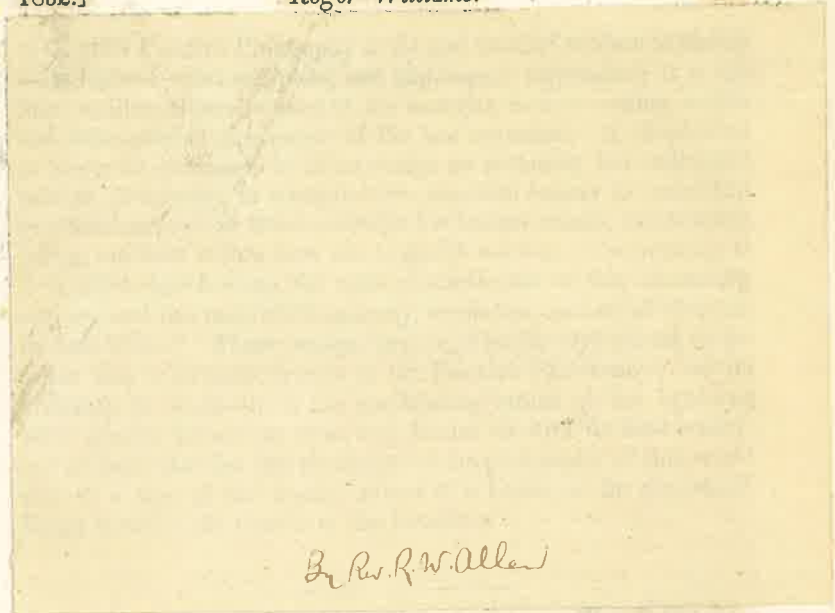


ROGER WILLIAMS

By Rev. R. W. Allen

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with Q. Rev.



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ART. II.—ROGER WILLIAMS.

1. *Memoir of Roger Williams, the Founder of the State of Rhode Island.* By JAMES D. KNOWLES, Professor of Pastoral Duties in the Newton Theological Institution. Boston: Lincoln, Edmonds & Co.
2. *Life of Roger Williams.* By WILLIAM GAMMELL. Boston: Charles C. Little & James Brown.

MR. KNOWLES has done the cause of morals and religion valuable service in rescuing from oblivion many important facts, throwing light upon the true character of Roger Williams. Several attempts had been previously made to accomplish this work, but they had all failed. Dr. Belknap designed to give the life of Roger Williams a place in his American Biography, and he sought earnestly for materials, but with indifferent success. It was announced, a few years since, that Southey intended to write the life of Roger Williams; the design was pro-

° The aims and tendencies of the civilization of the age have been so admirably expressed in a few brief formulæ by Hoéné Wronski, (Messianisme, tome i, pp. 47-49,) that we would have willingly inserted them here, had not our remarks run to such a length that we have been obliged to omit many topics of more importance. One expression has so pointed an application to the Positive Philosophy, as to indicate that the statement was intended as a criticism upon it, and it may certainly be regarded in that light, as a most forcible and just exposition of the fatal creed which must spring from the adoption of the Positivism of M. Comte.

bably relinquished for the same reason. At Southey's suggestion the Rev. Mr. Greenwood, of Boston, collected many valuable materials, but he, too, for personal reasons, abandoned the undertaking. The task of our author was a most difficult one. After receiving all the materials previously collected by Mr. Greenwood, he says, "In my further search for information, I soon discovered, that many persons, well acquainted with our early history, knew very little of Roger Williams. In the books I found almost every important fact concerning him stated differently. I was obliged to gather hints from disconnected documents, and to reconcile contradictory assertions;—my labour often resembled the miner, who sifts large masses of sand, to obtain a few particles of gold." But, difficult as was the task, he has performed it well.

Mr. Gammell's life of Roger Williams presents a truthful and striking portrait of the justly styled "apostle of religious liberty." He relies principally on the facts furnished by Mr. Knowles, and has used them with great skill and advantage. His work is unquestionably one of the most interesting biographies to be found in "Sparks's Library," of which it forms the fourth volume.

In attempting a brief sketch of the life, character, and career of the founder of Rhode Island, we shall make free use of the volumes before us.

But little is known respecting the early life of Roger Williams. From the best information received, it is supposed that he was born in Wales, in 1599. He possessed the Welsh temperament—excitable and ardent feelings, generosity, courage, and firmness. It is supposed that he was a distant relative of Oliver Cromwell—perhaps second cousin. Mr. Williams does not claim in his writings such relationship with the Protector, though he often speaks of being intimate with him. They seemed to have been kindred spirits, whose hearts beat in unison on those great principles which they labored so ardently to promote. Roger speaks of a "close conference with Oliver," on the subject of Popery, which, it is said, they both abhorred and feared. How much they may have assisted each other by their frequent and "close" conferences in the great work to which they seemed to have been providentially called, will not be known before the great day of final accounts.

He became a Christian in early life, though the exact time of his experiencing regenerating grace is unknown. Near the close of life, he observes,—“From my childhood, now above threescore years, the Father of lights and mercies touched my soul with a love to himself, to his only-begotten, the true Lord Jesus, and to his Holy Scriptures.” “The religious character, whose germs were thus early

planted, grew and ripened with his years, amidst the retirement of his secluded studies, and bore fruits in a life of piety and virtue, which won for him the respect and confidence of those with whom he was associated.”

As is the case with most great and good men, the stability of his Christian character and his usefulness were laid in his early piety. He was eminently spiritually-minded, and this characteristic he retained to the close of life. Few men have ever lived who possessed through a long life a Christian character so pure and blameless.

That Mr. Williams was liberally educated has generally been admitted, but *where*, has, until recently, been a matter of doubt. It has been generally supposed that he was educated at the University of Oxford, under the patronage of Sir Edward Coke, whose interest in him was first excited by an incident as follows:—

“Sir Edward observed him, one day, during public worship, taking notes of the discourse. His curiosity was excited, and he requested the boy to show him his notes. He was so favourably impressed by the evidences of talent which these exhibited, that he requested the parents of young Williams to intrust their son to his care.”

From an interesting correspondence between Mr. Williams and Lady Sadler, a daughter of Sir Edward Coke, which was obtained by Mr. Bancroft when in England, and is now in the possession of the “Rhode Island Historical Society,” we learn that he was educated as above supposed, which certainly reflects great honour on his generous patron. He drank deeply at the fountains of learning, as his writings abundantly testify. Says Mr. Gammell, “His mind was enriched and expanded with the best learning of the age; and it is probable, that his preparation for the sacred profession, to which he was looking forward, was, for the time, unusually thorough and complete.” He was thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and the Dutch, and it is said while teaching John Milton the Dutch, Milton taught him several other languages besides the above. He subsequently obtained a knowledge of the Indian languages of New-England, and wrote a “Key” to those languages—an interesting and valuable work.

He studied law under the direction of Sir Edward Coke,—his patron would naturally wish to train his pupil to his own useful and honourable profession,—and the knowledge he thus obtained of jurisprudence had evidently much to do in qualifying him for the duties of a legislator. He soon, however, turned his attention to the study of theology,—a study more congenial with his taste,—and became eminent as a theologian. “He was admitted to orders in the Established Church, though it is not known by what bishop, or in what year, he

was ordained. It is also said that he was appointed to the charge of a parish, while in England, but of this no mention whatever is made in his writings which now exist." His preaching attracted considerable attention, and he was respected and beloved as a devoted minister of Jesus Christ.

Roger Williams embraced the cause of the Puritans. It was an important period in English history. The great principles of the Reformation, first preached in England by Wiclif, now began to develop themselves in the institutions both of the Church and State. They were violently opposed by the power of the hierarchy, but hailed with rejoicing by those who had long felt the oppressive yoke, and desired freedom of conscience. The mighty struggle, which had commenced with the Reformation, between the corrupt forms of religion and the principles of civil and religious liberty, was now revived with great zeal. Elizabeth, who was supposed to be friendly to the Protestants, possessed the despotic temper of her father. She was in love with the showy rites of Popery. She actually hated the Non-conformists more than the Papists, and issued her mandate that the former should submit to the ceremonies of the Established Church.

"Severe laws were passed by an obsequious Parliament, and enforced, with ready zeal, by servile bishops. Every minister who refused to conform to all the prescribed ceremonies was liable to be deprived of his office; and a large number of the ablest ministers in the nation were thus expelled and silenced. In order to enforce the laws with the utmost rigor, a new tribunal was erected, called the 'Court of High Commission,' consisting of commissioners, appointed by the queen. This Court was invested with power to arrest ministers in any part of the kingdom, to deprive them of their livings, and to fine or imprison them at the pleasure of the Court. Instead of producing witnesses in open court to prove the charges, they assumed a power of administering an oath *ex officio*, whereby the prisoner was obliged to answer all questions the Court should put to him, though highly prejudicial to his own defence. If he refused to swear, he was imprisoned for contempt; and if he took the oath, he was convicted upon his own confession. By this Protestant Inquisition, and by other means, one fourth of the preachers in England are said to have been under suspension. Numerous parishes were destitute of preachers, and so many were filled by illiterate and profligate men, that not one beneficed clergyman in six was capable of composing a sermon. Thus were learned and pious ministers oppressed, merely for their conscientious scruples about a few ceremonies, their families were ruined, the people were deprived of faithful teachers, the progress of truth hindered, the prelatists were gratified, and a state of irritation was produced in the public mind, which led, in a succeeding reign, to the disastrous issue of a bloody civil war."

Roger Williams, whose political principles were very liberal, and who held in abhorrence the doctrines upheld by the court, could not but espouse the cause of the Non-conformists, or Puritans. James, whose accession to the throne greatly excited the hopes of the Puritans, proved to be

"An obstinate and arbitrary monarch, who inflexibly maintained in theory, and often in practice, those despotic principles which led his son to the scaffold, and expelled James II. from the throne. A mind like that of Williams, strong, searching, and fearless, would naturally be opposed to the pretensions of the king. His patron, Sir Edward Coke, incurred the resentment of James, for his free principles, and his bold vindication of the rights of the people."

Cotton, Hooker, and many other distinguished ministers were silenced, and Williams, who had become their associate and friend, could not expect to escape. With many others, he wisely concluded to seek an asylum on the shores of New-England. Consequently, on the 1st of Dec., 1630, in the ship *Lyon*, Capt. Peirce, master, (the same ship which bore so many of the pilgrims to America,) he embarked at Bristol, and, after a tempestuous voyage of sixty-six days, arrived at Boston, Feb. 5th, 1631. Mr. Gammell says:—

"He was now in the thirty-second year of his age, and in the full maturity of all his powers, having already acquired a reputation for eloquence and piety, which had spread widely in England, and had preceded him to America. His arrival at Boston is mentioned by Gov. Winthrop, as of 'a godly minister,' and was doubtless hailed, by the Churches of the infant settlements of Massachusetts Bay, as an accession to their strength of the precious gifts of piety and learning. They little anticipated the startling doctrines he would put forth; and he had no intimation of the singular destiny that was preparing for him amid the unknown wilderness to which he had come. When he embarked at Bristol, he had been recently married, and was accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Mary Williams, a lady who lived to share his changeful fortunes among the checkered scenes through which he subsequently passed, but of whose early history even less is known than that of her husband."

On his arrival in Boston, he was sadly disappointed. He had come, as he supposed, to the asylum of the exiled Puritans, where he would be received with open arms by his former associates and friends, and where he could enjoy those civil and religious privileges of which he had been deprived in his native land. But he had scarcely entered the colony before he found that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were arrayed against him. He had fled from persecution, and now, to his surprise, he found that the same intolerant spirit which had caused so many martyrs to bleed on British soil, and had made his stay in England intolerable, was actually governing the Massachusetts pilgrims. He supposed that they had formed a colony and established a Church in which civil and religious freedom might be enjoyed, but he now found his mistake. Understanding the principles by which they were governed, he refused to unite with the Church in Boston. Soon after his arrival, Mr. Williams was invited by the Church in Salem to become assistant to their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Skelton; but the magistrates of the colony remonstrated against his being thus settled. They addressed a letter to the Church, in which they stated the reasons for their remonstrance. First, Mr. Williams

had refused to join the Church in Boston, "because they would not declare their repentance for having had communion with the Churches of England while they lived there. Secondly, that he had declared his opinion, that the magistrate might not punish a breach of the Sabbath, nor any other offence that was a breach of the first table." As to the first reason assigned, Mr. Williams was not alone in believing that the pilgrims had been in fault in holding communion with those who were the greatest enemies to experimental religion in England. He looked upon such communion as a compromise with iniquity.

"Mr. Williams, however, had already removed to Salem, where, on the 12th of April, 1631, he was settled as a minister of the Church, notwithstanding the opposition of the magistrates, who at that time were assembled at Boston. On the 18th of the following May, after having been duly propounded, he was admitted a freeman of the colony, and took the usual oath of allegiance prescribed in such cases. He was now, in the fullest sense of the word, a citizen of the colony, and one of the ministers of its oldest Church. He had thus identified himself with its interests by the most significant acts which he could perform, and was doubtless as ready to labour in its service, and to share its burdens, as any of those who had been appointed to preside over its affairs. The people of Salem had extended to him their confidence, and his life and ministry there had confirmed their respect and attachment, and were giving promise of a long career, as their guide, and teacher, and friend."

But Mr. Williams was not permitted to remain here in peace. He and his Church were constantly harassed and disturbed by the civil authorities, who claimed a guardianship over the popular faith. Their advice in the settlement of Mr. Williams had not been followed, and this had awakened their stern displeasure. For the sake of peace and quiet, after the lapse of a few months, in August, 1631, he left a kind and affectionate people, to whom his labours had been made a great blessing, and sought a residence beyond the persecuting jurisdiction of Massachusetts Bay, in the colony of Plymouth. Here he was received with great attention and respect. His eminent talents as a Christian minister, and his deep personal piety were properly appreciated. He was soon admitted to the Church, and settled as assistant to the Rev. Ralph Smith. But although he found in the Puritans that came over in the *Mayflower* a far more liberal spirit than that which governed their neighbours in Massachusetts Bay, he did not feel perfectly at home. His feelings were strongly enlisted for the people in Salem, and he longed for the privilege of again ministering to them the word of life. They earnestly desired his return among them, and strongly invited him back. After an absence of two years, during which time he had formed strong attachments in Plymouth, though the preaching of his liberal sentiments had awakened the suspicions of some of the principal

men of the colony, he returned to Salem, and again entered upon the duties of his ministry among a people that he honoured and loved. The Church in Plymouth were unwilling to lose the services of so valuable a pastor, and remonstrated with him against his departure; but believing it to be his duty, he at once sought and obtained a dismissal.

Mr. Williams's second residence in Salem forms an important period of the history of this distinguished man. He resided there a year without being settled as a pastor; but at the death of Mr. Skelton, in 1634, he entered upon the duties of a regularly settled minister. A war now commenced, fierce and terrible. The General Court of Massachusetts must bring Roger Williams to terms! But in case of his refusal to submit to their unrighteous demands, he must be banished from the colony. Such were the conduct and sentiments of those who had fled from England to America to enjoy the rights of conscience! During the first year of Mr. Williams's residence in Salem, even while he ministered "by way of prophecy," he was constantly harassed by magistrates, and was several times summoned before the Court to answer for his sentiments. As the Church in Salem had invited Mr. Williams to become their minister, they wished to ordain him; but against this the Court sent in a decided remonstrance. "The Church, however, with a becoming independence, disregarded the remonstrance, and Mr. Williams was regularly instituted in the pastoral office, in August, 1634. This act was regarded by the Court as a high-handed contempt of their authority, which was not soon forgiven, and was at length punished in a most remarkable and characteristic manner." At nearly every session of the Court Mr. Williams was summoned before it, and his sentiments were complained of, or condemned. "A few months after his settlement as pastor of the Church," we find him again obnoxious to the Court, for having publicly called in question the king's patent, and also "for usually terming the Churches of New-England antichristian." Again, in the following April, 1635, the governor and assistants summoned him to appear at Boston. "The occasion was, that he had taught publicly that a magistrate ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man, for that we thereby have communion with a wicked man in the worship of God, and cause him to take the name of God in vain. He was heard before all the ministers, and very clearly confuted." So says Gov. Winthrop. Had Mr. Williams given a version of the argument, the result might have been differently stated.

The controversy in which Mr. Williams was engaged continued with increasing violence. Mr. Gammell observes:—

"The controversy with the authorities of Massachusetts, in which the principles of Williams had impelled him to engage, was now becoming every day more violent, and running into almost every act of the Court, and every relation of social life. They still maintained a connexion with the Church of England, and manifested a respect for its institutions. Williams retained a vivid recollection of its intolerant acts, and boldly declared its 'bloody tenet of persecution,' as he termed it, to be 'most lamentably contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.' The magistrates enacted a law, requiring every man to attend public worship, and to contribute to its support. This he denounced as an open violation of natural rights, and the prolific source of every form of persecution. 'No one,' said he, 'should be bound to maintain a worship against his own consent.' The ablest divines were appointed to reason with him, and to refute the heresies that seemed wrought into his very being. But it was all in vain. His opinions were misrepresented, and carried out to absurd and unauthorized conclusions, and these were charged upon him as essential parts of his doctrine; but he contented himself simply with denying what he did not believe, and reiterating, with irrepressible boldness, the faith which he held. This faith set a clear and well-defined limit to the exercise of the civil power. 'It extends,' said he, with singular accuracy and clearness of perception, 'only to the bodies, and goods, and outward estates of men;' with conscience and with religious opinions, 'the civil magistrate may not intermeddle, even to stop a Church from apostasy and heresy.' These were the opinions that inflamed the whole body of the divines, and called down upon his head the sternest censures from both the civil and ecclesiastical heads of the colony."

Matters had now reached a point when something more effective on the part of the magistrates of Massachusetts must be done. They had denied the right of the Church in Salem to a tract of land in Marblehead, and in other respects had treated them with great injustice. In July, Mr. Williams was again summoned before the General Court in Boston, to answer certain charges brought against him, the substance of which has already been stated. At this Court no witnesses were examined, or counsel heard. They heard his sentiments, and, of course, condemned them. In October, 1635, the next General Court was held, before which he was again summoned. He now came for the last time, but he came with his principles. Under the advice of the ministers of the colony, the Court decided that he should depart out of their jurisdiction within six weeks. The following is the act of banishment:—

"Whereas, Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the Church of Salem, hath broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates; and also writ letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and Churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintained the same without any retraction; it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing, which if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the governor and two of the magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without license of the Court."

The sentence of banishment produced great excitement among the people of Salem, and was regarded as an act of persecution by the more soberminded citizens of the colony. The Court afterwards

gave him permission to remain till spring; but learning that he persisted in uttering and maintaining his sentiments, and fearing the influence of his teachings, they determined to send him to England, by a ship then about ready to sail. For this purpose he was summoned to attend the Court in Boston. He refused to obey the summons, on the ground of ill health. The magistrates, not to be defeated, issued a warrant for him to be apprehended and taken on board the ship, which was ready to sail for England. The officers on going to his house, found his wife and children, but he had been gone several days. Speaking of the banishment of Mr. Williams, Mr. Gammell justly remarks:—

"It is plain that the head and front of his offending consisted in his maintaining, that the civil magistrate has no right to interfere with religious opinions. Of the truth of this principle, and of its paramount importance to the well-being of society, there is no longer any room for question. It is now the cherished sentiment of the people of this country, and is rapidly extending its sway throughout the Protestant world. In the mind of Roger Williams, even at an early period of life, it was clearly conceived, and earnestly pressed to its legitimate results; though it was there mingled with other opinions, with which it had no natural connexion. It may also be admitted, that, while in Massachusetts, he advocated his principle with too urgent a zeal, and with too little regard for the prevailing opinions of the age; but, after making every allowance that either justice or charity can claim, his banishment must be regarded as an arbitrary proceeding, utterly without foundation either in justice or in state necessity. It was the offspring of a principle that would justify every species of tyranny, and it will forever remain among the few spots that tarnish the escutcheon of Massachusetts, otherwise radiant with unnumbered virtues."

It was winter when Mr. Williams was driven from his home in Salem. Referring to this remarkable period of his history several years afterwards, he says, "I was sorely tossed for fourteen weeks, in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean." During his residence at Plymouth, he had become acquainted with several Indian chiefs, called sachems, and among them was Massasoit, the father of King Philip, who governed the Wampanoags, a tribe of the Pokanokets. This Indian chief welcomed Mr. Williams to his cabin, at Warren, or where this beautiful town now stands, and received him with true hospitality. "He granted him a tract of land on the Seekonk river, to which, at the opening of spring, he repaired, and where "he pitched and began to build and plant." But here he was not permitted to remain. It seems he had not gone quite far enough into the wilderness. "I received a letter," says he, "from my ancient friend, Mr. Winslow, then Governor of Plymouth, professing his own and others' love and respect for me, yet lovingly advising me, since I was fallen into the edge of their bounds, and they were loath to displease the Bay, to remove but to the other side of the

water; and then, he said, I had the country before me, and might be as free as themselves, and we should be loving neighbors together." Wishing to be entirely beyond the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts or Plymouth colonies, he again took up the line of march, and landed near the mouth of the Mooshaucic river, where he commenced the first "plantations of Providence." Here he found a home, and was enabled to lay the foundations of a great and growing city, the name of which was to stand as a perpetual memorial of that superintending Providence, which, he believed, had directed him to this spot.

His colony was founded on the principles which he had long advocated, and for which he had been exiled. He purchased his lands of the Indians, (those which were not given to him,) whom he acknowledged as the rightful owners of the soil. The deeds were generally given in his own name, and he might have retained all his lands as his own property; but this he was unwilling to do, as he desired that the new settlement might be "for a shelter for persons distressed for conscience." Though he had disposed of all he possessed to purchase these lands, yet he gave them as a free gift to those who had united with him in forming the colony. Before he could obtain a charter, the government must be voluntary, but all belonging to it agreed that "no man should be molested for his conscience." Though great liberty of conscience was admitted, great peace and harmony were generally preserved in the settlement. In this respect, its inhabitants were not a whit behind their Massachusetts neighbours. Disturbances, it is true, often afflicted the colony, but these were not the result of the liberal principles introduced into it by its founder, but sprang from causes which always exist in new settlements.

In the summer of 1643, he set sail from New-York for England, to obtain a charter for the infant colony. This he secured through the influence of Sir Henry Vane and other friends of religious freedom, and re-embarked for America, in the summer of 1644. He landed in Boston, September 17, and was permitted to pass through the forbidden territory, by virtue of a letter which he presented from several members of both houses of Parliament, and addressed "to the Governor and Assistants of Massachusetts Bay." He was received by his friends in Providence amid great rejoicings. Several towns of the "Providence Plantations" formed themselves into a government under the charter, May, 1647. Disturbances had sprung up in the colony, owing to misunderstandings and claims that were made to a part of the territory, supposed to belong to the colony. Mr. Williams was again urged to visit England, for the purpose of obtaining the interposition of the Council in adjusting those difficulties. At length, he consented to go; and though he found it difficult to reach Boston,

in consequence of the opposition of the authorities and people of Massachusetts to his passing through their territory, yet he sailed from that port for England, November, 1651. During this visit to England he was thrown into the society of some of its most distinguished men. He held frequent intercourse with Sir Henry Vane, Oliver Cromwell, Harrison, the major-general of the army, Lawrence, the lord president of the council of state, and many other distinguished men then governing public affairs. Having accomplished the object of his mission, as far as possible, he returned to Providence, where he found a great work to be done, in removing the jealousies and feuds, which had become inveterate, and which had separated and distracted the citizens of the colony. Through his influence, and a letter addressed to the colony by Sir Henry Vane, the disputes among the citizens were settled, the government re-organized, and Mr. Williams was chosen president of the colony. Peace was now restored throughout the settlement.

On the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne of England, another effort was made to obtain a new charter for the colony, which Mr. Williams had failed to obtain on his second visit to England, on account of the unsettled state of affairs in that country. The effort was successful. The charter was received from the king, July 8th, 1663, and was presented to the General Court of Commissioners at Newport, Nov. 24, of the same year. It instituted a "government clothed with more perfect authority, and better suited to the condition of the people," and still recognising in full the same principle of unlimited freedom 'in matters of religious concerns,' on which the colony had been originally founded." Under this charter, "Rhode Island and Providence Plantations" continued to act and prosper until the famous "war" in this State a few years since, when a Constitution was adopted, though in most respects, not differing materially from the old charter. The charter, in 1843, when it was supplanted by the present constitution of the State, is supposed to have been the oldest charter of any civil government in the world.

Roger Williams is claimed to have been the first who advocated the rights of conscience. Says Mr. Bancroft, "Williams was the first person to assert in its *plenitude* the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law, and in its defence he was the harbinger of Milton, and the precursor and superior of Jeremy Taylor." Says Judge Story, "In the Rhode Island code of laws we read, *for the first time* since Christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, that conscience should be free, and men should not be punished for worshipping God as they were persuaded he required." Says another late writer, "The Bloody Tenet was

proclaimed by him in England and America in 1644, and contained the substance of the great argument for humanity. Bishop Heber seems not to have read the book, for he says, 'The Liberty of Prophesying, by Jeremy Taylor, is the first attempt to put the perilous and portentous novelty on record; a book not published till 1647, of which Williams says in *The Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody*, that it is 'a monumental, everlasting testimony to the truth.' The great treatise of John Milton, *On the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Matters*, was not published till 1659; but it is to be remembered that Williams was an assistant to Milton, who was secretary of state in 1653-1654, and aided him in the Dutch correspondence; so that it is very probable Milton had already adopted the views of Williams on this great subject. The great Locke did not publish his *Letters* on this subject till 1690, just before the 'act of toleration' was passed in the British parliament." Some have asserted that religious liberty was enjoyed in Holland long before Williams was born. The assertion is true only to a limited extent. The greatest religious liberty of Holland excluded Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, and others from civil places, while Turks, Jews, and Pagans were in a far worse condition. This was not the religious liberty for which Williams was banished from the colony of Massachusetts, and to advocate which he spent his life.

As a legislator, counsellor, and governor, Roger Williams has had but few equals. Of the truth of this remark, the history of the colony that he planted furnishes abundant proof. The various Indian tribes of New-England were, to a great extent, under his control. He had studied their languages and disposition, and had secured their confidence. Whenever difficulties existed between them and the English, he was ready to do all in his power to effect a settlement. Through his interposition, the Massachusetts colony were saved from a long and bloody war with the Indians. What an instance of Christian magnanimity we have here! Roger Williams had been banished by this colony for maintaining the rights of conscience; but we now see him perilling his own life to save the colony from the horrors of conflagration and massacre.

As a writer, he is known by several valuable works; most of which are now out of print. His *first* book bears the following title: "A Key into the Language of America, or an help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America called New-England; together with brief Observations of the Customs, Manners, and Worships, &c., of the aforesaid Natives, in Peace and War, in Life and Death. On all which are added Spiritual Observations, general and particular, by the Author, of chief and special use (upon

all occasions) to all the English inhabiting those Parts; yet pleasant and profitable to the View of all Men. By Roger Williams, of Providence, in New-England. London: printed by Gregory Dexter, 1643." This work was written at sea, during his first voyage to England, and is exceedingly valuable for the information it contains of the languages of which it treats. The greater part of the work has been republished by the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Historical Societies. His *second* work is entitled, "Mr. Cotton's Letter, lately printed, Examined and Answered. By Roger Williams, of Providence, in New-England. London: imprinted in the year 1644." Mr. Cotton in his Letter vindicates the conduct of the magistrates in sending him from the colony. Mr. Williams replies in this work in a most able manner. A copy of the work may be found in the library of Yale College. His *third* work is called "The Bloody Tenet of Persecution, for cause of Conscience, discussed, in a Conference between 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." Printed in London, 1644, and consisting of two hundred and forty-seven pages, small quarto. This work may be found in the library of Brown University. Mr. Cotton wrote a reply to the work in 1647, entitled, "The Bloody Tenet Washed and made White in the Blood of the Lamb, being discussed and discharged of Blood-guiltiness, by Just Defence." Mr. Williams's *fourth* work was a rejoinder to this work of Mr. Cotton's, with the following title: "The Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody, by Mr. Cotton's Endeavour to Wash it White in the Blood of the Lamb," &c.: printed in London, 1652, and comprising three hundred and twenty pages. The library of Harvard College contains a copy of this work. His next work is entitled, "The Hireling Ministry None of Christ's," &c.: printed in London, 1652. The doctrine of religious liberty is the subject of the work, a copy of which may be found in the library of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester. He also published a work, called, "Experiments of Spiritual Life and Health, and their Preservatives. London, 1652." His last work was printed in Boston, and has the following title: "George Fox digged out of his Burrowes, or an Offer of Disputation, on fourteen proposals made last summer, 1672, unto G. Fox, then present on Rhode Island, by R. W." This book comprises three hundred and twenty pages, and "derives its quaint title from the accidental combination of the names of Fox and Burrowes in the work, which had been written in defence of the Quakers." It gives a full account of his controversy with the Quakers, and is said to be the most violent and denunciatory of all his writings. Even some

of his greatest opposers commended him for his opposition to the Quakers. "Mather, in his *Magnalia*, makes a tirade against Williams, and compares him to 'a windmill, that, by its rapid motion, was like to set the whole country on fire,' yet commends him for his opposition and firm ground against the Quakers."

The republication of the works of Roger Williams is now called for, and we hope they will soon be given to the public. They would throw much light on the age in which he lived—an age which Dr. Chalmers called the "Augustan age of Christianity." He lived "through all the days of Goodwin, Owen, and Bunyan; in the times of Robinson, Baxter, Hooker, Cotton, and multitudes of others, men of eminence; who, together with John Milton and Oliver Cromwell, effected a second reformation in the Christian Church. The lives and writings of these men have been published; and such is the call for them, that new editions are even now issuing from the press." "Those who admire Milton, cannot fail to admire Williams; admire him, not because they approve of *all* his views, but because, even when they differ from him, they will perceive that he is conscientious, and that his arguments deserve attention and consideration."

Roger Williams lived to see the colony that he planted established on a firm basis, and in a state of prosperity. He died in Providence, R. I., 1683, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. His memory will be fondly cherished while the rights of conscience are respected; and posterity will yet do justice to the character, and honour to the name, of the founder of Rhode Island.