John Cotton had held similar views before coming to America.20 Yet all had been willing to come to agreement when they reached this shore. Where it was necessary to shade


20 Miller, Roger Williams, pp. 76-77.
their convictions to be able to fit the mold, they did so. When some tended to diverge from the main stream, they either repented and "got in" or were removed. Williams did not fit, and he would never stop trying to break the mold.

The General Court of Massachusetts comprised an interesting audience. Williams had spoken to this audience before. When he debated with Thomas Hooker before the General Court on October 8, 1635, Williams knew that his primary audience was not Hooker but the entire Court. He must have sensed the hopelessness of his situation. His views, if accepted, would have vitally changed the structure of the entire Bay Colony government. He was a minority of one—the Salem people would conform to the wishes of the magistrates. Since the magistrates were unwilling to change or modify their position in any way, the only road for Williams was to repent. Such was not his nature.

Mr. Hooker 'could not reduce him from any of his errors.'21

The Emergent Issues

Williams' debate before the General Court of Massachusetts might be called the first affirmative speech in the great debate over liberty of conscience. While it is unfortunate that the content of this first affirmative declaration is not extant, enough was contained in the subsequent materials by both Williams and Cotton to see the main stream of the arguments. As source materials for his research Roger Williams would need little besides his Bible, Cotton's manuscripts, and A Model of Church and Civil Power. His novel opinions

21 Winthrop, p. 171.
and his educational background would provide the seed plots for sustained arguments.

For purposes of analyzing the structure of the debate, Cotton's letter to Williams shortly after Williams had reached Providence might be considered the first negative constructive statement. Williams had declared at the General Court that there was something wrong with "status quo"--the existing condition in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is possible that he used his own experiences at Plymouth and Salem to establish the need for the change. What his case may have consisted of will be enlarged upon a little later in the paper. At this point it should be pointed out that during the entire debate Cotton took the approach of defending the existing institution. He sought to justify the banishment of Williams while defending the "status quo." His main line of reasoning was simply that Williams had been warned repeatedly yet sinned against his own conscience and had thereby "enlarged" himself out of Massachusetts.

The second affirmative presentation came in the form of Queries of Highest Consideration; Mr. Cottons Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered; and The Bloody Tenent, of Persecution, for cause of Conscience, discussed, in A Conference betweene Truth and Peace.

Now it was John Cotton's turn, and the negative replied with: The Bloody Tenent, Washed, and made white in the bloud of the Lambe: Being Discussed and Discharged of Bloud-gultinesse by just Defense.

Since there is very little new evidence presented in Williams' reply, The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody: By Mr. Cottons endeavour to
wash it white in the Blood of the Lambe, it might be considered the affirmative rebuttal. The Hireling Ministry None of Christs also has a place in rebuttal. Cotton's death cut the debate off at this point or it might have continued to complete a full round of rebuttals.

Almost all the major issues of the debate centered around the interpretation of Biblical texts and concepts. Both men were Bibli-cists, and in the true Puritan spirit they reveled in prolonged debate over the minutia of the meanings of Bible texts. This fact gives some insight into the audience that Williams sought during the pamphlet flurries of the great debate. "William's arguments were addressed to the faithful, without the slightest concession to any reader who had not been drilled in the discipline of Puritan disputation."22

The primary audience that he sought was always John Cotton and the religious leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In addition he addressed his works to a wider audience. The Blody Tenent might be used as a case in point. It was addressed: "To the Right Honorable, both Houses of the High Court of Parliament" and carried an additional greeting "To every Courteous Reader."23 Williams was addressing Puritan clergymen and speaking in such a maze of elongated prose as only they would have the patience to unravel. There is no indication that Williams intended to reach an audience beyond this group. That his works might continue to be read for three hundred years probably never crossed his mind.

22 Alan Simpson, "How Democratic Was Roger Williams?" Williams and Mary Quarterly, XIII (February, 1956), 56.
23 Williams, III, 5, 11.
Williams and Cotton differed on a very basic principle of Biblical interpretation, and Perry Miller has strongly emphasized the importance of this difference. In speaking of Williams he said:

He belonged to that rare and furtive brotherhood who, here and there throughout the centuries, have taken the New Testament to mean not a continuation but a repudiation of the Old. He would be a Christian, but not a Christianized Jew. He believed the Bible from cover to cover, yet he would not read the Old Testament only as a historical document: he expounded it "typologically." Here is the secret of his Separatism and his divergence from his colleagues (they so feared and detested it that they tried to conceal it). Here is the insight that guided him from his initial separation to his ultimate vision of the predicament of men and nations.24

The typological approach to interpretation has had many advocates. Most Puritans of the day would probably have felt that there were many Old Testament types that found fulfillment in the New Testament. One outstanding example is mentioned by Christ in Matthew 12: 38-41:

> Then some of the scribes and Pharisees replied to Him, "Teacher, we would like to see your token of proof." But He answered them, A wicked and disloyal generation craves evidence and no evidence shall be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was for three days and three nights in the sea monster's gullet, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the earth's heart. Ninevite men shall arise at the judgment along with this generation and shall condemn it, for they repented at Jonah's preaching and indeed One greater than Jonah is here.25

This clearly indicated that the Old Testament experience of Jonah was a type of the New Testament experience of Christ in his burial for three days prior to the resurrection.

24 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 32.

The particular typological interpretation that Williams advocated involved the relationship of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament to later figurative manifestations of Israel on the earth. John Cotton felt that the Massachusetts Bay Colony was actually the re-structuring of the Old Testament Israel on the earth and thus demanded the establishment of a government of religious leaders following the example of the original pattern in the Old Testament. Williams responded by affirming that the Old Testament nation of Israel was only a type or prophecy that found its antitype or fulfillment in the church of the New Testament. If Williams' claim were true, the Massachusetts Bay Colony had no rational reason for their theocratic form of government and no precedent for the rule of the clergy.

Miller further states:

Typology was a way of forging a link between the Testaments which did not depend upon any ingenious or manufactured theory of historical transmission. It said, albeit in many ways, that all events in the Old Testament and all episodes of the kingdom of Israel were only physical rehearsals of spiritual significances ultimately to be made intelligible in the New Testament.26

Miller traces the typological school back to Origen in the third century,27 and goes on to identify Williams with the allegorical school. He states that Williams "formulated the logic of typology

26Williams, VII, 16-17.
27Miller, Roger Williams, p. 34.
in an especially sharp, or one might even say brutal fashion,²⁸ and

calls Williams "a rhetorician of allegory."²⁹

Although the writer feels that Miller is right concerning the

origins of typology, he cannot agree with Miller in the application of

degree of typological indulgence to Roger Williams. If Williams

was a Biblical literalist and orthodox Calvinist, as asserted repeat-
edly by Miller,³⁰ he certainly could not be so thoroughly given over
to a "wild imagination"³¹ and still be considered orthodox.

Alan Simpson suggests that Miller has gone too far and states

in a footnote on the subject:

Professor Miller has made much of this principle of
typology, so much so that Williams is almost represented as
a prophet who owed his insights to a daring principle of
literary criticism. It may be objected (1) that typology
was simply a handy means to an end—Williams first decided
what was involved in regeneration, under the Gospel, and then
fell back on typology to get rid of some of the obvious dif-
ficulties when they were forced on his notice; (2) that his
use of this instrument only differed in violence from the way
his contemporaries used it. Some "typology" seems to have
been involved in any attempt to relate the Old Testament to
the New.³²

LeRoy Moore calls Williams a Biblical literalist who did use
typology but that the typological implications were not the dominant
factors. He summarizes as follows:

²⁸Ibid., p. 38.
²⁹Ibid., p. 40.
³⁰Williams, VII, 14, 19, 21-23; Miller, Roger Williams, p. 35.
³¹Miller, Roger Williams, p. 38.
³²Simpson, p. 58.
Perry Miller provides a needed corrective in emphasizing Williams' use of typology, though he overstates the case when he calls the Rhode Islander's typology "the secret of his Separatism"... For Williams, the New Testament did not repudiate but fulfilled the Old, so that with eyes enlightened by God's grace in Christ, the real significance of the Old Covenant as a type of the New is seen. Miller is entirely correct in asserting that the typological approach to the Bible was "feared and detested" by the Bay Puritans and, therefore, became a very significant element in their disagreement with Williams. The key to Williams' thought, however, is not typology but unqualified allegiance to divine sovereignty.33

With typology in its proper setting, the issue that it presents can now be considered. It was an equally strange view of the Bible that allowed the Bay Colony to look upon themselves as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises to restore the nation of Israel literally to the earth in the form of some segment of the church--apart from any Jewish racial connections. It was to this that Williams objected. The degree to which such thinking had taken possession of the minds of the colonists might be seen in the words of Increase Mather as late as 1676. In speaking of the problem with the Indians he says:

That the Heathen People amongst whom we live, and whose Land the Lord God of our Fathers hath given to us for a rightful Possession, have at sundry times been plotting mischievous devices against that part of English Israel which is seated in these goings down of the Sun, no man that is an Inhabitant of any considerable standing, can be ignorant.34

In his eyes the Bay Colony was a "Possession" given to them by


34 Increase Mather, A brief history of the warr with the Indians (Boston: printed and sold by John Foster, 1675), p. 1.
God and could properly be designated Israel. It was theirs to govern as God's appointed agents. Christ was King, the saints were his visible agents and Israel of the Old Testament was the pattern for the church-state relationship. Roger Williams disposes of the matter in a sweeping statement found in Queries of Highest Consideration:

We know the allegations against this counsel: the head of all is that from Moses (not Christ) his pattern in the typical land of Canaan, the kings of Israel and Judah. We humbly desire it may be searched into, and we believe it will be found but one of Moses' shadows, vanished at the coming of the Lord Jesus: yet such a shadow as is directly opposite to the very testament and coming of the Lord Jesus. Opposite to the very nature of a Christian church, the only holy nation and Israel of God.36

In The Hireling Ministry None of Christ's Williams maintains that since Israel is a type of the Church, it can never be used as authority for civil government. "The civil state of the nations, being merely and essentially civil cannot (Christianly) be called Christian states after the pattern of that holy and typical land of Canaan." This distinction is vital for it is basic to his arguments against persecution for cause of conscience:

The civil sword (therefore) cannot rightfully act either in restraining the souls of the people from worship or in constraining them to worship, considering that there is not a title in the New Testament of Christ Jesus that permits the forming or reforming of His spouse and church to the civil and worldly power.38

36Miller, Roger Williams, p. 85.
37Ibid., p. 198.
38Ibid.
In The Bloudy Tenent he further clarifies the issue:

What land, what country now is Israel's parallel and antitype but that holy mystical nation, the church of God, peculiar and called out to Him out of every nation and country? . . . This spiritual seed is the only antitype of the former figurative and typical. . . . The want of discerning this true parallel between Israel in type then and Israel the antitype now is that rock wherom . . . thousands dash and make woeful shipwreck.39

The church then has special place in God's economy. On the church has been placed the blessing and responsibility, not of the physical state as in the imperfect type but in the spiritual care of the souls of men as revealed in the more perfect antitype. Since Williams held such an exalted concept of God and the church, it is not too difficult to see why he had problems in understanding how the Bay Colony ministers could be content to struggle along in the pollutions of Non-separatism. He announces in The Bloudy Tenent:

Herein New England Churches secretly call their Mother Whore, not daring in America to joyne with their owne Mothers children, though unexcommunicate, no nor permit them to worship God after their consciences, as their Mother hath taught them this secretly and silently, they have a mind to doe, which publickly they would seem to disclaime, and professe against.40

Cotton's answer to the problem of separation was basically a matter of an intermediate position. He was ready to confess that imperfections might come but assured Williams that these could be dealt with using better "medicine" than separation.

Wee confesse the erroors of men are to be contended against, not with reproaches, but the sword of the Spirit:

39Ibid., pp. 151, 153.

40Williams, III, 283.
but on the other side, the failings of the churches (if any be found) are not forthwith to be healed by separation. It is not Chirurgery, but Butchery, to heal every sore in a member with no other medicine but abscession from the body.\(^1\)

Larzer Ziff in his scholarly study of John Cotton positions the Boston teacher in his difficulties with Roger Williams and with the English leaders.

His road was the "middle-way" between Presbyterianism and separatism. He did not believe that his support of what Williams opposed contradicted his attitude toward the Presbyterians, but, nevertheless, both pressures coming together so insistently made his task a difficult one. An overforceful defense against Williams at the back gate might leave the main entrance weakened for Presbyterian assault; a too vigorous foray against the Presbyterians might provide the opportunity Williams could use to undermine all.\(^2\)

Thus Cotton became what might be called "the Apostle of the Middle-Way." Such a middle course could never satisfy Williams. With the close association of the sacred and the secular came the pollution of the church.

All may see how since the Apostacie of Antichrist, the Christian World (so called) hath swallowed up Christianity, how the Church and civill State, that is the Church and the World are now become one flocke of Jesus Christ; Christ's sheepe, and the Pastors or Shepherds of them, all one with the severall unconverted wilde or tame Beasts and Cattell of the World and the civill and earthly governours of them: The Christian Church or Kingdome of the Saints, that stone cut out of the mountain without hands, Daniel 2. now made all one with the mountaine or Civill state, the Roman Empire, from whence it is cut or taken: Christ's lilies, garden and love, all one with the thornes, the daughers and wilderness of the


World, out of which the Spouse or Church of Christ is called, and amongst whom in civill things for a while here below, she must necessarily be mingled and have converse.\footnote{Williams, III, 174-75.}

To Williams, who sought a pure church, this was stark tragedy. The answer was quite simple. Let the civil authorities take care of civil matters and let the church take care of the souls of men.

The interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13) figured large in the case that Williams built against John Cotton. By \"the seventeenth century the parable of the tares had a long and complicated history behind it.\"\footnote{Elisabeth Hirsch Feist, \"John Cotton and Roger Williams: Their Controversy Concerning Religious Liberty,\" Church History, X (June, 1941), 43.} Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and many others had struggled with it. The point of clash concerned the interpretation of the term \"field\" in the parable. Cotton asserted that the field meant the church and therefore a pure church could never be expected on this earth since the hypocrites and false believers must be allowed in the church until the end of the age. He used this interpretation to justify the entanglements of the Bay Colony churches with the pollutions of the mother church back in England. In opposition to Cotton, Williams insisted that, in the parable, the \"field\" is the world rather than the church, and the \"tares\" represent not hypocrites but unregenerated people.\footnote{Moore, \"Religious Liberty: Roger Williams and the Revolutionary Era,\" p. 61.}

The issue then became that the wheat--Christians, and the tares--sects
and false religious groups, are to be left alone to live side by side until the harvest time—the end of the age. A brief look at one of Williams' arguments in *The Bloudy Tenent* should help to indicate the complexity of the argument.

Peace. The place then being of such great importance as concerning the truth of God, the blood of thousands, yea the blood of Saints, and of the Lord Jesus in them, I shall request your more diligent search (by the Lords holy assistance) into this Scripture. I shall make it evident, that by these Tares in this Parable are meant persons in respect of their Religion and way of Worship, open and visible professors, as bad as briars and thornes: not onely suspected Foxes, but as bad as those greedy Wolves which Paul speaks of, Acts 20. who with perverse and evill doctrines labour spiritually to devour the flocke, and to draw away Disciples after them, whose mouthes must be stopped, and yet no carnall force or weapon to be used against them, but their mischiefe to bee resisted with those mighty weapons of the holy Armoury of the Lord Jesus, wherein there hangs a thousand shields, Cant. 4.46

Williams maintained that it was proper to seek to restrict the activity of the false religious groups through spiritual means such as prayer, preaching, and theological debate, but civil force and persecution should never be allowed to interfere with the existence of these sects in the civil state. Referring to Christ as "the best Politician that ever the World saw" Williams states:

That absolute Rule of this great Politician for the peace of the Field, which is the World, and for the good and peace of the Saints, who must have a civill being in the World, I have discoursed in his command of permitting the Tares, that is, Antichristians or false Christians to be in the Field of the World, growing up together with the true Wheat, true Christians.47

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46Williams, III, 99-100.

47Ibid., p. 179.
The matter of the wheat and tares drags on page after page until every shade of meaning has been exposed on both sides of the question. The simple application of the concept in the light of the church, Williams' first interest, he presents later in *The Bloody Tenant*:

Truth. I shall more fully answer to this . . . and show that if the weeds be kept out of the Garden of the Church, the Roses and Lilies therein will flourish, notwithstanding that weeds abound in the Field of the Civill State. When Christianity began to be choaked, it was not when Christians lodged in cold Prisons, but Doune beds of ease, and persecuted others, etc.\(^{48}\)

Ziff finds an additional issue of interest in Williams' views on predestination. Speaking of Williams' ideas he says:

Confident of the elect position of members of the true church, he saw no need for mortal interference to assure the elect of not falling since such falling was an eternal impossibility. Those who belonged to the church invisible would eventually enter the church triumphant, while those who did not belong to the church invisible would stray from the church militant. In either case, there was no need for civil measures.\(^{49}\)

The argument was quite simple—and to John Cotton quite compelling. If a person believed in the predestination of the elect, he had no reason to look to earthly aids for the protection and preservation of the elect—they could not fall away and the church could not fail. The pressure of Williams' contention caused Cotton to become in Ziff's opinion "a reluctant and belated convert to the theory of

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\(^{48}\) Ibid., p. 187.

\(^{49}\) Ziff, p. 215.
federal grace," an accommodation which would allow a maintenance of the doctrine of predestination, and, "at the same time, make it possible for the theocratic state to maintain its sway over the spiritual lives of all under its jurisdiction."\textsuperscript{51}

The Enduring Issue

As one travels among the complex trailways of this seventeenth century debate, a central concept emerges with lasting impression. This concept still lingers over the name and memory of Roger Williams. Those that know of Williams know that he stood for liberty of conscience, the classic right of freedom of worship. In an early statement from \textit{Queries of Highest Consideration} Williams propounds some complex questions for his opponents to answer:

\begin{quote}
We query (if security may be taken by the wisdom of the state for civil subjection) why even the Papists \textit{[Catholics]} themselves and their consciences may not be permitted in the world? For otherwise, if England's government were the government of the whole world, not only they, but a world of idolators of all sorts, yea the whole world, must be driven out of the world?
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{50}Cotton's view of federal grace asserted that there was actually a double state of grace. One factor applied to the outward state of man and the other to man's inner state. Common grace is provided for man's ability to serve God, and sanctifying grace is provided for his regeneration and salvation. Man may have trouble with the outward state and common grace without having any difficulty with the inner sanctifying grace. Since members of the church might have problems of slipping away in these areas of service and outward grace, it was necessary to erect barriers against such possibilities.

\textsuperscript{51}Ziff, p. 220.
Whether or no the laws enacted and violence offered even to the consciences of the Papists themselves have not kindled these devouring flames?\textsuperscript{52}

If these should seem to be hard questions, let Cotton answer these from \textit{The Blody Tenent}: 

\begin{quote}
If Paul, if Jesus Christ were present here at London, and the question were proposed what religion they would approve of—\textit{the Papists'}, Prelatists', Presbyterians', Independents'}—would each say, "Of mine, of mine"? 

But put the second question: if one of the several sorts should by major vote attain the sword of steel, what weapons doth Christ Jesus authorize them to fight with in His cause? Do not all men hate the persecutor, and every conscience, true or false, complain of cruelty, tyranny?\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Of interest in the last question is Williams' cutting statement concerning the apparent reaction of those who are persecuted and the strange change that comes over them when they gain the ascendancy.

\begin{quote}
When Mr. Cotton and others have formerly been under hatches, what sad and true complaints have they abundantly poured forth against persecution? . . . But coming to the helm (as he speaks of the Papists), how, both by preaching, writing, printing, practice, do they themselves (I hope in their persons lambs) unnaturally and partially express toward others the cruel nature of such lions and leopards?\textsuperscript{54}
\end{quote}

Cotton answered that the reason Williams was banished was not that he held diverse opinions because there were even then in the Bay Colony many who held similar opinions and they were having no problems. The reason Williams was banished could be found in the simple fact that he couldn't keep quiet about what he believed.\textsuperscript{55} He had to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[52]Miller, Roger Williams, p. 84.
\item[53]Ibid., p. 109.
\item[54]Ibid., pp. 140-41.
\item[55]Ziff, p. 217.
\end{footnotes}
preach and even when his errors were pointed out maintain his opinions still. Said Cotton, "When you over-heated your selfe in reasoning and disputing against the light of his truth, it pleased him to stop your mouth by a sudden disease, and to threaten to take your breath from you." The reference clearly implies that Cotton felt Williams' illness at the time of his flight from Massachusetts Bay was a divine punishment.

Even as Williams had used The Bloody Tenent to reach an English audience, Cotton used The Bloody Tenent, Washed and made white in the blood of the Lambe to reach the same English audience and to warn them of Williams' strange opinions. The banishment was declared to be just. Since Williams had been warned repeatedly and had refused to respond, he was in reality sinning against his own conscience.

In the true spirit that exemplified Roger Williams, he persisted and maintained all his opinions. He makes a sweeping summary of the case:

Were I believed in this, that Christ is not delighted with the blood of men (but shed His own for His bloodiest enemies), that by the Word of Christ no man for gainsaying Christ or joining with His enemy Antichrist should be molested with the civil sword—were this foundation laid as the Magna Charta of the highest liberties, and, good security given on all hands for the preservation of it, how soon would every brow and house be stuck with olive branches?

56 Williams, I, 298. (Cotton's Letter)
58 Ibid., p. 218.
59 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 144.
At the conclusion of The Bloudy Tenent he cries:

The God of Peace, the God of Truth, will shortly seal this truth and confirm this witness, and make it evident to the whole world:
That the doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience is most evidently and lamentably contrary to the doctrine of Christ Jesus the Prince of peace.\(^60\)

When Williams came to the end of his last rebuttal in The Hireling Ministry None of Christs he presented—in true debate fashion—a grand summary of his case. This he called, "The Summa totalis of all the former particulars."

First, since the people of this nation have been forced into a national way of worship, both Popish and Protestant... the civil state is bound before God to take off that bond and yoke of soul-oppression and to proclaim free and impartial liberty to all the people of the three nations, to choose and maintain what worship and ministry their souls and consciences are persuaded of.
Secondly, the civil state is humbly to be implored to provide in their high wisdom for the security of all the respective consciences, in their respective meetings, assemblings, worshippings, preachings, disputings: and that civil peace and the beauty of civility and humanity be maintained among the chief opposers and dissenters.
Thirdly, it is the duty of all that are in authority, and of all that are able, to countenance, encourage, and supply such true volunteers as give and devote themselves to the service and ministry of Christ Jesus in any kind.\(^61\)

In truth Williams could say, "I have not hid within my breast my soul's belief."\(^62\)

That Williams carried these "fixed opinions" to his grave might be inferred from a letter written to Major Mason from Providence, dated June 22, 1670. He offered to "dispute these points and

\(^{60}\text{ibid.}, \text{pp. 155-56.}\)
\(^{61}\text{ibid.}, \text{pp. 204-205.}\)
\(^{62}\text{ibid.}, \text{p. 110.}\)
other points of difference, if you please, at Hartford, Boston and Plymouth."

I have offered, and do, by these presents, to discuss by disputation, writing or printing, among other points of differences, these three positions: first, that forced worship stinks in God's nostrils. 2d. That it denies Christ Jesus yet to be come and makes the church yet national; figurative and ceremonial. 3d. That in these flames about religion, as his Majesty, his father and grandfather have yielded, there is no other prudent, Christian way of preserving peace in the world, but by permission of differing consciences.⁶³

This issue endured and stands enshrined as the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Although the amount of influence Roger Williams had on the makers of this amendment is debatable, no one can deny that his experiment in Rhode Island was the touchstone of such freedom in America. History cannot forget the man who would not be silent!

⁶³ Williams, VI, 347.
CHAPTER IV

THE CRITICISM OF THE CONTROVERSY

The concern of this chapter is to analyze the basic structure of the great debate over persecution for cause of conscience. This concept formed the emergent issue of the controversy between Roger Williams and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The letters between Cotton and Williams contained many pages of controversy over this central issue but the expanded statements were unfolded in the verbiage of The Bloudy Tenent, The Bloudy Tenent Washed, and The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody. Cotton's original letter to Williams contained eighteen pages. The reply that Williams made to this letter contained eighty-two pages. To these Williams added the four hundred twenty-five pages of The Bloudy Tenent. John Cotton took one hundred ninety-five pages to wash The Tenent white and added one hundred forty-four pages in answer to Williams' reply to his original letter. Roger Williams responded with the five hundred forty-seven pages of The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody. How many pages Cotton would have used in response to Williams' last attack will never be known since his death ended the debate. If victory in the debate had depended on the number of pages written, Williams would have to be called the winner. He had written
The Anatomy of the Debate

The attempt to cut through to the primary contentions of the debate is an arduous task but is necessary to an understanding of this first great American controversy. The summary that follows is this writer's analysis of the major contention of the debate drawn up in a form that reflects the thinking of Roger Williams and John Cotton but is cast in a modern framework of debate terminology.

The debate proposition that formed the basis for controversy might be stated as follows: Resolved, that no man should be persecuted by the civil state for worshiping God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

The terms of the proposition must be analyzed and clearly defined so that both sides are fully agreed concerning their meaning. Both Williams and Cotton could agree that those who were guilty of doctrinal error should have special treatment. The point of clash came over the question of whose authority it was to deal with heretics. Williams contended that only the church should be involved with spiritual matters. Cotton maintained that the civil magistrates were responsible for the punishing of spiritual offenders since theirs was the job of protecting the purity of the church. Therefore, Williams is careful to frame the debate proposition in a way that will clearly indicate this basic area of difference. The meaning of the term
"persecution for cause of conscience" took some time to clarify. John Cotton stated:

By Persecution for cause of Conscience, I conceive you mean, either for professing some point of Doctrine, which you believe in Conscience to be the Truth: or for practicing some worke, which you believe in Conscience to be a Religious duty.¹

Williams responded in The Bloudy Tenent that the distinction that Cotton made was not full and complete. A man could also be punished for refusing to engage in some practice that was against his conscience. He used an example to clarify the distinction:

A chaste wife will not only abhorre to be restrained from her husbands bed, as adulterous and polluted, but also abhor (if not much more) to bee constrained to the bed of a strang-er. And abominable in corporall, is much more loathsome in spiritual whoredom and defilement.²

John Cotton stated in The Bloudy Tenent Washed that he had implied this meaning and that such trifling over the definition of terms was no more significant than a "knot in a Bulrush."³ Williams' reply in The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody was that a great deal of blood had been shed by those who refused to conform to spiritual doctrines and practices forced upon them. In Williams' eyes their blood was more significant than a knot in a bulrush. It had taken several years but they were finally agreed as to the meaning of the proposition.

Since Williams was advocating a change from status quo, it was

²Williams, III, pp. 63-64.
³Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 4.
necessary for him to carry the affirmative side of the debate. In order to do this properly he must first establish a case that would prove a need for such a change. The end that Williams sought was an individual at peace with his conscience living in a peaceful society. Since persecution for cause of conscience was prevalent in the society that he knew, he felt justified in presenting his case advocating a need for a change. His contentions concerning the need could be summarized as follows:

I. The Massachusetts Bay Colony practices the evil of persecution for cause of conscience.

   A. The case of Williams' banishment is proof of this contention.

II. The doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience is not taught in the Bible.

   A. It is not practiced or taught by Jesus Christ.

   B. It is not taught by the Apostle Paul and other writers.

   C. The implications of typology are opposed to such persecution.

III. Persecution for cause of conscience is not universally practiced by civil states.

   A. Other peoples exist and prosper who do not exercise authority in spiritual matters.

   B. Some churches and civil leaders have opposed persecution for cause of conscience.

IV. Persecution for cause of conscience destroys peace.

   A. Such persecution causes the loss of civil peace.

   B. Such persecution causes the loss of church peace.

   C. Such persecution causes the loss of peace to those individuals who must conform or be persecuted.
Having presented the need for a change in the existing institution—primarily the one in Massachusetts Bay—Williams may now proceed to set forth his remedy. This affirmative "plan" indicates how Williams intended to meet the need. His case for the affirmative could be summarized as follows:

I. The proper standard for state affairs includes the following important areas:
   A. Civil government should be the essential concern of the state.
   B. The state should reserve spiritual matters for the care of the church.
   C. The state should provide security for assembled worshippers so that they may worship in peace.
   D. The state should only intervene in religious dissent when the dissenters disturb the civil peace.
   E. The state should not hinder those who voluntarily dedicate themselves to religious service from performing this service.

II. Full liberty of conscience should be provided for all.
   A. There should be no persecution of religious heretics by the state.
   B. There should be no persecution of religious sects by the state.
   C. There should be no persecution of unbelievers by the state.
   D. The state should not tax the people to finance the church.

III. The church should care for those matters that concern herself.
   A. Religious heretics should be dealt with by the church.
   B. The spiritual vitality and growth of the church should keep the sects under control.
C. The unbelievers should be won to the truth by the church.

D. The ministry should be financed by the churches and not by the state.

The negative approach chosen by John Cotton to answer the contentions of Roger Williams was primarily "the classical negative case"—maintaining that since the status quo is satisfactory there is no need for the adoption of the proposed resolution. Cotton's arguments were therefore directed almost exclusively against Williams' contentions that advocated a need for a change. Since he felt that his arguments proved that there was no need for a change, he need not bother to refute in detail the affirmative plan. Any benefits that Williams' plan might produce for good were not necessary because the need did not exist. Cotton stated in The Bloody Tenent Washed:

> I did not think it needful to declare what an Arrogant and Impetuous way was, seeing his Request was, not that I should compile a discourse of mine owne: but that I should returne an Answer . . . and it is an Answerers part not to Expatiate into declarations, but distinctly and closely to remove Objections.¹

He proceeded to "remove Objections" found in Williams' contentions. The first and most basic argument was met by Cotton's flat denial:

I. The Massachusetts Bay Colony does not practice persecution for cause of conscience.

A. Roger Williams "banished himself"² because of civil disobedience.

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Letter of Cotton to Williams, 1643, Williams, I, p. 13.
1. Williams had maintained views against the King's authority that could have undermined the security of the Bay Colony in its relation to the Crown.

2. Williams had advocated the view that the "Oath of Fidelitie" could not be sworn by unconverted men since the oath was an act of worship. By advocating this view Williams "tended to unsettle all the Kingdomes, and Common-wealths in Europe."6

B. Persecution for cause of conscience is opposed to all that the Bay Colony believes and practices.

1. No man is to be persecuted at all—much less for conscience' sake.

2. There is a basic difference between persecution and punishment. The Bay Colony does not persecute at all, but it reserves the right to punish error.

3. No one is to be punished for his conscience' sake unless his views be erroneous concerning a fundamental issue and he "sediously and turbulently" promotes his views.

4. Such offenders are never punished until they have been thoroughly advised concerning their error and given time to repent. If the one in error persists in his error and in advocating it, he may be punished.

5. Such a person is not being punished for his conscience but for sinning against his conscience.7

6. The civil magistrates may allow erroneous views to exist in the state as long as they are not propagated.

II. It is agreed that persecution for cause of conscience is not taught in the Bible but punishment for heresy is taught.

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6 John Cotton's Answer to Roger Williams, Williams, II, p. 49.

7 Point B above is summarized by John Cotton on page 3 of The Bloudy Tenent Washed.
A. Most of William's interpretations of Scripture are irrelevant and immaterial.

B. The typological views of William are fanciful and based on erroneous interpretation of Scripture.

III. It is granted that the civil state should not persecute for cause of conscience but the civil state has a responsibility to help keep the church pure by assisting in the punishing of heresy.

A. William's evidence concerning other peoples who exist and prosper but do not exercise authority in spiritual matters relates mainly to primitive peoples such as the Indians. As the Indians come to the truth they will have to accept the responsibility of using civil power to keep the truth pure.

B. William's evidence concerning church and civil leaders who oppose civil authority in matters of religion is inadequate.

IV. Persecution for cause of conscience is always wrong but the use of civil power to keep the church pure will preserve peace.

A. William's contention that such authority causes the loss of peace is erroneous.

1. The defection of one tribe of Israel caused great trouble to all the commonwealth. "I demand, whether the church also, (which is a particular Society of Christians) whether, I say, the Peace and welfare of it, do not concerne the Peace and welfare of the city or countrey where they live?"

2. "The rejoicing of the church is the glory of the nation. (Ps. 122.6 - Pro. 28:12)"

3. The church is the highest society in the civil state and should receive the best treatment of

8 Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 11.

9 Ibid.
any society. Certainly the church should get better protection than the "Merchants, or Drapers, Fishmongers, etc." 10

4. God is displeased if the civil state thinks the church is of little concern to her. If the spiritual peace is disturbed through heresy, civil disturbance will follow.

B. Individuals who hold dissident views should receive enlightenment and repent.

1. Those who repent find peace restored.

2. Punishment given to the unrepentant may cause him to repent later thus restoring peace to him also.

In typical debate fashion Williams and Cotton in their rebuttals would repair any holes that the other might have made in a particular argument and then proceed to provide additional reinforcement in these areas.

Since the materials of the debate are so massive, representative examples of debate procedures will be used to clarify the debaters' methods. An example of their rebuttal techniques will be expanded here.

In Chapter 9 of The Bloudy Tenent Williams set forth what he proposed was "A preposterous way of suppressing errours." 11

Breach of civil peace may arise, when false and idolatrous practices are held forth, & yet no breach of civil peace from the doctrine or practice, or the manner of holding forth, but from that wrong and preposterous way of suppressing, preventing, and extinguishing such doctrines or practices by weapons of wrath and blood, whips, stockes, imprisonment, banishment, death, etc. by which men commonly

10 Ibid.

11 Williams, III, p. 80.
are perswaded to convert Heretickes, and to cast out uncleane spirits, which onely the finger of God can doe, that is the mighty power of the Spirit in the Word.  

Williams continued by expressing the futility of seeking to expel error from men's minds by such civil punishment. He concluded by saying that it is only "Light alone, even Light from the bright shining Sunne of Righteousness, which is able, in the soules and consciences of men to dispel and scatter such fogges and darknesse."  

Williams was using a simple method of generalization. He reasoned that since religious error is spiritual and mental in its nature, it must therefore be combatted by using spiritual and mental weapons—"the Light."

Cotton's rebuttal in The Bloudy Tenent Washed was that there were negative instances which indicated that Williams' generalization did not have universal application. He cited the example of the prophet Jonah who had rebelled against God by refusing to go to Nineveh to preach against the wicked city. Jonah had sinned against the first table of the law. His error was spiritual in its nature. A great storm arose and the sailors finally discovered that Jonah's rebellion against God was the cause of the storm. They threw Jonah overboard and the storm subsided. Cotton concluded:

Therefore a Christian by departing from God, may disturb a Gentile civill State. And it is no preposterous way for the Governours of the State, according to the quality of

\[12^{12}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[13^{13}\text{Ibid.}, pp. 80-81.\]
the disturbance raised by the starting aside of such a Christian, to punish both it and him by civill censure.\textsuperscript{14}

If Williams would answer that only light can dispel the error, Cotton was ready to state that such an argument was true, "but judgements of God are lights." Williams rejoined that he spoke of judgements of the mouth and not of the hand. To this Cotton replied that both the mouth and the hand can bring light as evidenced by God's judgments of famine, war, and pestilence.

In The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody Williams returned to the issue to state that if Cotton wished to attempt rebuttal on the basis of such an isolated instance he should expect to carry such logic to its conclusion. Concerning the Jonah incident Williams has Truth say:

Truth. I answer, if that extraordinary and miraculous instance, be sufficient ground for Magistrates casting over-board whomssoever they judge Hereticks, then all civil states and ships must so practice in stormes and troubles on sea or shore, to wit, throw over-board, put to death, not only Hereticks, Blasphemers, Seducers etc. but the best of Gods Prophets or servants, for neglect of their duty, Ministry, etc. which was Jonahs case.

And if so, doth not this set up (and all the world over) by land or sea, all Kings and Magistrates, all Masters of ships and captains, to be the spiritual and Ecclesiastical Judges of the religion and spiritual neglects of all their subjects or Passengers? Such doctrine I cannot imagine would have relished with Master Cotton in his passage to New England; and I humbly desire of God, that he may never tast the bitter fruit of this Tree, of which yet so many thousands of Gods servants have fed, and himself not a little (to the Lords praise and his own) in former times.\textsuperscript{15}

It is possible to detect what may be a rare trace of humor of sorts in Williams' reference to Cotton's ocean passage.

\textsuperscript{14} Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{15} Williams, IV, pp. 86-87.
In concluding the issue raised by Cotton's reference to natural phenomena being lights for erring consciences, Williams discovered that Cotton had used as a proof text Zechariah 13:6. "Thus was I wounded in the house of my friends." As Cotton had apparently gone too far in his use of Jonah and natural judgments, so Williams now seems to overapply the meaning that Cotton must have inferred from the Zechariah passage.

Truth. But doth Master Cotton indeed believe that not only publike Magistrates, but also each private father and mother (as that place of Zechariah, literately, taken carries it) must now in the days of the Gospel wound and pierce; yea run through and kill their Son the false Prophet? would he justify a parent so practicing though it were in the neglect of the publike Magistrate, who happily may be of the same Religion with the false prophet? Will not this doctrine reach & extend to the pulling down deposing and killing of all such governors and governments, which God in his gracious providence hath set up amongst all peoples in all parts and dominions of the world, yea and harden the heart of Pharoah, the very Pope himself, in his King-killing and State-killing doctrine?

Peace. If ever Master Cotton wake in this point, he will tell all the world, that it is more Gospel-like that Parents, Brethren, Fathers, Friends, impartially fulfill this of Zechariah 13. and Deut. 13. (6-10.) spiritually, in the friendly wounding, yea and zealous slaying by the two-edged sword of the Spirit of God, which is the word of God comming forth of the mouth of Christ Jesus, Ephes. 5. (6:17.) Revel. 1. (16.)

There was nothing in Cotton's remarks to infer that he intended to carry the Zechariah passage to its literal fulfillment, but Williams was quick to catch a point and to draw from it an application that was startling in its nature. It was just such minute rebuttal on Williams' part that caused Cotton to declare:

16 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
It may seem though the Truth be as clear as the Beames of the Sunne, yet the Discusser can espie a moat of admirable weakness in the delivering of such a Position, though never so true or clear. But let him cease his Admiration, unless it be to admire his oune fancy.17

Although it is true that Williams tended to amplify his contentions to what seemed unreasonable lengths, it is also true that since he bore the burden of proof in seeking to change the status quo it was necessary for him to structure his contentions with all the evidence available to him.

In order to investigate the nature of the arguments used by the debaters, it seems profitable at this point to draw out these evaluations from the framework of one of the central contentions of the debate. The history of the principle of the separation of the church and the state in America had its initial evaluations in the controversy between Williams and Cotton.

These arguments arose during the discussion of contention IV of Williams' statement of the need for a change--persecution for cause of conscience destroys peace. In Chapter 6 of The Bloudy Tenent18 Roger Williams declares that civil peace is simply the peace of the city and the people of the city. He states that many cities of the world including the Indian towns in New England have peace and yet they do not have a "true Church of God" in the town at all. Since this is the case, Williams' logic concludes that the presence or absence of a church in a particular community has no relationship to the

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17Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 23.
18Williams, III, 71-74.
civil peace of the community. To clarify the point Williams uses an analogy:

O how lost are the sonnes of men in this point? To illustrate this: The Church or company of worshippers (whether true or false) is like unto a Body or College of Physicians in a Citie; like unto a Corporation, Society, or Company of East-Indie or Turkie-Merchants, or any other Societie or Company in London: which Companies may hold their Courts, keep their Records, hold disputations; and in matters concerning their Societie, may dissent, divide, breake into Schismes and Factions, sue and implead each other at the Law, yea wholly breake up and dissolve into pieces and nothing, and yet the peace of the Citie not be in the least measure impaired or disturbed; because the essence or being of the Citie, and so the well-being and peace thereof is essentially distinct from those particular Societies; the Citie-Courts, Citie-Lawes, Citie-punishments distinct from theirs. The Citie was before them, and stands absolute and intire, when such a Corporation or Societie is taken down.19

The analogy presents a general principle. Next Williams gives specific examples of the application of this principle. He states that in the city of Ephesus there was a strong cult of the worship of the goddess Diana. In the same city there were also a Christian Church and a Jewish Synagogue. Williams argues that any one of these three institutions might be altered or completely removed without any effect upon the peace of Ephesus.

In The Bloudy Tenent Washed20 John Cotton conceded that the meaning of civil peace is clearly the humane and civil peace of a particular community. However, he raises two points of clash. The first involves the matter of the companies or societies within the city, and the second relates to the particular case of the church. Cotton states

19Ibid., p. 73.

20Cotton, Tenent Washed, pp. 10-11.
that since the societies are integral parts of the city, to disturb one society is to disturb the city itself.

In this first point John Cotton apparently is seeking to turn Williams' argument against himself, for Williams had been first to mention the concept of the church being a society. Williams responds in The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody21 by saying that he is not speaking of an enforced destruction on a particular society within a city but rather a voluntary combining or disbanding—that such can be done without the civil peace being disturbed in any way. Williams goes on to make his essential contention clear. He maintains that there can be free controversial discussion and debate within a church—even to the extent that a particular church can dissolve itself—without the civil peace being destroyed. The problem comes when the civil magistrates intervene in the free course of persuasive interaction and silence controversy through persecution.

Williams charges John Cotton with a double fallacy. The first might be called a degree of equivocation—using words or groups of words more than once with different meanings. In Williams' view Cotton used the term "peace" at times to mean spiritual and moral peace and at other times he used the same word to mean material prosperity. The second fallacy that Williams notes in Cotton's logic is Cotton's contention that every dissident view within the church immediately constitutes a breach of the civil peace. This fallacy arises from Cotton's failure to understand the basic difference between the role

21Williams, IV, 68-70.
of the church and that of civil government. Cotton maintains that while the inner peace of the church is spiritually maintained the outward peace of the church must be protected by the civil magistrates.

The main points of Williams' rebuttal are listed below:

I. Many cities have flourished where there was no church.
   A. Rome flourished for over five hundred years before the church came.
   B. Constantinople flourished for over one thousand years.
   C. Athens flourished for two thousand years.

II. The church flourished most effectively when it was not controlled by the state.
   A. The church in Rome flourished when the Roman emperors refused to recognize it and even persecuted it.
   B. The church in Rome suffered most after it had become the recognized state religion under Constantine.

III. Church peace is a matter for the church to maintain without the help of the civil state.
   A. Inner spiritual peace of a church is a church matter.
   B. The administration of the outward affairs of a church is also a church matter.

IV. There is a balance to justice.
   A. Spiritual justice is cared for by the spiritual King—Christ.
   B. Civil justice is cared for by the civil state.

V. There is a balance in the application of justice to voluntary organizations.
   A. Voluntary organizations may disband without being forced by the civil state to continue.
   B. The church is a voluntary organization—spiritual in its nature—and must be kept immune to force.
The line of reasoning used by Williams in the last contention listed above was based on syllogistic reasoning. It could be called a chain syllogism—a syllogism that develops out of the previous one. The syllogisms might be stated as follows:

Voluntary organizations may disband as they choose.
The church is a voluntary organization.
Therefore, the church may disband as it chooses.

The second syllogism growing out of the first could be stated:

Any part of a voluntary organization may disband.
An individual member is a part.
Therefore, an individual member may disband.

To the modern reader such conclusions seem completely natural and acceptable, but to the seventeenth-century mind—steeped in centuries of enforced church relationships—it may have sounded like a strange tongue.

John Cotton also demonstrated the use of syllogistic reasoning in his arguments. He reasoned:

All societies in the civil state must be preserved by the state.
The church is a society.
The church must be preserved—by the civil state.

In drawing this conclusion John Cotton placed the church as a society in an equal sense with such societies as the fishmongers, haberdashers, and merchants. As a result he placed himself in somewhat of a dilemma. Roger Williams could and did argue—if the church is parallel with other societies in the civil state, "is it not partiality in a meer civil State to preserve one onely society, and not
the persons of other Religious societies and consciences also? He then concluded that such obvious partiality and bigotry was based on the selfish motives of people who were afraid to put their church to the test of standing without state support.

But the Truth is, this mingling of the church and the world together, and their orders and societies together, doth plainly discover, that such churches were never called out from the world, and that this is only a secret policy of flesh and blood, to get protection from the world, and so to keep (with some little stilling of conscience) from the Cross or Gallowes of Jesus Christ.

The second horn of the dilemma also creates problems for Cotton. He had already stated that the church was the most important of all the societies in the civil state, and being the highest it deserved the fullest and most instantaneous response from the civil state when problems arose in it. Williams infers that in such a declaration John Cotton destroys the validity of the syllogism. If the church is above all the other societies, the basic premise is not valid. The societies must be equal in status or the major premise is not universal in its application. In developing this idea Williams goes on to say that if Cotton's opinion of the "excellency and pre-heminence" of the church is carried to its logical conclusion then Cotton has refuted himself. Such an institution as the church could never be properly judged by such an inferior institution as a civil state.

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22 Ibid., p. 74.
23 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
24 Ibid., p. 76.
If Cotton says that Williams' contentions would displease God because God would feel that the civil state doesn't care about the church, Williams answers that the civil state can be concerned for the welfare of the church without judging and ruling it. It was a matter of degree. In Williams' view Cotton was now the one who was guilty of going too far.

The final argument of this phase of the debate can be found interwoven throughout Williams' contentions but is especially dominant in the sixth chapter of The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody. It is based on the concept of typology that was discussed in detail in Chapter III of this paper. John Cotton was saying in essence that the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the nation of Israel in the Old Testament were really parallel cases. The promises of God that had been placed on the historical Israel were now placed upon the new Canaan in New England. The logic of the parallel case demanded that the "New Israel" be like the old in form of government. Since historical Israel was a Theocracy--ruled by God through religious leaders--so the Israel in New England could justify government by magistrates who were also the ruling elders of the church. Since Israel in the Old Testament allowed only one faith in the land, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was justified in following this example.

Roger Williams consistently answered this argument with the contention that John Cotton was mistaken in his basic assumption. The Bible nowhere taught that the Israel of the Old Testament could be the pattern of a literal physical state under the new "covenant"--the way
in which God dealt with man after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The contrary was true: the Israel of the Old Testament was a type—a figure or prophecy—of the New Testament church. The New Israel was the church. The type was physical—the antitype was spiritual. The spiritual domain of the fulfillment of the type was only in the church and did not relate at all to the civil state. To interpret the promise as physical was to do violence to the truth.

The true and living God, is the God of order, spiritual, civil and natural: Natural is the same ever and perpetual: civil alters according to the constitutions of peoples and nations: spiritual he hath changed from the national in one figurative land of Canaan, to particular and congregational churches all the world over; which order spiritual, natural or civil, to confound and abrogate, is to exalt mans folly against the most holy and incomprehensible wisdome of God, etc.25

It was on this point that Williams scored one of his most telling blows and indicated why it was necessary for Cotton to continue to seek to refute him. Cotton's entire case was built on the fragile foundation of a curious method of interpreting the Scriptures. Since—in Cotton's view—New England was now the favored Canaan of God and he was the chief spokesman of the "divinely appointed" magistrates of the Bay Colony, his word was highly authoritative. If the magistrate is God ordained, he should have power in God's things.26 He fully believed that men—even Roger Williams—were amenable to reason and that the central doctrines of his brand of Christianity were clear and reasonable. When these doctrines were explained by a competent

25 Ibid., p. 80.

26 Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 104.
teacher—Cotton being the most competent—no man could remain unconvinced except by suppressing the urging of his own conscience. Behind him stood the united voice of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. On their own ground their logic was invincible.

But Roger Williams no longer stood on their ground or before the judgment bar of their General Court. They could not silence him in Massachusetts, and it became increasingly apparent that it was even more difficult to silence him in Rhode Island. His logic was not institutionally supported as was that of John Cotton. He was one of the few men of his century in American history that could speak the logic of the individual spirit. He did not need an institution to back him up. He had Jesus Christ, the Bible, and his own sense of truth. His was the logic of individualism—the logic of the pioneer of radicalism and dissent in America.

If John Cotton could not convince Roger Williams of his error and bring him to repentance—apparently Cotton never stopped believing that he could convince Williams—at least he could weaken Williams' character and his case so that others would not be led astray by it. He used a debate strategy that is not uncommon in his reply to the letter that Williams had written to him. After defending his position in the matter of the first contention mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—that the banishment of Williams proved that the Massachusetts Bay Colony practiced persecution for cause of conscience—he concludes by accusing Williams of being prejudiced.

Let no man take it amiss, that . . . I intimate, the
Conscience of Mr. Williams in this case to be leavened with overmuch prejudice. For if extreme prejudice were not predominant in him in this case, I should stand amazed how a man of understanding could out of such Conclusions make up this Inference, which he gives in the Title of the Chapt. pag. 7. That I doe professedly maintaine Persecution for Cause of Conscience. I that doe expressly, professedly deny Persecution of any, even of Hereticks, unlesse it be when they come to persist in heresie, after conviction, against conscience; how can I be said to maintaine Persecution for Cause of Conscience? But oh the wofull perverseness and blindnesse of a Conscience, when it is left of God, to be so farre transported with prejudice, as to judge a Cause of Conscience, and a cause against Conscience to be all one.27

Later he states that Williams was guilty of misquotation of Scripture. Williams had mentioned Titus when he meant Timothy. Cotton observes that the mistake was not really material to the argument, but the fact that he mentions it—as he did many others that may have been printer's errors—indicates that Cotton felt that the interjection of such information into the minds of the readers was important to his strategy. By associating Williams with error he hoped to discredit his testimony. In the same paragraph Cotton sought to cast himself in a sympathetic light in the reader's mind by inferring his own openmindedness.

But let him produce one testimony of holy Scripture (rightly understood, and applied) against the advice, and voyce of those Elders, and Brethren, and then though he be but one (yea though that one were but a Mechanick too) we shall gratifie his demand, and (by the Grace of Christ) be ready rather to hearken to him, then require that he should hearken to us.28

Another interesting example of Cotton's debate strategy arose

27Williams, II, 30.
28Ibid., pp. 36-37.
out of his attempt to exonerate himself from Williams' charges related to the banishment proceedings against Williams in 1635. He repeatedly reminds the reader that he was not personally involved in Williams' banishment—in fact, had advised moderation. If any persecution was being done, it was Williams who was punishing Cotton by the repetition of these unfair accusations. He sought to refute Williams' contention that the civil state did not have the right to execute such powers in spiritual matters. Cotton states, "Let him make it appeare, that Christ hath not committed the Ministry of the Gospel to us; and wee shall give place to others whom Christ shall send." But—says Cotton—until Williams proves such to be the case, we will continue to exercise our God-given power. In pursuing this phase of the argument Williams had exercised one of his most effective debate procedures—the rhetorical question. He asked if it were not true that there were places where the Apostles were forbidden to preach. The inference that Williams intended was clearly that of refuting the Massachusetts Bay notion that they had universal authority. Cotton responds to Williams' arguments:

He wisely quoteth no Text for it, lest the quoting might be the confuting of himselfe. He knoweth, it was but for a time that others (according to the good pleasure of Christs will) might be served before them.

In following up his refutation of Williams' contentions against Bay Colony authority, Cotton states that Williams is greatly

29Ibid., p. 67.

30Ibid., p. 68.
lacking in evidence and that in conclusive points he is evasive. The following extended quotation from Cotton's reply to Williams' letter should illustrate clearly the Cotton method. The quotations are directly from Williams' letter.

"What though in all Civill Transactions, and in all the present disturbances of England, principall respect is had unto a right Commission, and right Order?" Let him shew wherein our Commission, or Order is defective, and reason would we should hearken to him.

But see the wariness, and slinesse of the Examiner: "I judge it not seasonable here, to entertaine the Dispute of the true Power, and call of Christ's Ministry." An handsome evasion. Now when the grounds of his Separation are questioned, now when he standeth upon his open justification, now in Print before the eyes of all men, now he thinketh it not seasonable, to entertaine any dispute of such things at all. Thus Felix would heare Paul when he had a more convenient time: and yet that was the very time and hour of his visitation, Acts 24.25.

His evasion of this Text in Prov. 11.26. (by comparing it with Deut. 17.12.) doth but adde a delusion to an evasion. (Deut. 17. I suppose he meaneth, though his printed copie say Deut. 15.) For it is a delusion to make the capital punishment prescribed against the presumptuous rejection of the Sentence of the chiefest Court in Israel, a figure of Excommunication in the Church of Christ.

For first, no Scripture of old or new Testament giveth any intimation of any such figure in this Law. And to make a judicall Law a figure without some light from some Scripture, is to make a mans selfe, wise above that which is written.31

The above argument concerning capital punishment was a corollary argument to Williams' contention that Old Testament Israel was only a type of the New Testament church and that literal fulfillment should not be expected. Cotton says that Williams' contention is based on a "delusion."31

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31 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
Although the modern reader may agree that the principle of typology that Williams used as a basic premise does appear to be a delusion, he may also agree with this writer that the Massachusetts Bay notion—that they were literally the embodiment of the nation of Israel reconstituted on the earth—appears to be no less of a delusion.

In the controversy concerning the extent of civil involvement in church matters, Cotton accuses Williams of being ambiguous and then proceeds to clear up the matter to suit his own logical patterns.

The Discusser, as often throughout his Discourse, so here he looseth himself, and the truth in ambiguities. Civil weapons are indeed improper, and unfitting in spiritual matters, to wit, in the dispensing, and pressing of spiritual matters for the immediate producing of spiritual ends, as for Magistrate to draw his sword to compel all his Subjects to the obedience of the faith in Christ, and to the profession of it.\(^{32}\)

Cotton went on to explain how it was possible to justify the use of the civil sword to defend the church. He illustrated with an analogy. Carpenters don't bring axes and hammers to build the spiritual element of the church, but they must use them when they want to build a pulpit for the declaration of truth. Just so is there a blending of the spiritual and physical in Cotton's view of church and state.

Cotton later accused Williams of the fallacy of begging the question—the stating of an argument in such a manner as to assume the truth of the argument without proving it.\(^{33}\) Williams had referred to

\(^{32}\)Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 94.

three kings—James I, Steven of Poland, and the King of Bohemia—who had made statements against persecution for cause of conscience.

Cotton replies:

This may goe for a truth, but not for an Answer. The Letter would Justifie Toleration of Religion from the judgement and speech of three kings. I Answered that was no Argument, for I could bring him Kings more in number, and greater in the sight of God and man, who judged it meet not to tolerat Hereticks, nor turbulent Schismaticks.

To this the Discusser Answereth, sometimes the Godly doe that which is evill, and the wicked that which is good. This I say is a Truth, but doth not take away my Answer, but by a Petitio Principy, a begging of the Question, That Kings allledged by him did that which was good, but the Kings allledged by me, though better persons, did that which was evill.

In the writer's opinion Cotton also appears guilty of begging the question with his statement that he can parade more and greater kings for evidence than can Williams yet does not bother to do so.

Williams responded to Cotton's charge and answered Cotton by saying the kings he had named could certainly not be considered petty or insignificant and that his evidence therefore stood.

The arguments of both Cotton and Williams followed similar patterns. Both were capable debaters in relation to their use of reasoning. Both tended to premise the majority of their arguments on interpretations of Scripture passages. The clash of contentions rose most often over these matters of interpretation, and the lack of

34 Williams, III, 181-82.

35 Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 60.

36 Williams, IV, 307-308.
factual material made the debate hard to evaluate as to the outcome. Williams tended to provide more extensive documentation than did Cotton. The reason for this may have involved Williams' awareness that he bore the burden of proof and therefore had to supply more thorough documentation than did Cotton. He may also have been aware of a principle that Paul D. Brandes asserts, "It appears that the more hostile the audience is to the communication, the more detailed the documentation should be."37 There were times when both Cotton and Williams carried their contentions too far and argued over points that seemed quite petty and obscure.

It seems to this writer that both debaters handled their materials well. Williams did prove a need for a change and advocated a new procedure that is tenable to the modern mind. The problem came when Cotton answered the contentions of Williams. On the basis of the institutional logic of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Roger Williams was wrong in his premises and on the local scene John Cotton was declared to be winner beyond question. What Williams advocated was impossible for the colonial magistrates to accept. Although Williams found many in Rhode Island and in Old England who were in agreement with his contentions, it seems that the majority either favored Cotton or at least refused to accept the radical views that Williams presented. Roger Williams' primary responsibility to history apparently was to shake

the conformity of New England at its foundation and so weaken it that succeeding generations could topple the monarchy and build the young nation on the bedrock of democratic ideals. In the long view of over three centuries it appears that the final victory must be accorded to Roger Williams, America's first great dissenter.

Having considered in some detail the nature of arguments employed by Williams and Cotton, it seems to the writer that the matter of evidence can be discussed most profitably under the general area of invention later in this chapter.

The Debate in Colonial Perspective

Cambridge at the time of Cotton and Williams was characterized by Haller as follows:

In spite of everything that had been happening for a hundred years in thought, letters, religion, exploration and science, Cambridge still adhered to the medieval round of academic studies and procedures.38

An overview of the Cambridge curriculum at the time when John Milton entered was characteristic of the general emphasis of the period. The course of study and system of education was dictated by medieval tradition. Milton was expected under the direction of his tutor to learn rhetoric, logic, metaphysics, Latin and some Greek before proceeding bachelor of arts. After that he might go on to the study of theology, the degree of master, perhaps a fellowship, and, if he entered the church, ordination. He received no formal instruction in history, literature, mathematics or science. Academic success depended upon the skill and address a youth could command in public disputations on such topics as those

38Haller, p. 299.
Milton had to deal with in his own academic exercises, namely, whether there be resolution into first matter in the destruction of any substance, whether there are partial forms in an animal in addition to the whole, whether learning is more full of blessings than ignorance.\[^{39}\]

George V. Bohman described the classical pattern of the English and European universities as they were repeated in Harvard (1636) and other Colonial colleges: "In seventeenth century Harvard, the students spoke and were taught in Latin a curriculum of Greek and Semitic languages, mathematics, history, logic, ethics, and rhetoric, intended primarily for prospective ministers.\[^{40}\]

Wilbur Samuel Howell traced a mosaic of five dominant patterns of English rhetoric from the eighth to the seventeenth century. These five could be called briefly: Ciceronian, stylistic, formulatory, Ramistic and Baconian.\[^{41}\]

The Ciceronian concept placed emphasis upon the classical canons of Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory and Delivery. Stylistic rhetoric placed the major emphasis on Style while also continuing the use of the other canons. Formulatory rhetoric consisted of "a series of model compositions or model parts of compositions for guiding students in the practice of communication."\[^{42}\]

\[^{39}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 298.}\]
\[^{40}\text{Brigance (ed.), A History and Criticism of American Public Address, I, ll.}\]
\[^{41}\text{Wallace (ed.), A History of Speech Education in America, pp. 4-5. (This work should be consulted for an excellent study of these rhetorical backgrounds.)}\]
\[^{42}\text{Ibid., p. 23.}\]
In the period of our concern "the Ramistic pattern of rhetoric and dialectic constituted the dominant theory of communication in England." 43

The Ramistic theory of communication means two things. It means first that the three liberal arts, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, are severely departmentalized, and separated one from another, so that materials formerly claimed by two of them are made the exclusive and final property of one or the other. It means secondly that each of these liberal arts is arranged for the reader or student so that he encounters first the definition of the art he is mastering, then a statement dividing it into two main parts, then a treatise on one of those parts, and then a treatise on the other, each main part being divided and subdivided in its turn until finally the foundation terms and illustrations are set forth. 44

Even before Ramus the trivium--grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic--had been regarded as a total theory of communication. The aim of Ramus was to reform or "clean up" the medieval system. The Ramistic approach was an attempt to set forth a complete communication system that did not overlap in its areas. Ramus objected to having scholastic logic, the traditional rhetoric, and the conventional grammar of the day treating many of the same areas in each discipline. Both logic and rhetoric taught invention and arrangement as a part of their individual disciplines. Both rhetoric and grammar dealt with schemes and tropes--figures of speech. Such overlapping and redundancy seemed to be unnecessary in the thinking of Peter Ramus. He sought to produce a communications system that would do away with the repeated areas and be complete in itself. In the Ramistic system: Grammar is

43 Ibid., p. 28.
44 Ibid., pp. 28-29.
the art of speaking well; Rhetoric, the art of communicating well; Dialectic, the art of disputing well.\textsuperscript{45}

Ramus\-\[\text{\textae si\-}\text{t\textae}ic\] theory seemed to move in sequences of pairs. Ram-
\[\text{\textae si\-}\text{t\textae}ic\] grammar consisted of Etymology and Syntax. Ramistic dialectic
included Invention and Arrangement, and Ramistic rhetoric involved the
areas of Style and Delivery.

Never, as in the old stylistic pattern of English rheto-
\[\text{\textae ri\text{\textae}c}\text{\textae}c\] ric, did the Ramists permit tropes and figures to be classed
as grammatical and rhetorical, for that kind of thinking sug-
gested an untidy duplication between grammar and rhetoric, as
if distinctions had become blurred and confused. Never, as
in the system of scholastic learning, did the Ramists permit
rhetoricians to write upon Invention and Arrangement, since
that would mean a duplication between their art and dialec-
tic, which, as we noticed earlier, also claimed Invention
and Arrangement as their own. Never, as in the old Cicer-
nian theory of rhetoric, did the Ramists allow the theory of
the parts of an oration to be covered under the topic of In-
vention, since that would sanction a theft by Invention of
materials belonging properly to the topic of Arrangement.\textsuperscript{46}

The contribution of Frances Bacon to rhetorical theory was
basically in reaction to stylistic, Ciceronian, formulary, and Ram-
\[\text{\textae si\-}\text{t\textae}ic\] ic rhetoric and indicated a new future for communication theory.\textsuperscript{47}

However, the Ramistic concept had heaviest influence during
the period of the training of John Cotton and Roger Williams and thus
was of primary importance in understanding the communicative proce-
dures of the two men.

The logic of Ramus was in a sense, \#simply a schematic

\textsuperscript{45} Howell, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{46} Wallace (ed.), A History of Speech Education in America,
 pp. 28-29.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p. 33.
arrangement of logical terms. Its emphasis was always on laying
things out in a series. Howell pointed this out clearly from his
study of Ramus' own Dialectique:

The text proper of the Dialectique begins with a definition: Dialectic is the art of disputing well. Next comes a
brief comment on this definition, with citations from Plato
and Aristotle. Next comes the partition: Dialectic has two
parts, invention and Arrangement. Each of these terms is at
once defined, the definitions crisply discussed, and the lines
of difference between them established. Invention is then
made to assume the duty of explaining what arguments are and
where they dwell. Arguments are then classified as artificial
or inartificial: artificial arguments are divided into the
primary and the derivative primary; primary arguments are at
once given four species: the first species is at once given
four aspects. Now these four aspects constitute the first
cluster of Ramus' foundation terms. By this time we have
reached page 6 of a treatise which runs to 140 pages, and
Ramus' analysis of the forms of argument is ready to begin.
The rest of the work is as severely schematized as the part
I have just described. Divisions of material are always
enumerated with mathematical precision: transitions are
always marked, although abruptly, and without grace; illustra-
trations for each basic term appear with the regularity of
the refrain at the end of stanzas of a song.

The scholastic teaching of the period involved the student in
many disputations and declamations. Even lecture titles were cast in
question form. Both Williams and Cotton must have engaged in a great
deal of such oral communication.

To the Puritan the basic reason for education as a whole and
rhetoric in particular was to provide a means for communicating

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48 Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Cen-
tury (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1939), p. 125. (This book con-
tains excellent materials on English and American Ramistic theory.)

49 Wallace, p. 29.
religious truths. Thomas Hooker summarized the communicative responsibility of the office of Teacher or as he said "Doctor":

The aim and scope of the Doctor is, to informe the judgement, and to help forward the work of illumination, in the minde and understanding, and thereby to make way for the truth, that it may be settled and fastned upon the heart; and is therefore enjoyned, Rom. 12.7 to attend unto Teaching.50

Hooker stated that the Teacher's role was that of illumination --the auditor was to respond. It was the proper thing for John Cotton to instruct Roger Williams. The responsibility of Roger Williams was quite clear. He was to respond! If he did not, the responsibility lay not with the Teacher but with the auditor. Therefore, in refusing to repent after thorough illumination, Roger Williams was sinning against his own conscience.

The Teacher also had a responsibility in his preaching:

As to dwell upon the interpretation of Texts, so farre as the difficulty and intricacie thereof may require, and to clear it to the capacity of the meanest, because this is necessary to the information of the judgement.51

This concept was in itself one of the distinguishing characteristics of Puritan rhetoric. Much of the Anglican rhetoric remained florid and was thought by the Puritan to be elevated beyond the ordinary member of the congregation and quite impractical.52 It was vital that meanings be made clear by communicating them clearly, for response was dependent on understanding.

51 Ibid.
52 Haller, p. 23.
The special province of the Teacher was further defined by Hooker as being primarily persuasive in its intent:

To him it appertains to lay down a Platforme of wholesome words, and to deliver the fundamental points of Christian Faith, the principles of Religion, as the maine pillars of truth, which may underprop our apprehensions that they may not be carried aside with every wind of Doctrine, because this is necessary to the teaching.

To him it belongs to handle such controversies as are on foot, and doe arise betwixt the Church and Adversaries of the truth, to state them clearly, strongly, and solidly, to confute them out of the Word, and to convince such as bee the broachers and maintainers of them, because this is necessary for the information of the judgement.53

John Cotton assumed his responsibility in the matter of Roger Williams. As Dean of the New England clergy he had the task of entering into the debate with force and resolution. In a very real sense his authority as Teacher was involved. Even though Williams had been removed, the stain of failure was on Cotton. The ideal had been violated. Williams was supposed to yield to the truth. The debate widened and the audience widened until only the death of Cotton could terminate it. It was apparent that the rhetoric of John Cotton was motivated by a very strong persuasive intent.

Roger Williams did not need A Model of Church and Civil Power or A platform of church discipline to justify his course of action. He had his Bible and his understanding of what it taught. His own individual conscience would respond first to truth as God's Spirit revealed the truth to him. Once resolute in his own conviction, he

53Hooker, pp. 21-22.
could wade unflinchingly into the battle, brandishing only the sword of the Spirit.

It is necessary, yea more honourable, godly and Christian, to fight the fight of faith, with religious and spiritual Artillery, and to contend earnestly for the faith of Jesus, once delivered to saints against all opposers, and the gates of earth and hell, men or devils, yea against Paul himself, or an Angell from heaven, if he bring any other faith or doctrine. Jude vers 4. Gal. 1.8.54

It was apparent from the list Williams composed that he feared neither Teacher, Bishop, Pope or King. He would do battle with mortal or "angell from heaven." His right to so speak he set forth clearly in The Hireling Ministry None of Christs and in addition gave a clear picture of how thoroughly he had analyzed his audience:

I humbly acknowledge (as to personal worth) I deal with men for many excellent gifts elevated above the common rank of men; yea, and for personal holiness (many of them) worthy of all true Christian love and honor, in which respects, when I look down upon myself, I am really persuaded to acknowledge my unworthiness to hold a candle or book unto them. And yet, if I give flattering titles unto men, my Maker (saith Elihu) would quickly take me away; and why therefore (since I have not been altogether a stranger to the learning of the Egyptians, and have trod the hopefulest paths to worldly preferments, which for Christ's sake I have forsaken), since I know what it is to study, to preach, to be an elder, to be applauded—and yet also what it is also to tug at the ear, to dig with the spade, and plow and labor and travel day and night amongst English, amongst barbarians—why should I not be humbly bold to give my witness faithfully, to give my counsel effectually, and to persuade with some truly pious and conscientious spirits rather to turn to law, to physic, to soldiery, to educating of children, to digging (and yet not cease from prophesying), rather than to live under the slavery—yea, and the censure (from Christ Jesus and His saints, and also)—of a mercenary and hireling ministry.55

54 Blair, Hornberger and Stewart, p. 142. (From The Blody Tenent).

55 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 197.
Roger Williams had stepped out boldly to a new kind of freedom for the day in which he lived—the freedom to speak as an individual. He had paid the price that that freedom had exacted. Having once tasted the fruit of this freedom, he could not return again to less. Perhaps here was the source of the "rockie strength" that enabled him to face overwhelming odds and retain his dedication to truth as he saw it. Here, too, may lie the secret of his prolonged dissent. If the fruit of freedom was sweet to his soul, it could also be sweet to others. His persuasive intent was clear. Even the General Court of Massachusetts might come to appreciate the truth as he saw it if he could engage them in oral debate again. In a letter to them, dated October, 1651, he stated:

>Who knows but upon humble and Christian debatements and agitations, not only I, but your honored selves, may yet see cause to put our mouths in the dust together, as touching the present controversies about the Christian worship.

>Yet if it please this honored Court to depute two or three of yourselves to receive and debate mine answer to this objection, I hope (through God's assistance) to make it apparent, yet I go not as an enemy to the Massachusetts, but as a professed instrument of a peaceable and honorable end of the sad controversy, and as an humble servant, rather than as an enemy, to this honored Government of the Massachusetts.56

Since the Bay Colony was unwilling to debate orally, the controversy must be continued in the only form available—that of the pamphlet.

Hudson agreed that the purposes of most Colonial communications were persuasive and emphasized the influence of Ramean logics

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56 Williams, VI, 233.
and rhetorics. In laying the foundation for his study of Invention he stated:

The rhetorical advice of the New England clergy in the first fifty years of the theocracy contained no new ideas, but rather new applications of traditional ideas. Herein lies the individuality of the New England rhetoric. It was not a discovery of a new world of rhetoric, but a new use for the old rhetoric. 57

The basic considerations in Colonial invention were found to be:

First, to aid the minister to obtain his own understanding and conviction, and, second, to discover the means whereby the congregation could be persuaded. This was not an easy task when applied to theology. 58

However difficult the task, the rhetorical systems of invention must be linked with theology. Haller called it "the Rhetoric of the Spirit." 59 It was "sacred logic," and the hunting ground for ideas was the Bible.

Its logic differed little from the logic of the day. It was a system of analysis and discovery—the application of a set of topics to Biblical statements for the purpose of uncovering all the "notions," i.e., meanings or ideas. The system also included the composing of the ideas uncovered into convincing arguments. 60

The presence of the Spirit of God in all of this was important. Williams could only hope to be successful in persuasion "through God's assistance." John Cotton felt he, too, was a man led

58 Ibid., p. 217.
59 Haller, pp. 128-172.
60 Hudson, p. 217.
by God. He was first of all a "physician of the soul." The Puritan prayed first and then went to the Bible to hunt for his evidence. When he arranged his arguments, he kept himself in an attitude of dependence upon God.

No Puritan ever believed that logic of itself could redeem. Many learned doctors were obviously outside the Covenant of Grace, and many who were uninstructed in dialectic were clearly sanctified. But since logic was a fragment of the divine mind, the saints, being joined to the divinity, must become logical. According to the doctrine of imperfect regeneration they would no more achieve perfect logicality than they would come to flawless holiness: nevertheless, by receiving grace they regained something of Adam's original power to reason correctly. They learned the rules and methods of study, and they were given an ability to use them by conversion. God demands that men judge between truth and falsehood, and Scripture is not addressed to irrational beings. Puritan piety was formulated in logic and encased in dialectic; it was vindicated by demonstration and united to knowledge.

Perhaps enough has been said above to indicate the sources of "understanding and conviction" in the minds of Cotton and Williams. The Bible was authoritative evidence and the means of persuasion were based on Biblical proofs. One clear demonstration of this was the matter of "the want of fit matter of our Church" which John Cotton says in his Letter to Williams turned Williams off from fellowshiping with them. Whether Cotton's knowledge on this point came from a previous letter written by Williams or was remembered from the oral debate before the General Court is not indicated. The arguments

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61 Ziff, p. 31.
63 Williams, I, 299.
relate to Williams' basic contention—that the Bay Colony was guilty of persecution since they had banished him. Williams argued that the Bay Colony lacked the authority to so treat him because their church was essentially impure. Here he was pressing the claims of his Separatist position—that a pure church must be composed of members who had severed all relations with the mother church. Cotton quotes Williams:

You acknowledge (as you say) with joy that godly persons are the visible matter of these Churches, but yet you see not that godly persons are matter fitted to constitute a Church, no more then trees or Quarries are fit matter proportioned to the building.64

While this contention appears to be almost meaningless to the modern reader, the true meaning emerges as Cotton presents his response:

Answ. This exception seemeth to imply a contradiction to it selfe, for if the matter of our Churches be as you say godly persons, they are not then as trees unfelled, or stones unhewn. Godlinesse cutteth men downe from the former roote, and Heweth them out of the pit of corrupt nature, and fitteth them for fellowship with Christ and with his people.

You object, first, a necessity lying upon godly men before they can be fit matter for Church fellowship, to see, bewail, repent, and come out of the false Churches ministry, worship and government, according to Scriptures, Isa. 52.11, 2. Cor. 17. Revel. 18.4. And those this to be done not by a locall removall or contrary practise, etc. but by a deliverance of the soule, understanding, minde, conscience, judgement, will and affections.65

In debate fashion Cotton went on to grant agreement in some areas and to deny agreement in others.

Answ. 1. We grant it is not locall removall from former pollutions, or contrary practise, that fitteth us for fellowship.

64Ibid.

65Ibid., pp. 299-300.
with Christ and his Church, but that it is necessary also that we doe repent of such former pollutions wherein we have been defiled and inthralled.\(^{66}\)

Cotton proceeds to set forth his rationale for the middle way. He affirms that it is necessary for repentance to be made for former apostasy but that it is not necessary to go as far as Williams had declared. Williams demanded total repentance and total separation. Cotton requires only that there be an awareness and repentance for those areas in which the Bay Colony church and the mother church in England differ.

**Answ. 2.** We deny that it is necessary to Church fellowship (to wit, so necessary as that without it, a Church cannot be) that the members admitted thereunto should all of them see, expressly bewail all the pollutions which they have been defiled with in the former Church—fellowship, ministry, worship, government. If they see and bewail so much of their former pollutions as did enthrall them to Antichrist, as to separate them from Christ, and be ready in preparation of heart, as they shall see more light, so to hate more and more every false way.\(^{67}\)

Williams responds in characteristic fashion. He quotes Cotton word for word in his *Answer*, and with extreme care he answers the arguments of Cotton in their finest nuances:

**Ans.** Here I desire 3. things may be observed: First Mr. Cottons own confession of that two-fold church estate, worship, etc. the former false, or else why to be so bewailed and forsaken; the second true, to be imbraced and submitted to.

Secondly, his own confession of that which a little before he would make so odious in me to hold, viz. that Gods people may be so farre inthralled to Antichrist, as to

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\(^{66}\)Ibid., p. 300.

\(^{67}\)Ibid.
separate them from Christ: for saith he, If they see and bewaile so much of their former pollutions, as did inthral them to Antichrist, so as to separate them from Christ.\footnote{Ibid., p. 354.}

At this point Williams was careful to point out what he considered a "fallacie" in Cotton's arguments:

Thirdly I observe how easilie a soule may wander in his generalls, for thus he writes, Though they see not all the pollutions wherewith they have been defiled in the former Church—fellowship. Again if they see so much as did in­­thral them to Antichrist, and separate them from Christ. And yet he expresseth nothing of that all the pollutions, nor what so much is as will separate them from Christ. Hence upon that former distinction that Christ in visible Worship is Christ: I demand, Whether if a godly person remaine a member of a falsly constituted Church, and so consequently (in that respect) of a false Christ, whether in visible wor­­ship he be not separate from the true Christ?\footnote{Ibid.}

In Williams' mind there was no middle ground. He held that separation from the false Christ was absolutely necessary before there could be union with the true. Cotton's response was characteristic:

"Why should he blame wandering in Generalitie in the Answer, when his own Objection wandereth in the like Generalities."\footnote{Williams, II, 118.}

Also characteristic of the controversy was the elongated prose debating the minutiae of Scriptural meanings. Cotton asserted:

To the places of Scripture which you object, Isa. 52.11. 2 Cor. 6.17. Revel. 18.4. we answer, two of them make nothing to your purpose, for that of Essay and the other of the Revelation, speake of locall separation, which yourself knoweth we have made, and yet you say you doe not apprehend that to be sufficient. As for that place of the Corinthians, it onely requireth comming out from Idolaters in the fellowship of their Idolatry. No marriages were they to make with them: no
feasts were they to hold with them in the Idols Temples: no
intimate familiaritie were they to maintain with them: nor
any fellowship were they to keepe with them in the unfruit-
full workes of darknesse.71

Cotton proceeded to expand the argument from the Corinthian
passage to the place where perhaps only the mind trained in the intri-
cacies of Ramistic dialectic could follow.

Again with what might be called "Ramistic patience" Roger Wil-
liams quotes the entire section and proceeds to tear it apart piece by
piece. Here Williams returned to his basic premise of typology. Only
a portion of the answer is necessary to reveal the nature of his argu-
mentation:

But saith Mr. Cotton two of those Scriptures alleged by
me (Isa. 52.11 Revel. 18.4. which I brought to prove a neces-
sitie of leaving the false, before a joyning to the true
Church) they speake of locall separation, which (saith he)
your selfe know we have made.

For that locall and typicall separation from Babylon,
Isa. 52. I could not well have beleeved that Mr. Cotton or
any would make that comming forth of Babel in the antitype,
Rev. 18.4. to be locall and materiall also. What civill
State, Nation or Countrey in the world, in the antitype,
must now be called Babel? Certainly, if any, then Babel it
selfe properly so called: but there we find (as before) a
true church of Jesus Christ, I Pet. 5.72

If the answer of Cotton to Williams' original statements
seemed extended, the answer of Williams to Cotton's answer must be
considered as stretching almost into oblivion. Cotton's Letter con-
tained fifteen pages. Williams' answer to the Letter contained
eighty-two pages. The extended arguments of The Bloudy Tenent, The

71 Ibid., p. 301.
72 Ibid., p. 360.
Bloudy Tenent Washed, and The Bloudy Tenent yet More Bloudy lasted for page upon page with exactitude piled upon exactitude until one would think that there were no more room for words or thoughts, and then it continued still. Such was the flow of ideas in the Ramistic dialectic of Puritan controversy.

One area of significance apart from purely Scriptural evidence was that of the testimony of figures in church and secular history. One of Cotton's "Heads of Reasons" was taken from the profession and practice of famous kings: King James, Stephen of Poland and the King of Bohemia.73 Williams counters in The Bloudy Tenent by quoting an opposing view by the same kings and presenting others—"we can name you more and greater"74—who backed up his case: he documented his contentions with references, evidently drawn from his research.

Constantine the Great at the request of the General Council of Nice, banished Arrius with some of his fellows. Sojom. lib. 1. Ecclif. Hist. cap 19.20. The same Constantine made a severe Law against the Donatists. And the like proceedings against them were used by Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius, as Augustine reported in Epist. 166. Only Julian the Apostate granted liberty to Heretickes as well as to Pagans, that he might by tolerating all weeds to grow, choke the vitals of Christianity, which was also the practice and sin of Valens the Arrian.

Queen Elizabeth, as famous for her government as any of the former, it is well knowne what Lawes she made and exe­cuted against Papists. Yea and King James (one of your own witnesses) though he was slow in proceeding against Papists (as you say) for conscience sake, yet you are not ignorant

73 Williams, III, 46.

74 Ibid., p. 47.
how sharply and severely he punished those whom the malignant world calleth Puritaines, men of more conscience and better faith than he tolerated.75

Cotton and Williams also argued over the statements of "Writ-ers." The list included many that must have had local prominence but have dropped from view today. Among those still popularly remembered were: Tertullian, Luther, Augustine, Bernard, Calvin, and Beza.76 It was quite obvious that almost all of these sources were drawn from church history. Williams wrote of the bloodshed caused by persecution for cause of conscience and drew many examples from other areas of church history:

Most memorable is the famous history of the Waldenses and Abingenses, those famous Witnesses of Jesus Christ, who rising from Waldo at Lyons in France (1160.) spread over France, Italy, Germany, and almost all Countries, into thousands and ten thousands, making separation from the Pope and Church of Rome. . . . These fought many Battels with various success, and had the assistance and protection of divers great Princes against three succeeding Popes and their Armies, but after mutuall slaughters and miseries too-both sides, the finall successe of victory fell to the Pope-dome and Romish Church in the utter extirpation of those famous Waldensian witnesses.77

As if to add to the confusion of his Ramistic dialectic, Williams chose as his scheme of arrangement for The Bloudy Tenent the form of the dialogue. The full title was: The Bloudy Tenent of Per-
secution, for cause of Conscience, discussed, in a Conference betweene

75 Ibid., pp. 47-48.
76 Ibid., pp. 48-54.
77 Ibid., p. 190.
Truth and Peace. Who, in all tender Affection, present to the High Court of Parliament, (as the Result of their Discourse) these, (amongst other Passages) of highest consideration.

Perry Miller states:

The greatest of Williams' efforts, The Bloudy Tenent and The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody, belong to an age when disputation stretched out interminably, when no controversialist dared to rest until he had refuted every most minute point of his antagonist. Because Williams elected to cast his forensic in the form of dialogues, they are more confusing, and for long stretches more tedious, than even the average polemic of the time.78

John Cotton's method of arrangement was much more simple. In The Bloudy Tenent Washed he extracted the central points of clash from The Bloody Tenent, quoted them in capsule form, and generally refuted them in a brief paragraph. His system of arrangement simply followed chapter by chapter through The Bloudy Tenent with the exception that at times he combined several of Williams' chapters and answered in one of his own.

Since the overall pattern of arrangement of ideas used by both Cotton and Williams has been discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it seems feasible to proceed to the next area of investigation—that of rhetoric.

According to Ramistic concepts when one leaves invention and arrangement and turns to a consideration of style, he leaves the province of dialectic and enters the sphere of rhetoric. Rhetoric consisted of style and delivery according to the Ramistic mode. Since

78 Miller, Roger Williams, p. vi.
delivery was not a factor in the controversy, due to the fact that the vehicle of communication was the pen, this paper shall deal exclusively with style. Concerning style Howell states:

Ramus' reformed rhetoric, which began on the assumption that Invention and Arrangement belonged to dialectic, and continued on the assumption that Style and Delivery were purely and properly rhetorical, was written out by his good friend and colleague, Audomarus Talaeus. . . . Talaeus' rhetorical system, published at Paris in 1544 as the Institutiones Oratoriae, and later as the Rhetorica, accepts explicitly these two assumptions of Ramus, and proceeds to reduce Style as the first part of the new rhetoric to Tropes and Figures, whereas Delivery, the second part of the new rhetoric, is made to consist of Voice and Gesture.\(^79\)

This was a greatly abbreviated form of rhetorical theory. Dialectic dominated the structure of the classical concepts, and rhetoric was left with only around twenty-five tropes and figures. Talaeus deals with these in sixty pages and devotes the rest of his work to voice and gesture.\(^80\) Perry Miller discusses at length the influence of Aristotelian rhetorical concepts upon the Puritans of New England and concludes that the dominant influence upon their thinking came from Ramistic theory. He seemed to feel that the popularity of Ramistic dialectic and rhetoric was its simplicity and system which was easy to teach and apply. He summarizes the Ramistic view:

With logic the meaning of Scripture may be extracted, with grammar it may be phrased so that men may grasp it, and with rhetoric its doctrines may be insinuated into their brains and hearts. If by logic the ministers deciphered the will of God, by rhetoric they communicated their knowledge; if by logic men were rescued from the chaos of depravity, by

\(^{79}\)Wallace, p. 31.

\(^{80}\)Ibid., p. 50.
rhetoric they were made capable of society, of an ecclesiastical as well as a political order. Just as the Puritans, starting from the Christian doctrine of the fall, came to venerate logic as an instrument of their recovery, so they reached an equally profound respect for rhetoric as the divinely given science for making sermons powerful means of regeneration. Sermons could operate as means because their rhetoric worked upon the rational and particularly upon the sensible souls of men. Rhetoric could not be a mere collection of empirical rules for prose composition, accumulated from the experience of previous writers and speakers; it was a codification of God's eternal wisdom in a form adapted to the deepest necessities of human nature.81

The province of emotional appeal appeared to have been left to rhetoric. The Puritan preacher “was to eschew rhetoric in opening his text, in stating his doctrine, and to employ it sparingly in the reasons, but in the applications he was free to call upon all the tropes and figures he knew.” Terms such as “Bloudy Tenent,” “the bloud of the Lambe,” “soul rape,” “idolatrous,” “false prophets” carried connotative symbolisms that could stir the emotions of most Puritans.

The Puritan was never to let his figures dominate but must keep them ever subordinate to the Bible. The truth must be presented plainly without great adornment but with a sufficient amount to move the heart. This was the rhetoric of “the plain style.” Figures could include such “flowers of speech” as exclamation, interrogation, compellation, apostrophe, and dialogue.84

82 Ibid., p. 347.
83 Ibid., pp. 331-362.
84 Ibid., p. 347.
The trope was more appealing to learned auditors while the figure was most appealing to the unlearned.

The most useful tropes, in the Puritan view, were those which could be worked into the text after the abstract proposition had been posed: similes, metaphors, illustrations, and examples. By facing their doctrines with comparisons, by announcing flatly that this truth is comparable to this fact or to such and such an experience, they could achieve the ends of rhetoric, appeal to the sensible soul by a sensory image, and yet the doctrine would not be submerged in the rhetoric.65

Haller gave an interesting insight into the Puritan Style when he said that even though the Puritans professed to set aside citation of human authors and to depend only on the Scriptures there was a fuller story behind the scenes:

They even held up a perfectly arid and schematic dialectic as the ideal mode of discourse—knowing better, it must be said, than to practice it on every occasion. The truth was that from the beginning they shared fully the Elizabethan love of witty phrase and poetic image, and far from abandoning such devices developed them in their own way, sometimes to extravagant lengths. Literary allusions, conscious Euphuisms, far-fetched metaphysical metaphors, these they laid aside in favor of homely similes, parables, exempla, moral emblems and the like. The result was a modified but not less imaginative style arising naturally out of medieval and Elizabethan practices in response to the needs and tastes of the audiences upon which the preachers depended for personal support as well as the eventual triumph of their cause.66

The authorized version of the Bible, first published in 1611, had helped to render the people literate and articulate as never before. This new impact upon the people also had its impact upon the Puritan preachers and their style:

85 Ibid., p. 356.
86 Haller, p. 23.
The style in which the spiritual brethren chose to address the new vernacular public was called plain English not because it was unimaginative or in the larger sense unliterary but because it was designed to be intelligible and moving to plain people.87

Haller was careful to point out in this regard that many of the controversial writings of the period followed a style somewhat different from the style used for sermons. In the technical treatises the style could become "complicated, interminable and arid in the extreme." These were only for the "initiated" who read and pondered them. "By the general run of godly folk, they were regarded with respect. But for the common public they were as a rule too expensive to buy, too dull to read and too difficult to understand."88 It appeared, however, that the common folk did want to feel that their preachers were capable of such dialectic and were able to use it successfully when the challenge of controversy arose at the ministerial level.

Kenneth B. Murdock stated that when John Cotton was an Anglican at Cambridge he was famous for his brilliant sermons, but when he became a Puritan he chose instead to preach in a "plain, honest" style.89 Cotton "scorned the flaunting wit and rhetoric" of many of the preachers of the Anglican communion.90

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87 Ibid., p. 133.
88 Ibid., p. 129.
90 Haller, p. 131.
He could speak plainly to Williams:

I speak not these things (the God of Truth is my witnes) to add affliction to your affliction, but (if it were the holy will of God) to move you to a more serious sight of your sin, and of the justice of Gods hand against it.\(^1\)

He could also ornament with a metaphor: "Against your corrupt Doctrines, it pleased the Lord Jesus to fight against you with the sword of his mouth . . . in the mouthes and testimonies of the Churches and Brethren."\(^2\) He could also clarify with examples:

But you in stead of recoyling (as even Balaam offered to do in the like case) you chose rather to persist in your way, and to protest against all the Churches and Brethren that in your way: and thus the good hand of Christ that should have humbled you, hardened you therein, and quickned you onely to see failings (yea intolerable errors) in all the churches and brethren, rather than in your self.\(^3\)

Balaam was a character of the Old Testament famous for his hard-headed rebellion against the advice of God. Balaam would yield--but not Roger Williams.

Richard M. Gummere, looking at the controversy from the stand-

point of a classicist, observes:

Cotton's illustrations are mainly Biblical and patristic, dealing with Greek New Testament terminology. What is the meaning of the "bitterness" that came between Paul and Barnabas? How do we define, sin, service, teaching, proof, refutation, love, faith, belief? What is the significance of the Greek word for "subverted"? Both men agree that these fine distinctions must be taken seriously. Extrapelia, or courtesy, was all very well; but there should be no mixing of jest with earnestness. . . . Cotton is an opponent of all frivolity. . . . His Reply to Mr. Williams is full of brief

\(^{91}\) Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 2.

\(^{92}\) Ibid.

\(^{93}\) Ibid.
coinages, tossed off from his store of theology and classics. His Providence rival is authades, "self-pleasing, selfe-full, self-willed," like some of the bishops Paul describes in the first chapter of Titus.94

In the eyes of classicist Gummere, "Roger Williams goes farther afield for his supporting material and much deeper into classical sources."95 He goes on to point out many classical references, but admits that they are mostly parenthetical.

It would be monotonous to record all the parenthetical classical allusions, mostly quoted from memory, and the almost macaronic coinages found not only in the two pamphlets we have discussed, but also in Williams' private correspondence. They often occur as afterthoughts, to drive home his arguments.96

Gummere concludes his study of Williams and Cotton with an interesting comparison:

These reactions of Cotton and Williams to the Greco-Roman tradition lead us to several conclusions. Cotton, highly trained in the ancient languages, abjured them in favor of a conservative theology, a settled position of leadership, and strict theologically oriented government. Williams, just as earnest in religious matters, combined his use of mystical symbolism with a wide sweep of classical illustration, going far afield into linguistics, law, and diplomacy. Their differing beliefs, equally sincere, are an early landmark in the "segregation" controversy, the question of the separation of the civil and the religious function. Neither can be neglected as a man of weight in public affairs. Their debate, full of the dogmas and doctrines of a bygone age, reveals the difference between the oligarchic, or aristocratic, policy of the leading guardian of New England puritanism and the belief in democracy and popular will which found an outlet in the Providence experiment.97

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95 Ibid., p. 49.
96 Ibid., p. 53.
97 Ibid., pp. 53-54.
It is apparent from Gummere's evaluations that he was somewhat influenced by the romantic view of Williams' nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century critics. He failed to see the pervasive Puritan foundations of Williams' thinking and the dominance of Biblical sources for Williams' arguments. He was accurate in his comparison of Cotton and Williams in relation to the repeated parenthetical use of classical allusions. However, he seemed to over-emphasize the importance of these concepts in the structure of Williams' rhetoric. A study of Williams' writings did not lead this writer to feel that the classical illustrations of Roger Williams were of significance in the controversy.

Williams used many examples from the New Testament and then made application of these examples to the point he was making. One of his favorite subjects for illustration and example was St. Paul:

If Paul had appealed to Caesar in spiritual respects, hee had greatly prophaned the holy name of God in holy things, in so improper and vaune a prostitution of spirituall things to carnall and naturall judgements, which are not able to compre­hend spiritual matters, which are alone spiritually discerned, I Cor. 2.

And yet Caesar (as a civill supreme Magistrate) ought to defend Paul from Civill violence, and slanderous accusations about sedition, mutiny, civill disobedience, etc. And in that sense who doubts but God's people may appeale to the Romane Caesar, an Egyptian Pharoah, a Philistian Abimelecke, an Assyrian Mabuchadnezzar, the great Mogol, Prester John, the great Turk, or an Indian Sachim?98

Williams was always ready to use a simile drawn from the Bible:

98 Williams, III, 159.
I doubt not but that what Mr. Cotton and others did in procuring my sorrowes was not without some regret and reluctance of conscience and affection (as like it is that David could not procure Uriahs death, nor Asa imprison the Prophet with a quiet and free conscience.)

At times Williams could be quite creative in his choice of simile and metaphor. One excellent example, perhaps drawn from his experience before the General Court of Massachusetts, was used when he dealt with Cotton's contention that civil magistrates should first send a heretic to the church for the healing of his conscience:

If a man thus bound be sent to a church to be healed in his conscience, either he is an heretic or he is not. Admit he be: yet he disputes in fear, as the poor thief, the mouse, disputes with a terrible persecuting cat, who while she seems to play and gently toss, yet the conclusion is a proud, insulting, and devouring cruelty. If no heretic but an innocent and faithful witness of any truth of Jesus: disputes he not as a lamb in the lion's paw, being sure in the end to be torn in pieces?

Williams was capable of extending his figures quite dramatically, especially when he came to describing the glories of full liberty of conscience and the glory of Christ. He affirmed that his own policy was in agreement with that of Christ:

I affirm that that state policy and state necessity which (for the peace of the state and preventing of rivers of civil blood) permits the consciences of men will be found to agree most punctually with the rules of the best politician that ever the world saw, the King of Kings and Lord of lords, in comparison of whom Solomon himself had but a drop of wisdom, compared to Christ's ocean, and was but a farthing candle compared with the all and ever glorious Son of righteousness.

99 Ibid., I, 328.
100 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 148.
101 Ibid., p. 135.
Puritan or no Puritan, at times Williams' figures become quite pointed and attention catching. He stated flatly concerning his favorite subject:

That the Christian Church doth not persecute: no more then a Lilie doth scratch the Thornes, or a Lambe pursue and tear the Wolves, or a Turtle dove hunt the Hawkes and Eagles, or a chaste and modest Virgin fight and scratch like whores and harlots.102

In Queries of Highest Consideration he used an even more vivid simile—that he would repeat many times—to prove how dangerous persecution for cause of conscience was and how much he despised it.

And oh! since the commonweal cannot without a spiritual rape force the consciences of all to one worship, oh, that it may never commit that rape in forcing the consciences of all men to one worship which a stronger arm and sword may soon (as formerly) arise to alter.103

The contention that persecution for cause of conscience was against the true nature of the church was one of Williams' favorites. In Queries of Highest Consideration he combined this concept with another rhetorical method that he employed repeatedly—the question.

We query how you can profess and swear to persecute all others as schismatics, heretics, etc., that believe they see a further light and dare not join with either of your churches? Whether the Lamb's wife have received any such commission or disposition from the Lamb her husband so to practice? . . . It being the nature only of a wolf to hunt the lambs and sheep but impossible for a lamb or sheep, or a thousand flocks of sheep, to persecute one wolf? (We speak of spiritual sheep and spiritual wolves, for other wolves against the civil state, we profess it to be the duty of the civil state to persecute and suppress them.)104

102 Williams, III, 193.

103 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 83.

104 Ibid., p. 85.
Another stylistic trait of Roger Williams that needs to be illustrated was the use of the dramatic dialogue form that characterized *The Bloudy Tenent* and *The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody*. The reader should note Williams' play on words—he writes in milk—Cotton in blood. These words formed part of the introduction to *The Bloudy Tenent*:

Truth. Sweet Peace, what hast thou there?
Peace. Arguments against persecution for cause of conscience.
Truth. And what there?
Peace. An "Answer" to such arguments, contrarily maintaining such persecution for cause of conscience.

Truth. These arguments against such persecution, and the "Answer" pleading for it, written (as love hopes) from godly intentions, hearts, and hands, yet in a marvelous different style and manner: the argument against persecution in milk, the "Answer" for it (as I may say) in blood....

Peace. The "Answer" (though I hope out of milky pure intentions) is returned in blood: bloody and slaughterous conclusions, bloody to the souls of all men forced to the religion and worship which every civil state or commonweal agrees on and compels all subjects to in a dispersed uniformity.105

Many of the figures used by Williams were drawn from life on the sea. Ola Winslow affirmed that he grew up within "shouting distance of the harbor"106 in London. Certainly his many trips across the Atlantic must have left firm impressions on his mind. Since Providence was on the Narragansett Bay, he had many occasions to be on the water in the pursuit of his daily business with the English and the Indians. The most famous of these nautical figures was his extended metaphor of the ship—which formed one of the earliest views of how a democratic government might function with true liberties

105 Ibid., pp. 113-14.
106 Winslow, p. 20.
exercised. The reader should note a favorite stylistic trait of Williams in building a long series of parallel statements:

There goes many a ship to sea, with many hundred souls in one ship, whose weal and woe is common, and is a true picture of a commonwealth, or a human combination or society. It hath fallen out sometimes, that both papists and protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal I affirm, that all the liberty of conscience, that ever I pleaded for, turns upon these two hinges—that none of the papists, protestants, Jews, or Turks, be forced to come to the ship's prayers of worship, nor compelled from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practice any. I further add, that I never denied, that notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of the ship ought to command the ship's course, yea, and also command that justice, peace and sobriety, be kept and practiced, both among the seamen and all the passengers. If any of the seamen refuse to perform their services, or passengers to pay their freight, if any refuse to help, in person or purse, towards the common charges or defence, if any refuse to obey the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common peace or preservation; if any shall mutiny and rise up against their commanders and officers; if any should preach or write that there ought to be no commanders or officers, because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters nor officers, no laws nor orders, nor corrections nor punishments;—I say, I never denied but in such cases, whatever is pretended, the commander or commanders may judge, resist, compel and punish such transgressors, according to their deserts and merits.107

It should be noted that while Williams had many very fine passages of clear almost exalted prose, the reader must exercise great patience to dig them out of the rambling sentences and parenthetical statements. Without any attempt to justify Williams' faults of style, it could be said that most of his controversial writings were dashed off under harried circumstances; and all of them lacked the advantage of good printing.

107 Williams, VI, pp. 278-79.
In *The Bloudy Tenent Washed* John Cotton insinuated that Williams had "time and leisure-at-will" to set up images made from clay and "then shoot at them." Williams responded by giving a description of what his life was like. In Providence Williams had labored "day and night, at home and abroad, on the land and water, at the hoe, at the oar, for bread." In London where "he might have run the road of preferment" while doing his controversial writing, "his time was eaten up in attendance upon the service of the Parliament and city for the supply of the poor of the city with wood (during the stop of coal from Newcastle and the mutinies of the poor for firing)."

Concerning the publication of *Queries of Highest Consideration* and *The Bloudy Tenent* Perry Miller states:

The final publication of his retorts gives evidence of hasty writing and of still more hasty printing, but the words had been so long formulating and treasured up that Williams could indeed throw them pell-mell upon the paper. He was not a man of many ideas, and the intense concentration of these years centered him even more narrowly on the three or four he did possess. They are all present, at least by implication, in the Key, and they are asserted over and over again in the following works. Williams had the sort of mind which, once convinced, finds that truth improves with repetition.

There were evidences that Williams was not unaware of his problems of expression. In the conclusion of *The Bloudy Tenent* he had Peace say, "We have now (deare Truth) through the gracious hand of God

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108 Miller, Roger *Williams*, p. 176.


clambered up to the top of this our tedious Discourse."\textsuperscript{111} In a letter to Governor Winthrop dated June, 1638, Williams confessed: "I sometimes fear that my lines are as thick and over busy as the musketoes, etc., but your wisdom will connive, and your love will cover, etc."\textsuperscript{112} In spite of the problems of style Roger Williams manages to leave a clear understanding of his essential purposes in the mind of the reader. This clarity has given him a continuing place in the history and communication of great ideas.

The Debate in Ethical Perspective

The ethical appeal or ethos of the debaters in the controversy was an important aspect in understanding the debate and its influence. A recent justification for an experimental study of ethical appeal stated: "Since the days of Corax and Tisias rhetorical theorists have been concerned with the role of ethos in communication."\textsuperscript{113} In recent years the Aristotelian concept of ethical appeal with its modern interpretations has been tested, and a relationship has been established between a communicator's ethical appeal and his ability to influence an audience.\textsuperscript{114} A person with a high degree of ethos will find his ideas accepted more readily than one with low ethos. A

\textsuperscript{111}Williams, III, 423.

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., VI, 99.


\textsuperscript{114}Kenneth Andersen and Theodore Clevenger, Jr., "A Summary of Experimental Research in Ethos," Speech Monographs, XXX (June, 1963), 59-78.
recent study by King included among its conclusions that: "The auditor's evaluation of the speaker seems to influence whether or not he accepts the view of the speaker."\(^{115}\)

The ethos of Roger Williams and John Cotton had many areas of similarity. Both were Cambridge graduates and had shared somewhat equal educational backgrounds. Cotton was several years older than Williams and entered Trinity College of Cambridge in 1558 at the age of thirteen. He was an apt student and progressed rapidly to be fellow and head lecturer at Emmanuel.\(^{116}\) At the age of twenty-six he became pastor of the ancient church of St. Botolph in the town of Boston, Lincolnshire. He came to America in September of 1633, where he became Teacher of the church in Boston in Massachusetts.\(^{117}\) This was the same position that Roger Williams had refused in 1631.

The Cambridge background of Williams had been at Pembroke. While Anglican influences were strong at Pembroke, the power of Puritan thinking was having a great impact upon all of Cambridge during this time. Williams and Cotton had shared somewhat similar views and had known each other in England. Haller speaks of Williams as a "Cambridge friend" of Cotton.\(^{118}\)


\(^{116}\) Haller, p. 69.

\(^{117}\) Williams, I, 288.

\(^{118}\) Haller, p. 70.
Perhaps the most telling indication of the similarity of background and qualification was in the matter of the church at Boston in Massachusetts. It was quite evident that both Williams and Cotton had qualified for the office of Teacher in this church. The difference between a Pastor and a Teacher was described as follows:

The Pastors office properly, is to bend himself to exhortation.

The Teachers office to give himself to instruction in points of doctrine, explication of Scripture, confutation of error, etc.119

The office of Teacher was reserved for the highly qualified whose educational background and attainment enabled them to pass the tests of judgment imposed on them by their peers. There were also tests of a man's moral and spiritual qualities that had strong Biblical foundations.

It is meet, that before any be ordained or chosen officers, they should first be Tryed and proved; because hands are not suddenly to be laid upon any, and both Elders and Deacons must be of honest and good report.

The things in respect of which they are to be Tryed, are those gifts and virtues which the Scripture requireth in men, that are to be elected into such places. viz. that Elders must be blameless, sober, apt to teach, & endued with such other qualifications as are laid downe, I Tim:3 & 2. Tit:1, 6 to 9.120

Williams' initial impact upon the people of the Massachusetts Bay Colony was extremely favorable. There apparently had been some rumors of Williams' tendency to deviant views in England, and Miller


120 A platform of church discipline (Boston: By S. G., 1649), p. 9.
observed concerning the offer of the Boston church to Williams: "That he, despite the rumors, should be offered the post shows how great was his reputation for scholarship and piety." However, the key to understanding Williams' character was perhaps not so much in his "scholarship and piety" which qualified him to become Teacher at Boston as in his profound ability to make firm decisions disregarding the danger of losing position and prestige with his peers. He had the ability to turn down a promising offer and to stand for what he believed regardless of the consequences to himself. Ziff concluded from his study that John Cotton was fully convinced that he could sway Roger Williams from his erroneous ideas. Cotton's letters to Williams after the banishment were in a sincere effort to move him from his errors and unify opinion in New England. Williams' inability to compromise his convictions no matter what the cost might be gives us our clearest picture of the man. Williams alienated himself from the magistrates of the Bay Colony when in the words of John Cotton he "overheated" himself "in reasoning and disputing against the light of his truth." In the mind of John Cotton, Williams had banished himself by disobeying the light they had shed on his conscience.

While the Bay Colony could not live with him in their midst, it is possible that they could not have lived without Williams in

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121 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 25.
122 Ziff, pp. 88-89.
123 Williams, I, 298.
Rhode Island. He reminded them of this in his letter of October, 1651, to the General Court asking for the right to pass through Massachusetts to take a ship to England.

Please you to remember that ever since the time of my exile I have been (through God's help) a professed and known servant to this colony and all the colonies of the English in peace and war, so that scarce a week hath passed but some way or other I have been used as instrumental to the peace and spreading of the English plantings in this country.

In the Pequot troubles, receiving letters from this Government, I hazarded my life into extreme dangers, by laboring to prevent the league between the Pequots and the Narragansetts, and to work a league between the English and the Narragansetts, which work as an agent from this colony and all English in the land, I (through help from God) effected. The fruit thereof (as our much honored Mr. Winthrop, deceased, wrote to me) hath been peace to the English ever since.\textsuperscript{124}

Had the league between the Pequot Indians and the Narragansetts been effected, the Bay Colony—who would have been greatly outnumbered—might easily have been swept into the sea. Williams served as ambassador-without-portfolio for the Massachusetts Bay Colony almost all of his life. He was finally commissioned a Captain in the Colonial service (1675) and provided important intelligence during King Phillip's war.\textsuperscript{125}

The general opinion of the Bay Colony toward Roger Williams might be reflected in the opinion expressed by Sir William Martin in his letter to Governor Winthrop March 29, 1636:

I am sorry to heare of Mr. Williams's separation from you: His former good affections to you, and the plantations, were well known unto me and make me wonder now at his proceedings. I have wrote to him effectually to submit to better

\textsuperscript{124}Ibid., VI, 231-32.

\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., pp. 374-75.
judgments, especially to those whom formerly he reverenced and admired; at least to keepe the bond of peace inviolable. This hath been always my advice; and nothing conduceth more to the good of plantations. I pray shew him what lawfull favour you can, which may stand with the common good. He is passionate and precipitate, which may transport him into error, but I hope his integrity and good intentions will bring him at last into the waye of truth, and confirm him therein. In the meane time, I pray God to give him a right use of this affliction.126

William Gammell in his early biography of Williams (1846) gives an accurate summary of colonial opinion of Williams' ethos:

Even his worst enemies have never breathed a reproach upon his morals. Cotton Mather, who says, in his quaint folly, that he had a windmill in his head, yet admits that he had "the root of the matter" in his heart.127

Williams remained friends with many of the Bay Colony people and corresponded freely with them. His affection for Governor Winthrop was evident throughout his writings, and the feeling was returned by Winthrop. Masson says of him:

There, at the head of the Bay, close to this two-towned chaos of Providence immediately around him, was the Arch-Individualist, Roger Williams. He was the most lovable of men, certainly: he and the good and orderly Winthrop of Massachusetts could not but like each other.128

Roger Williams was a man that his peers in Massachusetts Bay respected for his godly character but one they cast from them as a result of his fatal flaw: Once Williams had formed a conviction of what was right he could never again be silent about it—nor could he stop


127 Gammell, pp. 202-203.

attempting to refute those who believed otherwise. In *The Hireling Ministry* he cries out:

> I did humbly apprehend my call from heaven not to hide my candle under a bed of ease and pleasure, or a bushel of gain and profit, but to set it on a candlestick of this public profession for the benefit of others and the praise of the Father of all lights and godliness.\(^\text{129}\)

While Williams may have had the praise of God for his expressive spirit, he certainly did not have the praise of the magistrates of the Bay Colony. As representative head of the magistrates, John Cotton could speak with authority and with a degree of personal ethos that seemed capable of swaying the opinions of all but Roger Williams. Reuben Guild, in his introductory remarks to Cotton's letter to Williams, says of Cotton:

> His history during this time is the history of the Colony. Such was his influence in establishing the order of the churches, and in moulding and directing social and political affairs that he has not unjustly been called the "patriarch of New England."\(^\text{130}\)

That John Cotton's personal ethos in Massachusetts was great could hardly be questioned. Perry Miller summarized his influence:

> Cotton, so widely renowned among Puritans in England and Calvinists on the Continent, became the symbol of the New England Way. More than any other he assured the world that a Congregational system could get along with, indeed required, a vigorous magistracy, that churches founded on an exclusive covenant and consisting only of tried saints were entirely compatible with a forcible and intolerant rule of uniformity. He was the incarnation of that image of respectability, conformity, success (all the more because he was supposed in his youth to have been radical and to have

\(^{129}\) Miller, Roger Williams, p. 196.

\(^{130}\) Williams, I, 290.
suffered from nonconformity), which has since dominated American spiritual and intellectual life.\textsuperscript{131}

John Cotton's role in the life of Massachusetts was a large one, but it was also a complicated one. He had been one of those who had sought to define Puritanism in England and then later had the opportunity to bring that definition to life in New England. It was important that there remain the ties of influence back in the homeland for encouragement and supply of necessities. There must also be the image of purity so that the radicals of New England would feel that the trip over was having some concrete results. Winslow says of Cotton:

He was well prepared for this role. His early education introduced him to teachers representing various shades of continuing church reform. His Trinity Cambridge experience showed him men who knew how to conform outwardly and yet disagree in their own thinking, not only safely but without offending their consciences. This was a political lesson John Cotton never forgot. . . .

His twenty-year pastorate in Boston, Lincolnshire, with the bulwark of the University removed, stiffened his courage to resist conformity. His bold ingenuity in compromise brought forth the plan of a covenant group within the larger congregation. He preached to both groups, and satisfied his conscience by so doing. Thus he conformed and did not conform, yet remained safe. When safety ended with William Laud's tenure of control, he escaped to New England, where the danger would be less but the battle stouter.\textsuperscript{132}

John Cotton, the exponent of the middle way, thus stood in

\textsuperscript{131}Miller, Roger Williams, pp. 76-77.

stark contrast to Roger Williams who had a mind to which compromise was anathema and he could detect it by a hair. 133

Richard Gummere, presently Curator of the Lowell Institute, gives a helpful summary of the characteristics of the two men.

This was no ivory-tower affair. Both Cotton and Williams were Cambridge-trained. . . . They were finished classicists. Cotton had held his congregation spellbound at Boston in Lincolnshire and subsequently as a partner in the Puritan colony. Williams, at home in cities or in the wilderness, started as a law apprentice to Sir Edward Coke. He was master of seven languages and a successful negotiator of two provincial charters, from two such different characters as Cromwell and Charles the Second. Cotton was serenely entrenched in his pulpit, with only occasional problems to bother him, such as the Anne Hutchinson episode. Williams, the restless radical, could both win the confidence of Indian tribes and hold his own with John Milton. 134

John Cotton was careful to expose his own authority to the view of Roger Williams and any who might read his portion of the controversy. His basic assumptions of the importance of his office as Teacher at Boston have been discussed earlier in the chapter. In The Bloudy Tenent Washed Cotton makes a statement that is typical of his feelings concerning his own importance. After exposing the errors of Williams, he says of himself:

For I thank God, God never left me to live in any such Practice, as to fall into any Fundamentall Error, much less to Persist therein after Conviction and Admonition, and least of all to seduce others thereinto. If God should leave me so farre as to fall so fearfully into this three-fold degree of Hereticall wickednesse, what am I better than other men? better myselfe cut off by death, or Banishment, then the

133 Ibid., p. 264.
134 Gummere, p. 45.
Flock of Christ to be seduced and destroyed by my Hereticall wickednesse.135

His inference is clear—if he were in the place of Roger Williams he would accept his punishment readily, knowing that he well deserved it.

In reply to the question of Roger Williams: "What church would Christ set up in Old or New England and what persecution would be practice?"—Cotton states in full assurance of the inherent worth of his own place and position:

If the Lord Jesus were here himself in person, he would set up no other Church, nor Ministry, nor worship, nor government, then what himselfe hath appointed in his Word: which though the Examiner, and many others, have fought and searched what enormities they might finde in it, yet they have wearied themselves, and found nothing. So true is the faithful promise of the Lord Jesus, that he hath built his Church upon a Rock, and the gates of Hell shall not prevale against it, nor against the Ordinances thereof.136

Having fully established his own ethos in the mind of the reader through many statements like those above, Cotton consistently sought to undermine the ethos of Roger Williams. Under the consideration of debate strategy earlier in the chapter, instances of this practice were set forth. In addition to these Cotton used many other statements to weaken the ethos of Williams and thereby destroy the validity of his arguments. In his discussion of The Bloudy Tenent early in his book The Bloudy Tenent Washed, he states that the tenent "may seem Bloudy to men of corrupt minds destitute of the truth"—inferring

135 Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 10.

136 Williams, II, 134.
that Roger Williams was in this category—but minds that would receive
instruction would never feel this way.\textsuperscript{137}

When Roger Williams charges Cotton with wresting the Scriptures out of
their true meaning in his interpretation of Romans chapter thirteen, Cotton
replies: "This charge is a grievous crime, if it be truly proved: A grievous
slander, if it be not proved."\textsuperscript{138} Since Cotton was sure that
Williams could not prove him to be wrong, the reader could easily see an
open charge of slander placed on Williams' name. In his reply to Williams'
letter Cotton says of the Separatist views of Williams:

He that separateth from all Churches, and all Ordinances,
let him at last separate also from himself: and so he shall
then be better able to discerne the way to returne again unto
holy Communion with the Lord, and his people.\textsuperscript{139}

One of Cotton's most cutting statements came in The Bloudy
Tenent Washed when Cotton apparently grew weary of Williams' detailed
refutations of his views.

But yet herein I dare be bold to say, he exalteth him-
selve, not onely equall with God, but above God, to see one
contradictory in another, which God himselfe cannot see.\textsuperscript{140}

Such an accusation indicates to the modern mind that John Cot-
ton was often intemperate with his words. It also indicates the ex-

cpanding hatred that John Cotton had developed for Roger Williams. One

\textsuperscript{137} Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p. 96.
\textsuperscript{139} Williams, II, 12.
\textsuperscript{140} Cotton, Tenent Washed, p. 25.
almost feels that the inner impulse of Cotton was a wish that Williams
might go away and leave him alone.

In contrast to Cotton, Roger Williams usually seems careful to
express goodwill toward Cotton. A characteristic statement is found
in *The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody*.

For his Person, although I rejoice that since it pleased
God to lay a Command on my Conscience to come in as his poor
Witnesse in this great Cause: I say I rejoice it hath pleased
him to appoint so able, and excellent, and Conscionable an In-
strument to bolt out the Truth to the bran... And there-
fore (notwithstanding that some (of no common Judgement and
respect to him, have said, that he wrote his washing of the
Bloudie Tenent in Bloud against Christ Jesus, and Gall against
me, yet) if upon so slippery and narrow a passage I have slpit
(slip) (notwithstanding my constant resolution to the con-
trary) into any Tearm or Expression unbecoming his Person,
or the Matter (the cause of the most high in hand considered)
I humbly crave pardon of God, and Mr. Cotton also.\(^{141}\)

Also characteristic of Williams in his treatment of Cotton is
his qualifying statement after accusing John Cotton of "monstrous Par-
tiality." Williams indicates that Cotton's failure on this point was
due to the fact that God had hidden the truth from Cotton's eyes.

The monstrous Partiality of such suspending, etc. of
hanging up all the Magistrates in the world, (except a few
of his own perswasion) and that from so principall and main a
part of their Office, and that so many thousands in the Nations
of the world all the world over, and that constantly and per-
petually all their dayes. If it please the most jealous and
righteous God to hide it (I say the monstrounesse of such
a Suspension) from Mr. Cottons eyes, yet thousand and ten
thousands will behold and wonder at it.\(^{142}\)

Williams is not always so careful to modify his words with
such temperance. In *The Bloudy Tenent* he again accused Cotton of

\(^{141}\) *Williams, IV, 41.*

\(^{142}\) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
partiality--this time without reservations. In speaking of Cotton's use of Scripture in answering his objections Williams states, "This perplexed and ravelled Answer, wherein so many things and so doubtfull are wrapt up and intangled together, I shall take in pieces." In this statement Williams sought a negative reaction to the ethos of Cotton--accusing him of obscurity in the use of the Scripture. He also sought a positive reaction to his own ethos—he was able to untangle the mess that Cotton had made.

In Chapter Fifty-eight of The Bloudy Tenent Williams asserts that Cotton had sought to "obscure and darken" his arguments concerning the three kings--King James, Steven of Poland, and the King of Bohemia. "By the help of Christ," Williams states he has been able to clear "them from such vailes and mists." Williams goes on to say that "through the helpe of God" he has been able to expose the "weak foundations" of Cotton's interpretations of Scripture.

As also that, when such conclusions . . . as grasse, and the flower of the grasse shall fade, that holy Word of the Lord, which the Author against such persecution produced, and I have cleared, shall stand for ever, even when these Heavens and Earth are burnt.

By evidencing such confidence in the validity of his arguments, Williams may be attempting to build his own ethos while

143 Ibid., III, 213.
144 Ibid., p. 131.
145 Ibid., pp. 175-76.
146 Ibid., p. 176.
discrediting Cotton in the mind of the reader. His evidence of dependence on God for answers would have been pleasing to his Calvinistic audience. In this connection—when Cotton produced evidence from some "writers," Williams responds in the true spirit of Puritan logic:

>This Rhetoricall perswasion of humane wisdome seems very reasonable in the eye of flesh and blood, but one Scripture more prevaiies with faithfull and obedient soules then thousands of plausible and eloquent speeches.\(^{147}\)

In opening *The Bloudy Tenent* Roger Williams makes what may be his strongest personal appeal of an ethical nature. He aligns himself with "Truth and Innocencie" and casts himself in the image of the persecuted and mistreated:

>While I plead the Cause of Truth and Innocencie against the bloody Doctrine of Persecution for cause of conscience, I judge it not unfit to give alarme to my selfe, and all men to prepare to be persecuted or hunted for cause of conscience.\(^{148}\)

Throughout the controversy Williams retains the identification of himself with peace and Cotton with blood and persecution. Cotton writes in blood—Williams writes in milk. As the persecuted--the banished--he appeals to the professed evidence of his own personal worth and character and indicates the nature of his justifications for dissent:

>Hence I could name the place and time when a godly man, a most desirable person for his trade, etc. (yet something different in conscience) propounded his willingnesse and desire to come to dwell in a certaine Towne in New England;

\(^{147}\)Ibid., p. 207.

\(^{148}\)Ibid., p. 11.
it was answered by the Chiface of the place, This man differs from us, and wee desire not to be troubled. So that in conclusion (for no other reason in the world) the poore man, though godly, usefull and peaceable, could not be admitted to a Civill Being and Habitation on the Common Earth in that Wildernes amongst them. 149

With a firm basis established for his own personal ethos, Roger Williams proceeds in this same chapter of The Bloudy Tenent to make one of his strongest attacks on the ethos of John Cotton and the Massachusetts Bay Colony:

And I beleev (deare Peace) it shall appear to them that (with feare and trembling at the word of the Lord) examine these passages, that the charge of errour reboundeth backe, even such an errour, as may well bee called the bloody tenent, so directly contradicting the spirit and minde and practice of the Prince of Peace; so deeply guilty of the blood of soules compelled and forced to Hypocrisie in a spirituall and soule rape; so deeply guilty of the blood of the Soules under the Altar, persecuted in all ages for the cause of Conscience, and so destructive to the civill peace and welfare of all Kingdomes, Countries, and Commonwealths. 150

John Cotton appears to be more vitriolic in his jabs at Williams than Williams is in his remarks concerning Cotton. Cotton had behind him the authority of the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay and he reminded his readers that Williams had never been able to reduce the importance of that authority. On the other side, Roger Williams presents himself as the innocently persecuted—godly in spiritual life and affairs—earnestly contending for a great cause in spite of personal hazards to himself. It is apparent that both used techniques of augmenting ethical appeal that would have helped them

149 Ibid., p. 218.
150 Ibid., p. 219.
greatly with the audiences that were already favorable to them. The building of favor with the opposing audience that they wished to persuade was probably not so successful. Cotton was unimpressed with Williams' "martyr complex" and Williams was repelled by Cotton's authoritarianism and self-assertiveness.

The Debate in Current Perspective

In the critical evaluation of the debate between Roger Williams and the Massachusetts Bay Colony it is virtually impossible to separate the man from his times. It was quite evident to this writer that any attempt to understand and evaluate Roger Williams or John Cotton apart from the complicated involvements on both sides of the Atlantic would certainly meet with failure. During the years of the debate, the political situation in England saw a great deal of upheaval. Williams and Cotton were educated in the midst of the influence of Ramistic dialectic and rhetoric, and both clearly revealed the influence of their education. In our day the influence of Ramus has waned, and the rhetorical pendulum has swung to a different mosaic or balance of rhetorical view.

Without seeking to define in detail a comprehensive view of current rhetoric, the writer would like to point out some of the areas that seem dominant in his thinking in constructing a critical view of the debate in current perspective.

Current rhetoricians might call in question the uses of invention that dominated the thinking of both Williams and Cotton. Cotton
was an avowed Biblicist and felt that he did not need to look beyond the Bible and the authoritative statements of the Bay Colony churches for evidence and argument. Today many would question the authoritative nature of the Bible and would be aghast at anyone suggesting that the church should run the state. Cotton would be asked to look elsewhere for additional sources of rhetorical invention.

Since Roger Williams has been dressed somewhat in the halo of the "romantic" view of many of his critics and biographers of the last century and the first half of this century, one might tag him as a liberal thinking political democrat, the great pioneer of American liberalism and democracy. Thus he might appear to be current in his invention. However, when one looks below the surface, it is discovered that he is more of a Puritan and Biblical literalist than even John Cotton. His classical allusions were merely parenthetical and his appeal to other than Biblical sources were almost wholly in the area of church history and certainly not extensive. He, too, would be asked to broaden the base of his invention if he wished to approach current standards of criticism.

If one looks at the debate in the light of current standards, it is possible to see some similarity between the colonial debate and modern procedures. There was clearly an affirmative and a negative. Roger Williams as the proponent of the affirmative did establish clearly a need for a change in the "status quo" and presented a case for liberty of conscience that seems plausible and certainly prophetic.
to the modern mind. In the light of history Williams emerges as the first advocate and successful initiator of a system that became the way of life for the greatest nation the world has seen.

Cotton represents the negative, ever defending the existing institution. In his own day apparently no one in America--with the exception of Roger Williams and many of the outcasts of Rhode Island--doubted that John Cotton had won the debate and settled the issues forever. Judging from current understandings it is not hard to see that while Cotton may have been victorious in the skirmish, the affirmative principles ultimately won the war.

Current standards of arrangement and limitations of time would demand that Williams and Cotton find a more convenient medium for the expression of their ideas. While both the "first great debate" between Williams and Cotton and a recent "great debate" between Presidential candidates Kennedy and Nixon had many areas of vagueness, certainly the contrast in media can be appreciated. In current perspective Cotton and Williams would need to find some way to economize on words. They would have to cut to the heart of the matter, for even the specialized audience of modern theologians could not devote the vast amount of time needed to the unraveling of the tedious dialectic of that seventeenth century debate.

In style, the "plain style" might still be a little too ornate for the "conversational quality" urged by modern rhetoricians. The figures might be considered too expanded and the parallelisms too long. Certainly the long, rambling sentences and countless
parenthetical statements that were characteristic of both Williams and Cotton would have to be trimmed to smaller size. Moderns might applaud Williams' blunt metaphors that expressed so clearly the meanings he intended but would probably criticize the excessive verbiage that make most of his discourses too tedious to seem worthy of the considerable time and energy needed to find these metaphors.

In short, the contrasts of three centuries may cause too many barriers for a technical evaluation of the rhetoric of Williams and Cotton. Perhaps it would be more meaningful to develop the additional critical views under the heading of "effects" in the chapter that follows.
CHAPTER V

THE EFFECTS OF THE CONTROVERSY

The Impact upon the New World

Since the study of the controversy between Roger Williams and the Massachusetts Bay Colony has primary application to that part of the American Colonies called New England, it seems appropriate to begin the study of effects there. Roger Williams was speaking for the affirmative cause. With him lay the burden of proof. With him lay the responsibility of creating results. Since his primary concern was persuasion, at least part of the effects would have to be the influencing of change of opinion in his audiences.

The early effects of the controversy could be traced in Boston, Plymouth and Salem. Williams' rejection of the position of Teacher at Boston must have been a startling occurrence to the Massachusetts magistrates. However, there is no evidence that Williams debated issues with the elders of the Boston church. He simply acquainted himself with the facts and rejected the offer. Later at Plymouth and Salem his efforts to bring those two churches to the Separatist position were apparently having some results and might well be considered early indications of the effects of the controversy. These changes in the attitudes and positions of the church members involved
seemed to indicate to the Boston magistrates that they must take action. This they did and through influence and political manipulation—such as the case of withholding the land on Marblehead Neck from the men of Salem—they were able to contain the results that Williams was effecting. While the magistrates could not silence Williams, they could and did thwart his efforts towards effecting a truly Separatist segment in New England that could vie for political power and influence.

Had he been able to compromise his positions somewhat and be more subtle in his preaching, Williams might have been able to build a successful coup—if that were his desire. But compromise was not his way. What he believed, he believed with great force, and he evidently could not restrain his impulse to debate and bring the issues to direct clash. In the words of Ola Winslow the dangers that Williams presented to the young colony were fourfold "because he was a minister, had friends, was persuasive in convincing others, and even under reproof would not stop talking."

It is not difficult to understand the quick and dramatic action of the Bay Colony in seeking to silence Williams. The colony was very young and still struggling for survival. With the ever dangerous Indians on one side ready to wipe them out and Bishop Laud in England ready to send force to bring them to complete conformity, a spirit of unity was considered essential to the very future of the Colony. Most

—Winslow, p. 113.
of the colonists were able to restrain their deviant views—if they held any—and conform to majority opinion for the sake of this unity. To Williams unity at the cost of compromise of conviction was not worth what it might provide. He wrote to John Cotton's son, also named John, from Providence, March 25, 1671, that "there could be no reconciliation, pacification, or living together but by permitting of dissenting consciences to live amongst them."2 In The Bloudy Tenent he spoke of the underlying problem that he could not be silent about in Massachusetts or in England:

In vain have English Parliaments permitted English Bibles in the poorest English houses, and the simplest man or woman to search the Scriptures, if yet against their soul's persuasion from the Scripture, they should be forced (as if they lived in Spain or Rome itself, without the sight of a Bible) to believe as the church believes.3

The authority of the colonial magistrates was firmly established and perhaps quite apart from such practical aims as the need for unity to preserve the life of the colony, there was the danger of losing the great ideal of a pure state where all conformed to the standard set by the few. That standard was radically different from the standard advocated by Williams. Where such a political dream as that maintained by the Bay Colony is attempted, whether in Massachusetts in the 1630's or in Germany three hundred years later, dissenters must be silenced. Massachusetts had laid its foundations well and in the words of Perry Miller, "Williams was the first, and most

2Miller, Roger Williams, p. 238.
3Ibid., p. 111.
conspicuous, to strike at these foundations. Thus he became, as indeed he remains, a menace to society. That they had to move to silence him was testimony to the fact that the dissent of Roger Williams was effective.

John Winthrop spoke of the effect of Williams' dissent when in his Journal in 1635 he recorded that after the banishment decree had been issued and Williams had been ordered to be silent he continued to preach in his home and "had drawn above 20 persons to his opinions." Almost a year later Winthrop recorded that:

The church of Salem was still infected with Mr. Williams' opinions, so as most of them held it unlawful to hear in the ordinary assemblies in England, because their foundation was antichristian, and we should, by hearing, hold communion with them; and some went so far as they were ready to separate from the church upon it.

That some of them did separate was quite apparent, for the Providence colony grew as others who shared Williams' views went to live there. This colony in Rhode Island might in itself be considered a direct result of the controversy, for if Williams had not dissented and been expelled, his unique experiment in religious tolerance and democratic government might not have come until much later. Surely this free colony--developed so early in American history--has become an integral part of the true American experience of freedom.

If one should think that Roger Williams dissented because he

1Ibid., p. 24.
2Winthrop, I, 175.
3Ibid., p. 185.
knew he could establish a new colony and selfishly become its great leader, a look at the record should suffice to clarify the issue.

Williams bought land from the Indians to found Providence. This land he divided to those who came to the new colony and almost let the town run itself. The liberty he desired for himself he provided for all. Whenever problems arose, he was ready at great cost to himself—generally without pay—to negotiate a settlement in the woods of Narragansett Bay or before the High Parliament of London.

When Williams went to London the second time to negotiate a more stable charter for the colony, he had been promised that the people of Providence would sustain him there. But as time went on and the political troubles in England caused delays, the people of Providence apparently grew weary and withdrew support. When Williams returned in 1654, they were internally divided and very cold toward him. Since he could not get them together to talk to them, he wrote a letter to them to clarify the issue. In the letter he told of the hardships they had forced upon him by their lack of faithfulness:

The words have been so sharp between myself and some lately, that at last I was forced to say, they might well silence all complaints if I once began to complain, who was unfortunately fetched and drawn from my employment, and sent to so vast distance from my family, to do your work of a high and costly nature, for so many days and weeks and months together, and there left to starve, or steal, or beg or borrow. But blessed be God, who gave me favor to borrow one while, and to work another, and thereby to pay your debts there.

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7Williams, VI, 264.
As a direct result of his letter the Providence Colony was united and Roger Williams was elected President.

As an additional consideration it could be argued that if Williams had been motivated by selfish ambitions, it is likely that he could not have had the inner strength to turn down the chance of becoming Teacher in Boston when that post was offered to him.

In the later and perhaps more significant segment of the great debate Williams sought as a primary audience the mind and heart of John Cotton. One early result of the pamphlet controversy was the simple effect of moving John Cotton to write a pamphlet in response to Williams' arguments. Many great leaders have had attacks levelled at them and often they have answered with silence. But John Cotton could not refrain from answering Roger Williams. During the controversy Cotton developed what Perry Miller considered to be hatred for Williams. He resorted to name calling, declaring that Roger Williams was not truly godly as claimed but was "self-pleasing, self-full, or (as it is translated) self-willed. It was standard procedure in colonial controversy to reply in kind. Even John Milton could not refrain from periodic bursts of vituperance against some of his pamphlet foes. Instead of name calling Williams would reply:

Touching Mr. Cotton . . . whom I have ever desired, and still desire, highly to esteem, and dearly love to respect

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8 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 164.
9 Ibid., p. 165.
10 Haller, p. 360.
for so great a portion of mercy and grace vouchsafed unto
him, and so many truths of Christ Jesus maintained by him.11

The lack of love for Williams was carried on by Cotton's son
to whom Williams wrote many years after the death of his opponent in
controversy (March 25, 1671):

My great offence (you so often repeat) is my wrong to
your dear father, etc. But the truth is, the love and honor
which I have always showed (in speech and writing) to that
excellently learned and holy man, your father, have been so
great, that I have been censured by divers for it. God knows,
that, for God's sake, I tenderly loved and honored his person
(as I did the persons of the magistrates, ministers, and mem-
bers whom I knew in Old England, and knew their holy affec-
tions, and upright aims, and great self-denial, to enjoy more
of God in this wilderness)...

This made that honored father of the Bay, Mr. Winthrop,
to give me the testimony, not only of exemplary diligence in
the ministry (when I was satisfied in it), but of patience
also, in these words in a letter to me: "Sir, we have often
tried your patience, but could never conquer it."12

That the controversy had colored the thinking of others than
John Cotton and his son was evident. Cotton Mather in looking back on
the life of the illustrious John Cotton spoke of Cotton's contro-
sional writings and accused Williams of heaping "horrid Injuries" on
Cotton:

He was twice compelled unto some other Eristical Writings:
Once in Answer to Baily; another time in Answer to Williams:
In both of which, like Job, he Turned the Books, which his
Adversaries had written against him, into a Crown. I believe,
ever any meer Man, under such open and horrid Injuries as
these two Reporters heaped upon Mr. Cotton, did Answer with
more Christian Patience; his Answers are indeed a Pattern for
all Answerers to the World's End. But it was particularly
remarkable, that, in this matter, certain Persons, who had
fallen under the Censures of the Civil Authority in the

11 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 171.
12 Williams, VI, 352.
Country, Singled out Mr. Cotton for the Object of their Displeasure, although he had, most of all men, declined InterESSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSX
was a significant factor in producing freedom in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Williams' presence in Rhode Island must have always been a reminder to the magistrates that they could never expect to produce the pure church-state.

The Impact upon the Old World

Roger Williams' impact upon his London audiences was variegated and quite difficult to describe. There can be little doubt that the controversy did have impact there, with ramifications that reached back across the Atlantic to have effect upon the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Perry Miller states bluntly: "Perhaps the most prophetic element in the whole debate is that both in 1644 and 1652 Williams had to go to London and there, by arousing a European awareness, fight America's battle." Masson agreed on this point:

When an attempt is made to look past these generalizations to specific indications of influence, the task becomes more problematical. The fact that Williams had gained an audience in England through the publication of the Key has already been noted. That his publication of The Bloudy Tenent also compelled an audience was made quite clear by the fact that the Presbyterian Parliament immediately ordered

15 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 168.
16 Masson, II, 602.
the book burned. The burning of a book usually incites an audience and this was the case with The Bloudy Tenent.

His sensational title, The Blody Tenent of Persecution, put him with the wrong crowd and marked his book for destruction, but it was also a stroke of genius for catching attention on the bookstalls. Had the licenser seen no more than these five words, the book would have been banned at birth, and had he turned the page and read any of the twelve statements of purpose, he would have seen more than enough, for Roger Williams had concealed nothing.

Evidently the censor either missed reading the book or it was never offered to him. It remained for the Parliament to order it burned. After spending a considerable amount of time in London studying the implication of Williams' presence there, Ola Winslow made several pertinent observations. She felt that by publishing in 1641 Williams had hit the English scene at a very appropriate time. The concept of freedom of conscience was just beginning to catch the mind of many of the people of England. It seemed to Professor Winslow that Williams' tracts were very well timed and had some concrete effects:

Seen in the long perspective of many generations (from the air as it were) and held firmly in its chronological niche among the pros and cons of 1641 debate, the appearance of this book at this particular time, the explosions it set off, the hundreds of pages it provoked, and the eventual contribution it made to the victory of a great principle, have many parallels in the history of thought. The test of validity for ideas at first unwelcome and inflammable, is of course their ability to get themselves accepted in the market place, and for ideas which reshape society significantly, such acceptance has usually been long delayed. It would be so with this 1641 plea. Roger Williams' part was only to proclaim the truth as he saw it,

17 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 238; Winslow, p. 198.

18 Winslow, p. 197.
and then to go about his Rhode Island business as before. Fortunately both for him and for his idea, a ship took him away at once, so that his answer to his answerers could at least wait until this first thrust had struck home with all its force. Had he remained in London longer at this time, he would have spoken out again and yet again, and in so doing he might have blurred the issue. In this case he need never have said another word. His book had been printed and ordered burned. That was enough.19

When Williams returned to England eight years later, he walked into a changed environment. The sweep of thought concerning religious liberty had widened greatly. Cromwell, with his tolerant attitude, had come into power. Roger Williams spoke of this change of attitude as he discussed The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody in his letter to John Cotton's son in 1671: "'Tis true, my first book, The Bloody Tenent, was burnt by the Presbyterian party (then prevailing): but this book whereof we now speak (being my reply to your father's answers) was received with applause and thanks by the army, by the parliament."20 Professor Winslow's evaluation of Williams' second effort was quite candid:

The second Bloody Tenent treatise hardly met the need of these changed times. In the semi-solitude of his trading house clearing, Roger Williams had gone right on fighting the battle from the point where Cotton's answer to his first blast had left it in 1647. Cotton had waited three years to answer, and since then Roger Williams had waited five. No battle of ideas stays at the same point more than a fraction of either span, and the line by line refutation of that which was already long cold in print, as Truth and Peace talk it out page after page, is pale by comparison with the 1647 treatise. In this first piece, Roger Williams had occasionally forgotten John Cotton and his fallacies in logic,
and had found words to express a flaming personal conviction
and an uplifted vision. He would not do it again, nor was
such a second flight needful. 21

The impact of the second Tenent was mainly a matter of inten-
sifying the nature of Williams' ideas and revealed, in Winslow's
words, his "unswerving selflessness in a great cause." 22 Perry Miller
also gave testimony to the selfless nature of Roger Williams:

We comprehend what sort of radical Williams was—and
how careless of his own interests—when we realize that in
1652, when he returned to London, Oliver Cromwell and the
Independent clergy, headed by John Owen, could easily have
embraced him, or he them, had he given the signal. 23

But Roger Williams still could not compromise. He would be
independent even of the Independents.

Part of the impact that Roger Williams had upon the Old World
was his influence upon important people of the day. He knew Oliver
Cromwell quite intimately. In a letter to John Winthrop in 1660 he
reflected on his experiences a few years before: "The late renowned
Oliver, confessed to me, in close discourse about the Protestants af-
fairs, etc., that he yet feared great persecutions to the Protestants
from the Romanists." 24 In a letter to the General Court of Massachu-
setts, October 5, 1654, Williams speaks of negotiations with Cromwell

21 Winslow, p. 240.
22 Ibid., p. 241.
23 Miller, Roger Williams, pp. 192-93.
24 Williams, VI, 307.
and the "many discourses" that he had had with him. As noted earlier, Williams had sought through *The Hireling Ministry None of Christs* to get Cromwell and the Parliament to abolish the compulsory payment of the tithe that was used to finance the established church. He had failed in this, but it is likely that his ideas did have many interested readers.

Much of Williams' success in being able to negotiate with the Parliament in the first Charter and in the Coddington affair was due to the influence that he had upon men who knew him and were interested in him. In addition to Cromwell were many other prominent men including: Sir Henry Vane, Sir William Masham, Cornelius Holland, John Milton and John Owen. The interest of these men was directed early to Williams partially because they were seeking to upset the party in power. In order to do this they were reaching out to draw as much support as possible from the dissident groups.

The fact that Roger Williams earned the support of some for a better reason than being in the right place at the right time was seen in the case of Sir Thomas Urquhart. Urquhart was a translator of note and quite a controversial figure in his day. Urquhart was an advocate of the establishment of Charles II on the throne after the death of Charles I. He was taken captive in 1651 and imprisoned in London. Roger Williams learned of his case upon arriving in London and perhaps

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26 *Winslow*, p. 237.
recognizing him as a kindred spirit—Urquhart was an eccentric scholar—Williams petitioned Cromwell for Urquhart's release. Cromwell put pressure on and Urquhart was released. Sir Thomas Urquhart told of Williams' efforts on his behalf and gave a view of Williams that was vastly different from the view that was current in the Massachusetts Bay Colony:

The enumeration of these aforesaid courtesies, will not permit me to forget my thankfulness to that reverent preacher, Mr. Roger Williams of Providence in New England, for the manifold favours wherein I stood obliged to him above a whole month before either of us had so much as seen each other, and that by his frequent and earnest solicitations in my behalf of the most especial members both of the Parliament and Council of State; in doing whereof he appeared so truly generous, that when it was told him how I, having got notice of his so undeserved respect towards me, was desirous to embrace some sudden opportunity whereby to testify the affection I did owe him, he purposely delayed the occasion of meeting with me till he had, as he said, performed some acceptable office worthy of my acquaintance; in all which, both before and after we had conversed with one another, and by those many worthy books set forth by him, to the advancement of piety and good order, with some whereof he was pleased to present me, he did approve himself a man of such discretion and inimitably-sanctified parts, that an Archangel from heaven could not have shewn more goodness with less ostentation.  

Another area of Williams' impact was upon certain private citizens who returned with Williams to share in the experiment in the wilderness. One of these was Gregory Dexter, who had printed the Key. Part of his reason for leaving may have been to escape the penalty for having also printed The Bloudy Tenent, but Brockunier stated: "Roger Williams had made one more convert to his broad notions of liberty,

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and Providence was to be the refuge of a master printer from Stationers Hall.28

In *The Bloody Tenent* yet More *Bloody Williams* summarized in his own words the influence of his writings upon the England of his day. Peace speaks and says of the Discusser, Roger Williams:

Well (notwithstanding Master Cotton's bitter censure) some persons of no contemptible note nor intelligence, have by letters from England, informed the discusser, that these Images of clouts it hath pleased God to make use of to stop no small leaks of persecution, that lately began to flow in upon dissenting consciences, and (amongst others) to Master Cotton's own, and to the peace and quietness of the Independents, which have so long, and so wonderfully enjoyed.29

Perry Miller asserted that Williams had helped to widen the breach between the Independents of England and the Bay Colony magistrates and this was as Williams saw it, "a divine retribution upon persecutors."30

Certainly not all of Williams' influence in England was of the nature that he desired. There was much opposition to toleration as the burning of *The Bloodly Tenent* would indicate. Many pamphlets in addition to those of John Cotton were written to refute Williams and other tolerationists.

His opponents did him the honor of a prompt reply. These

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29 *Williams*, IV, p. 104. (The clouts were the clay images referred to by John Cotton when he said that Williams would set them up and shoot at them.)

men were the brains of the church of England. His colleagues, in so far as any rallied to his side, were in Robert Baillie's phrase, "men of that stamp," meaning something decidedly inferior. As for Roger Williams himself, Baillie called him "my good acquaintance, Mr. Williams," adding "I have often pitied that poor man's spirit." He meant it kindly, but he could not follow. To him as to the stoutest of those who answered in print, to make conscience umpire was to open the door to all error and to exchange what to them looked like scriptural certainty for "the reelings of windmills, fair forms and dreams, beliefs, bottomed on fallible opinions."

They were afraid of liberty. Belief by authority and government machinery to keep it unchanged was a wall to preserve the doctrine. If liberty of conscience were permitted, religion itself would soon be lost in a "crowd of sects."

It might be said in conclusion that Williams seemed to have somewhat more influence in London than he did in New England. The audience of course was much larger and the diversification of opinion much wider. Those leaning toward tolerance were apparently given a significant shove forward by Williams' publishing of The Bloudy Tenent at a crucial time. Had he stayed he might have been engulfed in the wave of dissenters. Perhaps by coming to the scene as an individualistic voice and then going back into the silence of Rhode Island, he was able to place somewhat of an atmosphere of mystery about his name and to intensify the impression that he left. Certainly there was opposition to his views, but he was able to add significantly to the long step forward toward liberty of conscience in England.

The Impact upon the Present World

In seeking to assess the effects of the controversy between Roger Williams and the Massachusetts Bay Colony upon the modern world,

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31 Winslow, p. 206.
one must deal with many highly subjective factors and but few concretes. Perhaps the most significant of these subjective elements is the fact that America chose to reject the patterns and principles of the Massachusetts Oligarchy for her system of government and instead chose a government not unrelated to that basically democratic system originated in Rhode Island by Roger Williams. The rejection of intolerance in religion came early in the formation of the nation, and the principle of religious liberty initiated in Providence has been promulgated in the heritage of America as the first of our great freedoms set forth in the Bill of Rights.

In the process of time Roger Williams has become something of a hero. There does seem to be a tendency in America to make heroes out of those who were the first to achieve something great. Roger Williams was first to establish a colony that provided complete freedom of worship to all its people and a nation that accepted this principle as a way of life can never quite forget this man who was first.

Many scholars have attempted to trace the influence of Roger Williams on the writers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The finest of these efforts to date seems in the writer's opinion to be that of LeRoy Moore, Jr. After an intensive study of pre-Revolutionary literature Moore concluded that the stigma placed on Williams' name by the Massachusetts Bay Colony had given little opportunity for any of Williams' ideas to be directly influential upon the writers of the Constitution.
It would be only natural for the sojourner through the pages of these sundry histories to suppose that their various threads would together make a garment fit to the size of Roger Williams, but, amazingly, these works but touch the hem of his garment. It is doubtful if any other literate American, with a personal bibliography half as extensive, was so inaptly stereotyped and otherwise all but completely ignored in the embryonic stages of our national historical literature. Williams lived the better part of his life under the curse of John Cotton, and, when he died, that curse became his history.32

One very important factor in the sparse influence of Williams upon early American thought certainly must have been the fact that his writings were not available:

It is doubtful that Williams' works ever enjoyed extensive circulation on this side of the Atlantic prior to the late nineteenth century. Only one of his writings first saw the light of day in America—his polemic against the Quakers, George Fox Digg'd out of His Burrowes (Boston: 1676). After that, a span just shy of a century and a half elapsed before the Rhode Island Historical Society Collections included in 1827 the first Williams reprint, his Key into the Language of America. In 1863 a facsimile edition of the Experiments of Spiritual Life and Health appeared, and between 1866 and 1874 the Narragansett Club published at Providence a six volume edition of Williams' works. The situation in England was hardly different. London presses had initially issued all his writings, save the one mentioned above, but nothing was republished there until 1848 when a new edition of The Bloudy Tenent was brought out by the Hanserd Knollys Society.33

Moore's appraisal of the development of the Roger Williams image has been reviewed earlier in the paper and need not be repeated here. The romantic view of Williams has had considerable influence upon popular views of the man and has made it more difficult for


33 Ibid., pp. 432-33.
modern scholars to cut through the haze to the true Roger Williams. The fact that some have been interested in getting to the facts during recent years is attested to by the many references to current works found in the footnotes of this paper. Perhaps the most significant fact of all is that recently a need was felt for a republication of Williams' Works and this was effected in 1963 with the inclusion of a seventh volume of materials not published in the earlier Narragansett volumes.

Another facet of Williams' present influence is set forth clearly by Perry Miller in his essay that opens this seventh volume of the reprint of the Narragansett Club's edition.

In Geneva, Switzerland—within what was in the sixteenth century the mighty fortress of John Calvin—stands a massive monument to the memory of the Calvinistic wing of the Reformation. In the center are the four most majestic figures: Calvin himself, Guillaume Farel, Theodore Beza, John Knox. Flanking them on either side are the militant warriors of the many nations in which Calvinism fought, perished, or conquered. All but one are obvious choices, soldiers of the faith: Gustavus Adolphus for Sweden, William the Silent for Holland, Coligny for France, Oliver Cromwell for England, men who in the certainty of their calling and election waged bloody battles against the unregenerate. The exception is the space assigned to American Calvinism. In that portico there stands—to the never-ending bafflement of American tourists—not John Winthrop, John Cotton, nor Cotton Mather; not even Jonathan Edwards, nor Lyman Beecher, no military hero at all. The stolid inaccurately costumed statue is of Roger Williams. Beside him, in letters of stone are inscribed words from The Blody Tenent of Persecution. His "orthodox" contemporaries in New England have been heaving in their graves ever since that monument was erected.34

The monument in Geneva may be in the final analysis of the

34 Williams, VII, pp. 5-6.
question not so much a tribute to the man but to the triumph of an idea. Certainly in America that great ideal of liberty of conscience came to its fullest bloom. The sustaining of that idea has been one of America's greatest achievements.

Yet, the man cannot be separated from the idea. The nature of the influence of Roger Williams and his controversy in direct relation to the modern world might be expressed by the mention of two representative examples from current sources. The first is from a general statement concerning the history of the American doctrine of the separation of church and state. In speaking of the slow development of the realization that state control of the churches was bad for the churches, Stedman asserted:

It took somewhat longer for the conviction to grow that church control of the state was also bad for the churches. In time, this thesis, the rationale of which was superbly spelled out by Roger Williams, became accepted as an essential element of the American need by the dominant religious groups in our society.35

Although this is not a dramatic statement concerning the effects of Roger Williams and his controversy upon later generations, it is accurate. Such quotations could be drawn from many recent books on church and state issues and church history. That there was perhaps more to say seemed to be the feeling of Perry Miller as he sought to describe the significance of Roger Williams for the American tradition. He concluded:

For the subsequent history of what became the United States, Roger Williams possesses one indubitable importance, that he stands at the beginning of it. Just as some great experience in the youth of a person is ever afterward a determinant of his personality, so the American character has inevitably been molded by the fact that in the first years of colonization there arose this prophet of religious liberty. Later generations may not always have understood his thought; they may have imagined that his premises were something other than the actual ones, but they could not forget him or deny him. He exerted little or no direct influence on theorists of the Revolution and the Constitution, who drew on quite different intellectual sources, yet as a figure and a reputation he was always there to remind Americans that no other conclusion than absolute religious freedom was feasible in this society. The image of him in conflict with the righteous founders of New England could not be obliterated; all later righteous men would be tormented by it until they learned to accept his basic thesis, that virtue gives them no right to impose on others their own definitions. As a symbol, Williams has become an integral element in the meaning of American democracy, along with Jefferson and Lincoln.36

In the light of these statements it is not difficult to receive an inference that leaps directly back to Roger Williams when one hears Secretary of State Dean Rusk say before a nationwide audience in the heat of the current controversy over the war in Viet Nam: "The right to dissent is a basic American right."37 When it is remembered that in the American experience of the seventeenth century that right was not available—a deeper understanding of the significance of the controversy comes to light.

The basic issue for which Roger Williams fought has long since become part of the warp and woof of American heritage. Yet the element of controversy has never left the American scene. Perhaps

36 Miller, Roger Williams, pp. 254-55.
37 Senate Hearings, February 18, 1966.
controversy in itself is a part of the American heritage of freedom.

Paul A. Carmack commented on this concept:

The controversial speaking campaigns in American history have furnished the occasions for a large part of its nation's oratory. In some cases these controversial speeches and rebuttals have influenced history and have thereby been accepted as a part of the national history. The success of the movements led to acceptance of the proposed "changes from the status quo." The speaking campaigns were often extensive of time and number of speakers and intensive in emotion and vigor.38

Inherent to these controversies have been the controversial figures--people who in almost all cases could be described in some form as dissenters. In our own time the literature of dissent has begun to grow with the publication of such books as Ekirch's Voices in Dissent which he characterizes as an anthology of individualistic thought in the United States.39 It is indeed unfortunate that he does not include in his anthology America's first and perhaps most individualistic dissenter, Roger Williams.

In the second half of the present century there has emerged a new breed of dissenters fighting for causes that are wholly different from that of Roger Williams. Their brand of evidence and argument is also greatly different. Yet, there is a common bond that seems to characterize dissenters of all ages. This common bond was noted in a recent Life magazine article concerning Norman Thomas:

38Paul A. Carmack, "Controversial Speaking Campaigns in American History," The Gavel, XLIV (January, 1962), p. 20. (This article should be consulted for an extended list of these campaigns.)

In the tide of protest that has risen over Viet Nam, an aged but resonant voice is heard across the land attacking the war and proclaiming the glories of dissent. At 81—crippled by arthritis, hard of hearing, now legally blind—Norman Thomas storms the country alone, living out of an old duffel bag, bringing his sense of urgency to teach-ins, seminars, demonstrations. Mostly he speaks to a young generation which usually scorns the advice of anyone over 30. But they listen to Thomas with eagerness. They know little of his past—as leader of the American Socialist party and its presidential candidate. But they recognize—and appreciate—a master dissenter when they see one. Thomas is concerned "not with dissent for its own sake, but only as necessary to advance the truth to which one is devoted." In this he follows the great tradition of American protest which, from the beginning, has shaped our society and shattered its complacency. It was carried forward by the reasoned dissent of Roger Williams, with his opposition to intolerance, and by Thomas Paine, who declared war against "the hell of monarchy" and attacked the Bible. The measured arguments of Emerson and the anarchistic acts of John Brown both fought slavery.

Norman Thomas . . . goes about goading his audiences into protest, trying to pull others back from recklessness, making them laugh with him. But always he preaches the true purpose of dissent: "To tear a question open and riddle it with light."

Although Roger Williams may have considered these protests quite unrelated to the deep theological bent of his mind, this writer feels that Williams may have something to say to the controversialists and agitators of today. In the light of current trends in radicalism and dissent, perhaps the truest application of the rhetoric that that colonial controversy discussed may be in "the rhetoric of dissent."

If dissent is worthy of study—and present implications indicate strongly that it is—then the pioneer dissenter might serve as a model of sorts to define and clarify some basic elements from the beginning of the American tradition of dissent.

This rhetoric of American dissent—if it may be called that—which had its origin in Roger Williams has principles applicable not only to the dissenter but also to those who oppose radicalism and dissent and seek to control its effects.

The principles that this "first master dissenter" would set forth certainly must have as an initial concept for the edification of interested agitators the simple lesson that dissent is costly. One who would follow in the footsteps of Roger Williams would follow a rocky path. He must not be afraid to face the consequences of his actions. The cost may be assessed in many ways, but cost there will be.

For Roger Williams the price of dissent was a pilgrimage to America, the loss of the finest pulpit in America—that of the church of Boston—and subsequently the pulpits of both Plymouth and Salem. Dissent drove him from the Bay Colony to the wilderness. Dissent exacted from him his friends, often the fellowship of his family, and most of what little wealth he had accumulated. At any bend in trail, in Old England, in Massachusetts, back in England again, had he repented he could have found employment and probably success and ease. Therefore, it could be said that another price that dissent demands is constant vigilance against the temptation to surrender, to "throw in the sponge," or to take the easy way out.

Williams, like many of his more liberal contemporary counterparts, was guilty of civil disobedience. He deliberately went beyond the boundaries of the laws of the land in which he claimed citizenship. The Massachusetts magistrates were wholly in order when they
banished him. The price of civil disobedience is usually high. Those who choose to use this pathway of dissent must be willing to pay the price that a common lawbreaker pays. Such a dissenter must be willing to be misunderstood. He must be willing to be an outcast—to have enemies—to be hated by some who were once his closest friends.

If one follows the model of dissent exemplified by Roger Williams, he must be willing "to go into the wilderness alone." A dissenter of the Williams caliber must not be afraid to take the first step into the unknown world of peer reaction. He must be willing to realize that no crowds will be compelled to flock to his side. He must stand alone until he can win followers to his cause. For some the heartbreak of such loneliness might be more than the cause will stand and they may falter and fail.

The Williams style dissenter must pay the price of willing mobility. He must be ready to pull up stakes, leave home and family—usually at his own expense—to fight the good fight for his cause wherever the battleground may shift. He must never stop to ask how easy it will be—or how safe!

The dissenter must—if he would truly follow the Williams model—live a life in keeping with his claims. He must—in trite yet accurate terminology—practice what he preaches. To Roger Williams this meant the humble devout life of a Puritan turned Seeker. The life of one who loved God intently, believed the Bible implicitly, and was personally related to Jesus Christ through a vibrant faith. In
short—the disciplined moral and spiritual life of one of the most profound Christians of all time. The modern dissenter may quail before this standard—but such a soul was Roger Williams.

The final cost of dissent to be discussed here may be the most difficult of all to pay. The dissenter cut from the Williams mold must be willing to wait for his effects. The solution to most of the great issues of our history have taken time. The ideas must reach the market place and to do so there must be patience. At times the cost of change has been a generation or more.

Wallace Fotheringham speaks clearly on this aspect of the nature of radical change, "The first effort to persuade others commonly accomplishes only part of the job; that part, however, is necessary for the success of the next phase and for the ultimate goal." The process of change could be called that of "unfreezing, changing, and refreezing." The "unfreezing" process involves the radical departure from the current way of doing things. In the process of time there is a change to a new method and that new method is fixed in practice. Fotheringham describes the process as follows:

The revolutionary movement, clearly, changes its goals as it progresses from one phase to another. In the beginning, through persuasion and other means of influence, it seeks discontinuance as a goal. The status quo is discredited as a means of bringing about discontinuautant behaviour. The public

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41 Miller, Roger Williams, p. 256.
42 Wallace C. Fotheringham, Perspectives on Persuasion (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966), p. 34.
43 Ibid.
is encouraged not to believe and ultimately not to behave as it formerly did. Following this, the goal of the movement becomes adoption. The objective is to influence people to adopt new behavior which supports the revolution. Once the movement has come into power, its goals become continuance and deterrence. It then seeks the continuation of the newly accepted behavior and the prevention of behavior which threatens the new order.\footnote{Ibid., p. 36.}

Roger Williams found himself in the initial stage of the great reform movement toward freedom of conscience. He was able to make a resounding protest in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and also in the beginnings of this same movement back in England. Although he did not live to see the results of this movement worked out in either country on the large scale that ultimately was effected, he must have taken great satisfaction in seeing his ideal implemented in his own little corner of the world—Rhode Island.

Williams was alive at the right time and was sensitive enough to the issues of his day to raise his voice in protest at a time when it was most needed. Ola Winslow says of Williams:

His story suggests in a significant example that the timing of a man's life and words can be of vast importance in human history. A moment earlier, or a moment later, and the difference is a gulf. Born at a time when a vast revolutionary movement was in confused ferment, he helped to give it direction as well as impetus at a critical early stage.\footnote{Winslow, p. 292.}

The Williams rhetoric of dissent demands an awareness to the issues of the day—a sensitivity that responds at the right moment with the proper response. The reformer must speak in the dissent of

\footnote{Ibid., p. 36.}
\footnote{Winslow, p. 292.}
words and ideas and be ever vigilant to keep his dissent in this lofty atmosphere. Often the forcing of issues in reform movements causes the shedding of blood and nothing is more opposite to the Williams pattern than the stroke of the bloody sword—whether civil or radical. The battle must be fought with weapons of the mind and never with those of the flesh.

If any is willing to pay the price that such dissent may exact, then the second principle may be approached. This lesson in dissent involves motivations. It asks the very large question, "Why dissent?"

Again examining the Williams model a general principle emerges. For dissent to follow in the Williams tradition there must be a great cause. The cause must be large enough and noble enough to build a nation around it. If the cause is petty, ignoble or unworthy, the dissent will perhaps be of the same quality. The dissenter must echo in his soul the greatness of the soul of Roger Williams as he proclaims at the conclusion of The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody:

For me, though censured, threatened, persecuted, I must profess, while heaven and earth last, that no one tenent that either London, England, or the world doth harbor is so heretical, blasphemous, seditious, and dangerous to the corporal, to the spiritual, to the present, to the eternal good of all men as the bloody tenent (however washed and whited)—I say, as is the bloody tenent of persecution for cause of conscience.\(^{46}\)

Once this cause is found there must be total dedication to it. To fall short here is certainly to be unworthy of the example of this

\(^{46}\text{Ibid.}, p. 192.\)
first dissenter. There must be the willingness to devote all of life
to the cause and to die for it if need be. After Williams had re-
hearsed the summation of the case against him before the General Court
of Massachusetts, he asserted in Mr. Cotton's Letter Lately Printed,
Examined and Answered:

I acknowledge the particulars were rightly summ'd up,
and I also hope, that, as I then maintained the Rockie
strength of them to my own & other consciences so (through
the Lords assistance) I shall be ready for the same grounds,
not only to be bound and banished, but to die also, in New
England, as for most holy Truths of God in Christ Jesus.47

No selfish ambition or *get-rich-quick* scheme can be allowed
to enter into such motivations. The key word is sacrifice and the
chief attribute is selflessness. There must be no entangling alli-
ances with a Cromwell or a Milton, however lucrative such arrangements
might be. The true dissenter will stand up in the midst of the offers
of "positions or preferments" and go back to the wilderness environ-
ments of dissent.

This dissenter--with his fixed goal and firm motivations--will
keep his mind open. Even from the enemy may come rays of light to re-
veal the truth. Williams made this concept clear in his introduction
to The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody:

I add, it is a glorious character of every true disciple
or scholar of Christ Jesus to be never too old to learn.
It is the command of Christ Jesus to his scholars to try
all things: and liberty of trying what a friend, yea, what

47 Williams, I, 325.
Having agreed to the price and solidified the motivation, there is yet a third step to this colonial styled dissent. There is a method to be followed. Such dissent first seeks for a clear knowledge of the truth and once achieving it refuses to violate its principles. This is not the hot-headed, thrill-seeking revolt of a teen-ager carried along by the current of fad, but the reasoned dissent of a mature man, schooled in the finest traditions and classrooms of his nation. It is dissent that is thought out and entered into with open mind and ready heart. It is mature, reasoned dissent. It is not on a dare, or for kicks. It is measured, sincere, articulate dissent and can never be called rabble rousing.

It is ever dissent that is non-violent. Its method is words and ideas and never bricks and blood. It is an honored and respected tradition of dissent because it does not trample over the rights of others to gain its ends. This dissent breaks no windows and sacks no stores. It does not spy and counter-spy. It is pure in morals and manners and seeks to win by uplifting rather than by plundering and degrading. When this form of dissent must break the law, it does so only after truth has tried every avenue of gaining a foothold in the minds of people and magistrates. It seeks out patiently all avenues of persuasion before it resorts to coercion. Then when it steps

Miller, Roger Williams, p. 170.
beyond the law, it is ever vigilant not to draw blood. The warriors
are Peace and Truth. Their weapons are ideas and never bombs or bul-
lets.

Roger Williams' rhetoric of dissent may send the dissenter in-
to high places—before Parliaments, Protectors, or Kings—but he must
never fear the face of man. There must be boldness to stand and de-
clare truth as supreme. Again the dissenter may have to go into
strange, unfamiliar places to further his ends. If it becomes neces-
sary for him to flee into the wilderness, he must deal kindly with
those savages that inhabit the wilderness and seek in a spirit of true
respect and love to lead them to the truth also. He must be ready to
live with the Indians in "their filthy, smoky holes . . . to gain
their tongue."49 He must walk among them without fear in his heart
that the next step will be an ambush or that he will be the target for
"a revengeful, malicious arrow or hatchet." He must in sincerity be
able to say, "I have been in danger of them, and delivered yet from
them; blessed be His holy name."50

Finally, the dissenter who would be true to the Williams form
must be willing to speak on any occasion under any circumstances and
uphold the "rockie strength" of his contentions. He must be able to
say with Roger Williams—in this the greatest of all his prose, the
quintessence of the dissenter's art—that:

49 Ibid., p. 50.
50 Ibid., p. 51.
Having tried, we must hold fast, upon the loss of a crown; we must not let go for all the flea-bittings of the present afflictions. Having bought truth dear, we must not sell it cheap, not the least grain of it for the whole world, no, not for the saving of souls, though our own most precious. Least of all for the bitter sweetening of a little vanishing pleasure: for a little puff of credit and reputation from the changeable breath of uncertain sons of men: for the broken bags of riches on eagles' wings: for a dream of these, any or all these, which on our deathbed vanish and leave tormenting stings behind them. Oh, how much better is it from the love of truth, from the love of the Father of lights from whence it comes, from the love of the Son of God, who is the way and the truth, to say as He (John 18.37), #For this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth.#51

On the other hand, for those who would seek any sort of establishment or uniformity in religion or who would build a super-state by the monarchial dictatorial rule of the few—to these are presented certain principles from the #master dissenter# of Rhode Island. Let such be aware that dissenters will arise. These dissenters may be few but they will have a rage to speak and will carry a passion to persuade. Such dissenters will have to be dealt with or their demand for freedom will infect the people.

The case of Roger Williams would illuminate a simple truth in regard to silencing dissenters. They must either be refuted or persecuted and oppressed. One central danger must be voiced. If dissent comes from the side of truth it can only be refuted with half-truths and lying propaganda. Many may see through the fabric of lies. The safest and most successful way to silence the dissenter is to get rid of him. The refined way is the Massachusetts way—banish him!

51Ibid., p. 111.
popular way in many nations of our world today--liquidate him! The American way--the Rhode Island way--listen to him! If he speaks falsely, refute him. If he speaks truth, it will out to the good of the nation. Let him speak!

This, then, constitutes what in the writer's view might be called basic principles of dissent in the tradition of Roger Williams--the first great dissenter in American history. It is the essence of the Roger Williams rhetoric of dissent. In the logic and spirit of this model of dissent there is no coercive demand that current American dissenters must fit its mold. But as the great cause that Williams advocated hovered over the American origins until it became cemented ultimately in the constitutional foundations of the nation, even so it is possible that the lofty standards of the Williams tradition of dissent may bring some helpful principles to clarify and uplift the rhetoric of contemporary radicalism and dissent.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study began with the purpose of seeking to discover what part Roger Williams should have in the History of American Public Address. One preliminary generalization stated that his reputation seemed to be based on abilities other than preaching. Another generalization concluded that Roger Williams the man was better remembered than Roger Williams the writer.

The reputation of Roger Williams and the diversity of views concerning him seemed to encourage a study that would help to clarify his importance to the field of public address. No speeches or sermons of significance were extant to use for research purposes; therefore the conventional type of rhetorical study was impossible. However, Roger Williams is best remembered as a controversialist and since no rhetorical study of his most important effort in debate—that of his controversy with the Massachusetts Bay Colony over freedom of conscience—had been made, it seemed logical to focus the study on this his most important rhetorical contribution. While no written account of the oral part of the debate was kept, the pamphlet controversy between John Cotton and Roger Williams provided ample materials for investigation. Adequate primary and secondary sources were available to
make a worthwhile investigation. The methods for the investigation were those standard to contemporary rhetorical criticism. The topic was found to be quite timely due to the current interest in radicalism and dissent.

Summary of the Development of the Controversy

Roger and Mary Williams came to America in 1631. Roger had been born, probably in 1603, in London. The son of a shopkeeper, he had early gained the attention of Sir Edward Coke who helped him gain an education at Charterhouse School and at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. He received his B.A. in 1627. He continued for a time at Cambridge but found that the pressures of the Anglican church were too great for his interest; he left Cambridge and became household chaplain for Sir William Masham. He married in 1629 and having accepted the Separatist position came to America in 1631.

Upon arriving in Boston, he was offered the post of Teacher in the church in Boston. After finding that the church had not separated from the Church of England, he declined the post—to the amazement and great concern of the Colonial Magistrates.

For a time he was Teacher at Salem, but due to unrecorded circumstances he soon left and went to Plymouth. Here he set up a trading post, learned the language of the Indians, and preached in the church. His influence with the Indians became quite strong. He wrote a Treatise concerning what he felt was the King's lack of authority over Indian lands and fell under great suspicion from the General
Court of Massachusetts. He was submissive and they withdrew their threats. Williams returned to Salem, became Teacher, and due to his radical preaching was brought before the General Court a number of times.

Roger Williams was finally offered a chance to debate before the General Court. He did debate but no opinions were changed. The decree of banishment was read to him, and he was told that he could stay until spring if he would not preach. He apparently could not be silent and when the General Court heard of his continued preaching, officers were sent to put him on a ship back to England. Friends had warned Williams of this plan and he fled into the wilderness to stay with the Indians until spring. When spring came, he went to the Narragansett Bay, bought land from the Indians, and founded Providence.

Letters were exchanged between Williams and members of the Bay Colony but the controversy did not break open again until Williams went to London in 1643 to seek a charter for his colony. On the way to England he wrote *A Key into the Language of America*. The book was published in London and created much interest and an audience for Williams. Someone published a letter that John Cotton had written to Williams some time before. Williams immediately answered this publication with a letter that answered Cotton's contentions. He then entered into the pamphlet controversy over liberty of conscience, addressing John Cotton as a primary audience. His secondary audience was the Parliament and the clergy of England and America. His first
pamphlet was entitled: **Queries of Highest Consideration.** The second was his greatest work entitled: **The Blody Tenent of Persecution for cause of Conscience.** It set forth in dialogue form his arguments against John Cotton, refuting him on almost a word for word basis. Having gained a charter from the Parliament, he returned to Providence in 1644.

John Cotton published his rebuttal in 1647 with: **A Reply to Mr. Williams his Examination and The Blody Tenent, Washed, and made white in the bloud of the Lambe.**

Williams returned to London in 1652 and found that there was much interest in libert of conscience. He had many interviews with Cromwell, Milton and other important individuals and published his rebuttal to Cotton: **The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody: By Mr. Cottons endevour to wash it white in the Blood of the Lambe.** Cotton died in 1652—probably before he saw Williams' rebuttal—or the debate might have been more extended. Williams finished his business in London and returned to America in 1654. Here he carried on an active life, dying in 1683.

**Summary of the Nature of the Controversy**

Roger Williams evidently was interested in promoting a more Scripturally pure brand of Puritanism than the Massachusetts Bay Colony was willing to establish. His various clashes at Boston, Plymouth and Salem were all related to this concept. The emergent and enduring issue of the controversy became that concerning liberty of conscience.
Williams took the affirmative position in the debate—demanding that freedom of conscience and freedom of worship be made available to all regardless of creed. Cotton took the negative position and sought to defend both himself and the existing institution.

Almost all of the major issues of the debate centered around the interpretation of Biblical texts and concepts. Both men wrote for a limited audience of "initiated" people whose training would enable them to untangle the intricacies of Puritan dialectic. Cotton and Williams clashed over Biblical typology, the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, and principles of separation of church and state. Williams always took the hard line of complete church purity and Cotton was the exponent of the "Middle Way." Williams summarized the affirmative with a demand for complete liberty of conscience. Cotton died without shifting from his position of defending the "Puritan Oligarchy" and its right to suppress those who "sinned against their own consciences" after having been presented the truth by the Colonial Magistrates.

Summary of the Criticism of the Controversy

The debate over liberty of conscience was analyzed. The debate proposition was: Resolved, that no man should be persecuted by the civil state for worshiping God according to the dictates of his own conscience. The debaters agreed to the terms. Williams sought to establish a need for a change in the status quo. He sought as an end an individual living at peace with his conscience in a peaceful
society. Since this was impossible for an individual like Roger Williams in the Massachusetts Bay Colony under the prevailing system, Williams contended that a change was essential. He presented four basic contentions:

I. The Massachusetts Bay Colony practices the evil of persecution for cause of conscience.

II. The doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience is not taught in the Bible.

III. Persecution for cause of conscience is not universally practiced by civil states.

IV. Persecution for cause of conscience destroys peace.

As a "plan" to effectively achieve the end that he sought, Williams presented the following affirmative contentions:

I. The civil state should care for its own affairs and reserve spiritual matters for the church.

II. The state should provide full liberty of conscience for all.

III. The church should care for those matters concerning herself.

John Cotton countered by seeking to discredit Williams' contentions concerning the need for a change. He presented the following negative considerations:

I. The Massachusetts Bay Colony does not practice persecution for cause of conscience.

II. It is agreed that persecution for cause of conscience is not taught in the Bible but punishment for heresy is taught.

III. It is granted that the civil state should not persecute for cause of conscience but the civil state has a responsibility to help keep the church pure by assisting in the punishing of heresy.
IV. Persecution for cause of conscience is always wrong but the use of civil power to keep the church pure will preserve peace.

Since Cotton felt that he had successfully destroyed the case that Williams had established concerning the need for a change, he did not feel that he was required to refute Williams' proposed plan.

The nature of arguments and rebuttals was considered, and several examples of the logical patterns of the arguments of Cotton and Williams were presented. Their arguments followed similar patterns. Both used adequate reasoning, but premised the majority of their arguments on the interpretation of Scripture passages. This placed the problem of judging the outcome of the debate heavily in the area of probability. Williams used more detailed arguments with greater amounts of documentation than did Cotton. This may have been because he represented the affirmative side and realized that his audience was hostile to his views.

Although the initial victory in the debate appeared to belong to John Cotton, the long view of three hundred years accords the final victory to Roger Williams, America's first great dissenter.

The debate was next studied in its rhetorical setting. The dominant system of communication theory was that of Peter Ramus. This system severely categorized communication procedures, placed invention and arrangement in the realm of dialectic and left rhetoric with style and delivery. Bay Colony standards for the office of Teacher gave much authority to the preacher in illuminating the mind of the auditor and required the auditor to respond. Puritan rhetoric followed the
plain style and avoided florid ornamentation. It claimed to be en-
lit\n
lightened by the Spirit of God.

Both Williams and Cotton were Biblicists and needed little be-
sides the Bible for their sources of invention, Williams used more
classical allusions than Cotton but their importance to his arguments
was not of great significance. Their system of arrangement was simply
to repeat each other's arguments and then refute these arguments.
Both wrote with avowed persuasive intent. Cotton and Williams both
used some debate terminology.

The debaters both followed a rambling, wordy, technical style
of writing that was not intended for lay readers. Ramistic rhetoric
had equipped them to use tropes and figures and they both used them.
Emotional appeal was left to the area of style and could be found in
such words as "Bloudy Tenent," "the blood of the Lamb," and countless
expressions laden with religious connotations. Emotional effect was
strengthened by heaping up figures, but these had to be kept under the
control of Biblical logic.

Cotton used the plain style, ornamented with Biblical meta-
phors, and used many examples. Williams followed much the same style
but seemed to use more liberty in his figures, heaping them up more in
his paragraphs. They argued over examples drawn from current history,
but mainly used church history and Biblical examples. They quoted
some "writers" but most were drawn from church history.

Williams used the dialogue form for his presentations and
while he had many beautiful similes and metaphors, he would often
speak of harlots and use terms like "soul rape" to make his points vivid. His better figures were buried in long, rambling sentences that were broken up with meaningless commas and extended parenthetical statements. His writing was usually done in a great hurry and suffered from poor printing. Williams admitted at times that his discourses were tedious and his lines "thick and over busy as the musketoes."

Seeking to evaluate the debate in the perspective of current rhetorical concepts was extremely difficult. The nature of the controversy was theological and technical. Ramistic influence has waned since they wrote. Both men would be considered weak in their uses of invention by modern standards. They would be asked to look for a wider range of evidence and argument.

The debate had some relationship to modern forms of debate in that the affirmative and negative positions and contentions were discernible. The method of arrangement was too cumbersome for modern standards, and the debaters would be asked to cut to the heart of the matter and say it more quickly.

The style of the debaters was still too florid for modern conversational quality. The sentences were too laborious and extended. In short, the writer looked for a better way to make applications to modern theory and discussed his ideas under the heading of effects.

The ethical appeal of the debaters was examined and it was discovered that while Williams had high ethos in America initially, he lost it because of his dissent against the Non-Separatist stand of the
Bay Colony. In England his ethos was high with those interested in liberty of conscience and very low with the enemies of toleration.

Both Cotton and Williams were Cambridge graduates and had nearly equal academic qualifications and abilities. Cotton had generally strong ethos both in England and America and sustained it by his "middle way" approach. While Williams was looked down upon by members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony because of his dissenting views, no one cast any doubts upon his spirituality or his morality. He maintained many friends in the Bay Colony and worked constantly in Indian affairs to prevent Indian attacks upon Massachusetts. Williams could never compromise or be silent about what he believed was truth.

A number of examples were presented to reveal that both Cotton and Williams effectively demonstrated the use of ethical proofs in their debating. They sought to build up their own ethos and to tear down the ethos of their opponent.

Summary of the Effects of the Controversy

Roger Williams affected some change of opinion in Plymouth and Salem but was removed before any significant action could take place, although some people evidently followed him to Providence. Neither Cotton nor Williams were able to influence any significant change of opinion in each other. The development of the Providence Colony was perhaps the most important effect of the controversy in New England.

The impact of Roger Williams upon his London audiences was more varied. He was evidently quite effective in helping to stir up
the flurry of debate and pamphleteering that followed The Bloudy Ten­
ent. One very concrete effect of Williams' dissent was the burning of
The Bloudy Tenent. This action apparently helped to strengthen the
impact of the book. Williams was able to gain an audience more easily
on his second trip to London and strengthened his impact upon some of
the important people of the day such as Cromwell and Milton. He ap­
parently had opportunity to join Cromwell and the Independents but re­
turned to America instead. He was able to influence some private
citizens to come to America with him, and before he left he was able
to widen the breach between the Independents in England and the Massa­
chusetts Bay Colony.

He also effected a great deal of negative reaction both in
England and America from the opponents of toleration.

The major influences of the controversy of an immediate nature
seemed to be the establishment of the Rhode Island Colony in America
and the spurring of toleration controversy in England.

The impact of Roger Williams upon the present world was diffi­
cult to describe. Since his books were not republished in America un­
til the latter part of the nineteenth century, he apparently exerted
little direct influence upon the writers of the Constitution. There
can be little doubt, however, that his experiment in religious liberty
and democracy in Rhode Island had a continuing effect upon American
development in all its stages. The image of the "great dissenter"
hovers over all of American history to remind its leaders of the
fruits of freedom and the dangers of oppression.
Williams eventually became a popular hero, partly because he was first in America with a great idea. Perhaps his present popularity simply reflects the glow of his great dedication to that idea. The past one hundred years has seen the Williams image shift from heretic to hero, and the last fifteen years has seen a revival of scholarly study that perhaps has made his writings available to more people today than in the day they were first printed. There are many references to Williams in current books on secular and church history and he is popularly discussed in American Literature classes.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that the present study of Williams makes to current rhetorical theory is the setting forth of what might be called Roger Williams' rhetoric of dissent.

Current interest in academic circles concerning radicalism and dissent seemed to justify this examination of the Williams model of dissent.

This rhetoric of dissent based on the experience of Roger Williams found as a first principle that dissent is costly to the dissenter. The Williams type of dissenter must not fear the consequences of his actions. If he engages in civil disobedience, he must expect to pay the price that civil government will exact. The dissenter must be willing to stand alone—to be misunderstood. He must be mobile—ready to change battlefields—without regard to family needs, ease, or personal safety. He must expect to have enemies and must realize that he has no promise of followers when he takes his initial step into the wilderness of dissent. The final cost—and perhaps the most extreme—
is that the dissenter must be willing to wait for effects which he may never see in his lifetime. He must be alert to the issues of his day and not be afraid to face those issues.

Secondly, the dissenter in the Williams pattern must be aware of the importance of his motivations. He must have a great cause and be totally dedicated to it. He must not be guided by selfish ambition and must constantly keep an open mind.

Finally, he must follow a method. The Colonial model calls for a clear knowledge of truth and constant vigilance to keep truth pure. The method is always non-violent. The dissenter must not be afraid of high places. He must not fear to stand before kings to speak the truth or fear to walk among savages in order to find a place where truth may be planted to grow unmolested. The dissenter must never grow weary of speaking the truth—for silence is defeat.

The Williams rhetoric of dissent also found lessons for those on the other side of the coin. For those who would seek to force their ideas on their fellow men—whether in religion or in civil affairs—be aware that dissenters will arise with a rage to speak. These Williams styled dissenters must be dealt with or they will carry the day—people will follow the call of freedom.

Those who would silence dissenters must do it either through refutation or persecution. If the dissenter is on the side of truth, the masses may not be swayed by the half-truths and lying propaganda of the established power. The next step must be banishment or
liquidation or better yet the American way--let him talk! If he speaks truth, it will out to the good of the nation. Let him speak!

As the great idea of Williams' cause perpetuated itself in the American way of life, so it is possible that the awareness of the Williams rhetoric of dissent may help to lift the standards of the contemporary practice of radicalism and dissent in America.

Conclusions

It became apparent in evaluating the rhetorical career of Roger Williams that his reputation is based on abilities other than preaching. While his preaching in the Massachusetts Bay Colony was effective enough to cause his banishment, the record of his pulpit influence in Rhode Island is very sparse. It is apparent that his great contribution to rhetorical study lies in his radicalism and dissent. Against the odds of certain failure he was willing to clash with the Massachusetts Bay Colony and even though they removed him from them they could not silence his dissent. The prolonged pamphlet controversy over liberty of conscience has become an essential part of the backgrounds of America. Since the writings of the controversy have not been readily available for most of our nation's history, and since they are extremely difficult to read when they are available, it would seem that Roger Williams the man is better remembered than Roger Williams the writer. His dissent, the great principle of freedom of conscience that became the enduring issue of his dissent, and the ultimate triumph of this principle as the American way have set Roger
Williams apart as an American hero. Other dissenters have followed, other causes have become part of the American way of life, but Roger Williams retains his hero's stature because he was America's first great dissenter. As an exemplar of communication procedures on the basis of standard critical procedures his contribution to current rhetorical practices is slight. However, if the concept of rhetorical criticism is extended to include an investigation of the American tradition of radicalism and dissent, Roger Williams as the first dissenter provides an interesting and lofty standard for the rhetoric of radicalism and dissent. The current revolt on the part of many individualistic groups in America indicates a need for the continued evaluation of the rhetoric of such dissent. It is hoped that this study will make a contribution to the understanding of the American tradition of radicalism and dissent in its historical beginnings. Such a foundational study of American dissent should be helpful in developing a more complete study of the tradition of American dissent and should help in the proper evaluation of contemporary practices in radicalism and dissent.
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