

Letter to Major John Wilson and [Connecticut]  
Governor Thomas Prentice:

# “Forced worship stinks in God’s nostrils”

Roger Williams

Providence 22 June 1670

13. Some of Yours (as I heard) lately told tales to the Archbp of Canterbur. [Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Anglican Church] viz: that we are a prophane people, and doe not keepe the Sabboth, but some do plough etc. But (1) You told him not how we Suffer freely all other perswasions, Yea the Common Prayer wch your Selvs will not Suffer. If you Say You will, You Confesse You must Suffer more, as we doe.

2. You know this is but a Colour to Your Designe. For First, You know that all Engl. it Selfe (after the Formalitie and superstition of Morning and Evening Prayer) play away their Sabboth.

2. [sic] You know Your Selves doe not keepe the Sabboth that is the 7th day etc.

3. You Know that famous Calvin and thouhsands more held it but Ceremonial and figurative (from Colossians 2. etc.) and vanished: and that the Day of Wopp [Worship] was alterable at the Churches pleasure. Thus allso all the Romanists Confesse: Saying viz: that there is no Expresse Scripture 1. for Infants, Baptisme: Nor 2. for abolishing of the 7[th] day and instituting of the 8th day Worship, but that it is at the churches pleasure.

4. You know that generally all this whole Colony observe the first day. Only here and there one out of Conscience, another out of Covetuousnes make no Conscience of it.

5. You know the greatest part of the World make no Conscience of a 7th day. The next part of the World (Turks, Jewes and Christians) keepe 3 different dayes, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, for their Sabboth and day of Wopp, and everyone maintains his owne by the longest Sword.

6: I have offerd and doe; by these presents; to discusse by Disputation, Writing or printing among other points of difference these 3 positions: First that forc't Worshpp stincks in Gods nostrils. 2 That it denies Christ Jesus yet to be come, and makes the Church yet National, figurative and Ceremoniall. 3 That in these flames about Religion, as his Matie his Father and Grandfather have yielded, there is no prudent Christian way of preserving peace in the World but by permission of differing Consciences.

Accordingly, I doe now offer to dispute these points, and other points of Difference (if you please) at Hartford, Boston and Plymouth. For the manner of the Dispute and the

Discussion, if you thinck fit, one whole day Each month, in Summer, at Each place, by  
Course, I am ready if the Lo. [Lord] permit and (as I humbly hope) assist me.

**Source:** Glenn W. LaFantasie, ed., *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*, Volume II:  
1654-1682 (Brown University Press/ University Press of New England: Providence and  
London, 1988), 617-618.