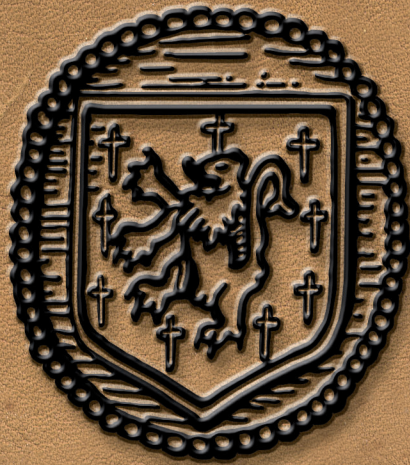


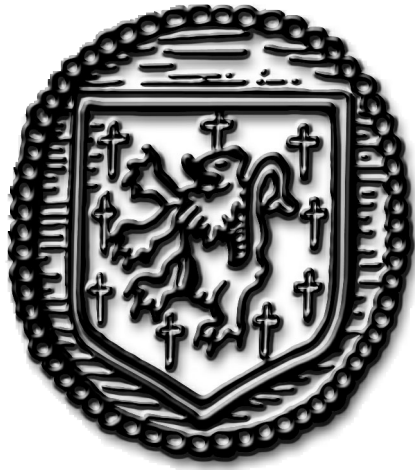
# The Complete Writings of Roger Williams



Volume 7

**THE**  
**Complete Writings of**  
**ROGER WILLIAMS**





**Roger William's Personal Seal**

THE  
*COMPLETE WRITINGS*  
OF  
ROGER  
WILLIAMS

VOLUME SEVEN



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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth.

-- *Psalms 60:4*



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**THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM**

*lux lucet in tenebris*

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

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Biographical Introduction  
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*by* Perry Miller  
Christenings make Not Christians  
Experiments of Spiritual Life and Health  
The Fourth Paper Presented by Major Butler  
The Hireling Ministry None of Christs  
The Examiner—Defended in a Fair and Sober Answer

***PUBLISHER'S NOTE***

**All the new matter contained in this edition, including Prof. Miller's essay, will be found in VOLUME SEVEN. This arrangement was adopted in order to retain the original pagination of the first six volumes and thereby maintain the integrity of the voluminous references to the *Narragansett Edition* in the literature about ROGER WILLIAMS. The reader is directed to the inclusive Table of Contents for guidance.**

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THE COMPLETE WRITINGS OF ROGER WILLIAMS

*Issued in Seven Volumes in a Limited Edition  
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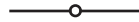
*Published in 1963 by Russell & Russell, Inc.*

*Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 63-11034*

*Printed in The United States of America*



## VOLUME 7 - CONTENTS.



	PAGE.
PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD . . . . .	1
ROGER WILLIAMS: AN ESSAY IN INTERPRETATION .	5
<i>by</i> PERRY MILLER	
CHRISTENINGS MAKE NOT CHRISTIANS. . . . .	26
EXPERIMENTS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND HEALTH .	42
THE FOURTH PAPER PRESENTED BY MAJOR BUTLER .	115
THE HIRELING MINISTRY NONE OF CHRISTS . . . .	142
THE EXAMINER—DEFENDED IN A FAIR AND SOBER ANSWER	192





## *Publishers' Foreword*

THE warm reception accorded by the reading public in 1953 to Perry Miller's book, *ROGER WILLIAMS, His Contribution to the American Tradition*, has encouraged the Publishers to set the present edition before the academic world. The necessarily brief excerpts which were woven into the narrative of that book have whetted the curiosity of students and scholars for a wider knowledge of Williams' text and matter. For many, however, the study has had to be pursued under severe handicaps. The original editions are excessively rare and costly. The few reprints made in the nineteenth century are not to be had merely by inquiry in antiquarian bookshops. As for the collected writings, almost ninety years have passed since the final volume of the *Narragansett Edition* was delivered to subscribers. Fewer than 200 sets were printed. This too is scarce, and this scarcity has been aggravated by the ravages of time on a brittle paper that crumbles to the touch.

If Roger Williams' very words were to be read again, another collection of the works had to be provided. In an ideal world of dedicated scholars and unlimited funds, nothing less than an entirely re-edited edition would be called for. Preliminary investigation indicated that such an edition would take years to prepare, and careful estimates of printing and editorial costs suggested a finally prohibitive price. The constitution of the present edition was adopted as a happy compromise. It has the immediate advantage of making available literal and authentic texts of Williams' writings. The first six volumes are an exact



reprint of the *Narragansett Edition*; the five tracts not printed therein, together with new forewords and Prof. Miller's essay, make up the seventh volume.

Care has been taken to ensure texts of the utmost fidelity. The eccentric spelling, the whimsical use of capitals and italics, even the most egregious printer's errors, all have been retained as conforming to the canons of usage adopted by the *Narragansett* editors. For their volumes these scholars provided annotations which are models of erudition. It would be a rash editor indeed who would attempt to improve upon them, except in matters of minor detail and emphasis. Reuben Aldridge Guild's Biographical Introduction, it must be confessed, is sadly out of date. It should be read in conjunction with any of the several biographies written by James Ernst, Samuel Brockunier, or Ola Winslow. The twentieth century reader, stumbling momentarily over the archaic *f*, should regard its retention by the editors as no more than a sentimental attachment to an antique type face.

The sophisticated student who has worked with 17th century books will accommodate himself readily to this irritant, as he will to Williams' archaic constructions. The difficulties of Williams' style, we venture to say, have been exaggerated. Although the texts have been corrupted by numerous printer's errors, Williams' spelling is itself so inconsistent as to discourage editorial tampering. What difference that in one line appears the spelling *Jews*, and in the next, *Jewes*? A modern reader capable of finding the important words in any sentence will be more amused than distracted by his emphatic use of italics. The punctuation is a more difficult matter. By modern standards there is too much of it. Williams was barely acquainted with the period, and dearly loved the comma. It is possible to become momentarily lost among the hedgerows of his parentheses. An occasional sentence has to be retraced in order to rescue the sense from the semi-colons. Notwithstanding these reservations, the sympathetic reader will discover that the punctuation has its own rationale. This was as much a part of his style as his vocabulary. It enforces its own discipline, a close reading of each word.

Williams' rhetoric requires the reader's complete attention. The sentences are long. Parallels are heaped one upon the other. The ques-

tion and answer form in which he cast his disputations leads to tedious repetition. In the 17th century, theological controversy stretched out interminably because its etiquette, its dialectic, required the protagonists to dot every "i" and to cross every "t." Williams' forensic writings deal only with a few basic ideas. Because they were important ideas, and because he held them steadfastly against redoubtable opposition, there are also passages of superb prose in these pages. In each successive tract he returns to the same conclusions. He will not rest. He will not be silent. His persistence triumphs over the tiresome polemics, and makes them finally bearable. The reader becomes aware of a massive and overwhelming sincerity.

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 to 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. How he came to hold this principle so tenaciously, Perry Miller undertakes to clarify on the following pages.

"The historic importance of Roger Williams for Baptists and others in the Free Church tradition has long been recognized . . . Yet being widely recognized has not translated into being carefully studied. Many know about him, but few have actually read anything of him. Williams may well be 'America's most overlooked founder'. . . Roger Williams offers a model of deep Christian conviction rooted in the Lordship of Christ which gives rise to the practices of hospitality to strangers, peacemaking with enemies, and civility in society. Until now it has been difficult for anyone without access to a research library to get their hands on his writings. The republication of **THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ROGER WILLIAMS** will provide pastors, church leaders, students of history and religion, and anyone wanting to know how to live at peace in a pluralistic world with the excellent resource of Perry Miller's wonderful edition at an extremely affordable price."

**CURTIS W. FREEMAN**

Research Professor of Theology and Baptist Studies  
Director of the Baptist House of Studies  
Duke Divinity School

"I am delighted to see Roger Williams's collected works reprinted . . . We can't be reminded too often that religious freedom is the ally of true faith – not its enemy. And no one demonstrates this more emphatically than Roger Williams. He reminds us that religious freedom in America was not the invention of skeptics but of fervent believers, i.e., believers who cared so intensely about faith that they could not dream of letting anything so clumsy as government be its guardian. We could use more of Roger Williams's prickly and prophetic voice."

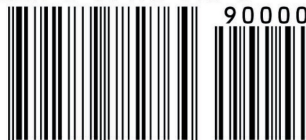
**TIMOTHY L. HALL**

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School of Law  
University of Mississippi

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ISBN 1-57978-276-0



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