



# **Religion and Violence in Early American Methodism: Taking the Kingdom by Force (Religion in North America)**

*Jeffrey Williams*

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Early American Methodists commonly described their religious lives as great wars with sin and claimed they wrestled with God and Satan who assaulted them in terrible ways. Carefully examining a range of sources, including sermons, letters, autobiographies, journals, and hymns, Jeffrey Williams explores this violent aspect of American religious life and thought. Williams exposes Methodism's insistence that warfare was an inevitable part of Christian life and necessary for any person who sought God's redemption. He reveals a complex relationship between religion and violence, showing how violent expression helped to provide context and meaning to Methodist thought and practice, even as Methodist religious life was shaped by both peaceful and violent social action.

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