During the 1600s, the newborn American colonies tended to mingle Church and State much to the vexation of those who questioned the validity of religious doctrines, such as Roger Williams. Williams first argues that Jesus, the founder of Christianity himself, does not support violence and aggression in his name. Additionally, Williams contends that God accepts the existence of religions other than Christianity and they need not be snuffed out. Finally, Williams references heroes from the Bible who were persecuted for supporting a belief different from that of mainstream society. In *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*, Roger Williams asserts the Trinity does not support violence, God accepts plurality of belief, and compares his situation to that of important biblical figures in order to contest the state’s right to judge those with controversial religious views.

Primarily, Williams repeatedly cites God’s disapproval of the persecution of one’s convictions to prove that the state has no claim to rule on religious identity. In Williams’s first point he claims, “…the blood of so many hundred thousand souls of protestants and papists, split in the wars…of present and former ages, for their respective consciences, is not required nor accepted be Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace” (Williams, *Bloudy Tenent*, 1). According to Williams, Jesus not only does not endorse conflict and violence between religions; he condemns it. Also, Williams affirms the statute of Christianity which opposes maltreatment of spiritual deviation by referencing scripture. Williams professes, “Pregnant scriptures and arguments are throughout the work proposed against the doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience” (Williams, *Bloudy
Tenent, 1). By citing Scripture itself, Williams implies that those who banished him are going against their own supposed ideals. Later, Williams yet again refutes the validity of religious persecution by referring to the pain of martyrs from the past. He dramatically laments, “The doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience, is proved guilty of all the blood of the souls crying for vengeance under the altar” (Williams 1, Blody Tenent). Through this statement, Williams claims that the sheer loss of life on account of religious persecution denounces the principle as toxic and immoral. By insisting the Lord’s disapproval of spiritually motivated aggression, Williams exposes the Christian civil state as hypocritical for not following its own creed.

Furthermore, Williams emphasizes that God does not demand religious uniformity, but instead prefers harmony among differing ideologies. In particular, Williams expounds, “It is the will and command of God that, since the coming of…Jesus, a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or anti-Christian consciences and worships be granted to all men in all nations” (Williams, Blody Tenent, 1). In this passage, Williams not only advocates on behalf of God for the liberty of diverging Christians like himself, but for all people of all faiths, no matter how different from his own. Moreover, the minister argues that sameness of divine ideologies can be a potential root of conflict. The theologian contends, “enforced uniformity, sooner or later, is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in his servants, and of the hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls (Williams Blody Tenent, 2). The writer propounds that coerced homogeneity often fosters tension among those who are forced to conform. Some argued that diverse religious individuals cannot cooperate together in a society. However, Williams challenges, “true civility and Christianity may both flourish in state or kingdom notwithstanding…the permission of diverse and contrary consciences, either of Jew or Gentile” (Williams, Blody Tenent, 2). Essentially, Williams deems the notion that civil governments must
maintain homogeneity in order to preserve the peace completely unnecessary. In sum, Williams refutes the suggestion that God and society demand spiritual oneness in order for the world to prosper in harmony.

In addition, Williams juxtaposes himself with biblical heroes of the past in order to call into question the government’s legitimacy in punishing the faithful. First, Williams alludes to the story of Daniel, one of Christianity’s most famous narratives. Williams relates, “…a man may be persecuted because he holdeth or practiseth what he believes in conscience to be a truth, as Daniel did, for which he was cast into the lion’s den” (Williams, Bloudy Tenent, 3). Since Daniel is such a beloved figure among Christians, Williams’s allusion creates sympathy for himself and causes his persecutors to question the validity of their actions. Later, Williams recalls the tale of Shadrach, Meschac, and Abednego. Williams articulates, “So the three famous Jews, who were cast into the fiery furnace for refusing to fall down, in a nonconformity, to the whole conforming world” (Williams, Bloudy Tenent, 3). By this recollection, the preacher criticizes the value of uniformity and prizes the courage of an individual who challenges the majority. Further, Williams emphasizes the passion of all Christian martyrs persecuted for their convictions. Williams grieves, “So thousands of Christ’s witnesses…have rather chosen to yield their bodies to all sorts of torments, than to subscribe to doctrines, or practice worships, unto which the states and times have…urged them” (Williams, Bloudy Tenent, 3). The author cites this multitude of suffering in order to suggest his banishment as yet another cross for the victimized Christians to bear. In essence, Williams’s reference to the trials of martyrs and other abused figures in Christian history transforms his shame as a heretic into his pride as a proponent of his perceived will of Christ.

In short, Roger Williams accents God’s disapproval of religious based violence, the Lord’s acceptance and even encouragement of spiritual diversity, and the memory of Christian
martyrs in order to discredit the government’s role in the religious sphere in his work, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*. Williams repeatedly recites Scripture in his work to support his claim that God himself condemns persecution of any kind, even if inspired by a sense of moral responsibility. Later, the author insists that Christ does not require religious unity in a society, and even warns that it could result in civil unrest. Third, Williams’s use of biblical allusions likens himself to past Christian figures and legitimizes his rebellion. In all, Williams’s work seeks to discount the notion that government can and should interfere with the personal spiritual matters of an individual and indirectly advocates for a separation of church and state.