

RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Enslaver's Guide to Slavery Reform: William Dunlop's 1690 Proposals to Christianize Slaves in the British Atlantic

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When it was first brought to light in 2010, an anonymously authored, unpublished document from 1690, *Proposals for the propagating of the Christian Religion, and Converting of Slaves whether Negroes or Indians in the English plantations*, appeared to support claims for an emerging humanitarian sensibility among Christian antislavery reformers in seventeenth-century England. This article argues that Scottish Covenanter, colonizer, and enslaver William Dunlop was the author of these proposals. Dunlop's authorship casts them in a new light, showing the complex ways Christianity and slavery were entangled in this period and the challenges Reformed Protestants faced in their attempts to disentangle them. Dunlop's Reformed background and experience in the Presbyterian resistance movement during the "killing times" of the early 1680s led him to view slavery as anti-Christian tyranny and liberty as the will of God. But during his time in Carolina he was deeply implicated in enslaving illegally seized Christian Indian captives, African chattel slaves, white indentured servants seeking freedom in Spanish Catholic Florida, and even fellow Covenanters banished to the plantations for their resistance to episcopacy. Dunlop's proposals emerged from these dual contexts. They tried and failed to imagine a form of Christian slavery that gave enough freedom to enslaved people to lead authentic Christian lives, showing instead that Christianity and slavery were incompatible and offering reformers only a stark choice: not Christian slavery, but Christianity or slavery.

Keywords: Christian slavery; Covenanters; Indian slave trade; Stuarts Town; William Dunlop

In 1690 an anonymous author penned a remarkable set of proposals for Christianizing slaves entitled *Proposals for the propagating of the Christian Religion, and Converting of Slaves whether Negroes or Indians in the English plantations*. Like similar proposals from the seventeenth century, these guaranteed that conversion would in no way alter the status of the enslaved. This was meant to promote Christianization by assuring slaveholders, in no uncertain terms, that their Christian slaves would have no legal claim whatsoever to freedom. Unlike other proposals, however, these guaranteed enslaved Christians the right to their lives and property, provided safeguards against abuse and overwork, provided protection for their families, acknowledged the validity of their testimony given

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under oath, and promoted education and even emancipation. Thus the proposals affirmed slavery while stripping away many of its enslaving principles. Giving enslaved Christians power over their lives, property, work, and families, along with a potential pathway to freedom, the proposals envisioned a framework for Christian slavery that recognized the humanity of enslaved people and secured some of their fundamental liberties.

The identity of the author of these proposals has been a matter of conjecture. When the document was first brought to light in 2010, Ruth Paley, Cristina Malcolmson, and Michael Hunter speculated that it was penned by either Morgan Godwyn or Robert Boyle. Godwyn, an Anglican minister who had lived many years in Virginia and Barbados, was the foremost advocate of slave baptism in seventeenth-century England. Boyle was a scientist, not a churchman, but he had a fervent interest in spreading Christianity throughout the British empire and used his position in several colonial and trading ventures to leverage missionary work. While his personal links to Godwyn were tenuous, he was clearly familiar with Godwyn's work. Three copies of the proposals, written in the hands of Boyle's scribes, are among his papers at the Royal Society, along with three drafts of parliamentary bills bearing Godwyn's influence and reflecting their mutual interest in promoting legislation to improve the status of slaves. There were also certain stylistic and structural similarities between the proposals and other documents written by Boyle—specifically, Boyle's use of lists made up of clauses beginning with the conjunction "that." Based on these similarities in "content and format," along with the document's placement among Boyle's papers, Paley, Malcolmson, and Hunter made a logical case for Boyle's authorship with the possible influence, if not the assistance, of Godwyn.¹

Yet the Royal Society was not the only archive to house these mysterious proposals. Another copy in a quite different hand can be found in the papers of William Dunlop at the National Library of Scotland.² Dunlop was a Scottish Covenanter and leader of the Carolina Company's short-lived Stuarts Town colony in Port Royal, South Carolina, in the 1680s. On first blush he appears to be an unlikely candidate for authoring the proposals. Unlike other seventeenth-century reformers who sought to soften slavery and clear a path for converting enslaved people—namely Godwyn, Boyle, George Fox, and Thomas Tryon—Dunlop was both a gospel minister and a dealer in slaves. He was the product of a religious culture, Scottish Presbyterianism, that was fiercely protective of its liberties and its church's autonomy. Yet he was principal manager of a colony whose survival, along with the preservation of the religious liberties the colony was designed to protect, depended on the exploitation of a variety of enslaved people, from exiled religious radicals to captive Indians and African chattel slaves. This article argues that Dunlop authored the proposals and that they were shaped by his dueling identities as Scottish Covenanter and colonizing enslaver. During his short stay in Carolina, Dunlop personally experienced the complex ways in which Christianity, freedom, and slavery were entangled. The paradoxes and radicalism of his proposals embody these entanglements and represent Dunlop's attempt to disentangle them. They reflect his struggle not merely to reconcile slavery with Christianity but to imagine a kind of slavery that was compatible with the freedoms required for a Christian life and the

¹Ruth Paley, Christina Malcolmson, and Michael Hunter, "Parliament and Slavery, 1660–c. 1710," *Slavery & Abolition* 31, no. 2 (June 2010), 261–265, 271, 277n41 (quotation on 262). Hereafter referred to as *PMH*.

²*Proposals for the propagating of the Christian Religion, and Converting of Slaves whether Negroes or Indians in the English plantations*, accession number 9255, Dunlop Papers, Special Collections, National Library of Scotland (hereinafter *NLS*), Edinburgh.

dignity that life conferred. In hindsight, it was a lost cause. However, as Philippe Rosenberg has noted, the late seventeenth century was a time of “conceptual unsettledness” when slavery, freedom, and Protestantism were all putting down roots in a rapidly expanding British empire, and any number of futures were possible for Christian slavery.³ By calling attention to these entanglements, Dunlop’s authorship sheds new light on the historical significance of early modern slavery reformers, the southeastern borderlands context of reform, and the dynamic construction of Christian slavery in the British empire.⁴ It also represents the first known attempt by Scots to deal with the problem of slavery and Christianity as they encountered it in their own imperial ventures in the American tropics.⁵ In doing so, they gave the unfolding debate over Christianizing slaves a Scottish stamp, one shaped by Scots’ ambivalent history as both imperial subjects and rivals, insiders and outsiders, and victims and beneficiaries of English power.⁶

³Philippe Rosenberg, “Thomas Tryon and the Seventeenth Century Dimensions of Antislavery,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 61, no. 4 (October 2004), 614. It would be naïve to exaggerate these possible futures. The same year Dunlop proposed that slaves should have “dominion and propriety” over their own lives, the South Carolina assembly passed a law protecting masters who disciplined their slaves to death and giving only a minimal sentence for the outright murder of a slave. The law was vetoed by the Lords Proprietors but was passed again despite their opposition. See Andrew Fede, *Homicide Justified: The Legality of Killing Slaves in the United States and the Atlantic World* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017), 99.

⁴Historians have disagreed about the significance of these seventeenth-century slavery reformers. Some see them as protohumanitarians who influenced the later abolition movement: PMH, 257; Alden T. Vaughan, “Slaveholders’ ‘Hellish Principles’: A Seventeenth-century Critique,” in *The Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 80. Also see Patricia U. Bonomi, “‘Swarms of Negroes coming about my door’: Black Christianity in Early Dutch and English North America,” *Journal of American History* 103, no. 1 (2016), 38, which questions the sincerity of these humanitarians. Others view them as “isolated moralists” whose lonely voices fell on deaf ears: Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 40. Some characterize them as antislavery moderates who tried to humanize enslaved people while curbing the most violent features of emerging slave societies: Rosenberg, “Thomas Tryon,” 609–610; John Donoghue, “Out of the Land of Bondage: The English Revolution and the Atlantic Origins of Abolition,” *American Historical Review* 115, no. 4 (October 2010), 946–947. Still others regard them as the founding fathers of proslavery Christianity: Katherine Freedman, “Sustaining Faith: Quakers and Slavery in the Early Anglo-Atlantic, 1655–1679,” *Journal of Global Slavery* 3, no. 3 (August 2018); and especially Katherine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 2–3, who makes a strong case for the seventeenth-century origins of proslavery Christianity. As a Reformed Scot, Covenanter, colonizer, minister, and enslaver, Dunlop does not fit neatly into any of these categories, and his proposals remind historians to give close attention to the local context of antislavery in the early British Atlantic.

⁵On the “hidden history” of Scotland and slavery, see T. M. Devine, ed., *Recovering Scotland’s Slavery Past: The Caribbean Connection* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). On Scots and the problem of slavery, see Joseph S. Moore, “Covenanters and Antislavery in the Atlantic World,” *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 4 (2013): 540–542; Iain Whyte, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756–1838* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006); and William Harrison Taylor and Peter C. Messer, eds., *Faith and Slavery in the Presbyterian Diaspora* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2016). See also David Hancock, “Scots in the Slave Trade,” in *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600–1800*, ed. Ned B. Landsman (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1991), 60–93.

⁶On the influence of Scotland and the Scottish diaspora on liberty, free trade, and anti-Catholicism in the emerging British empire, see Craig Gallagher, “Covenants and Commerce: Scottish Networks and the Making of the British Atlantic World” (PhD diss., Boston College, 2017).

I. The Case for Dunlop's Authorship

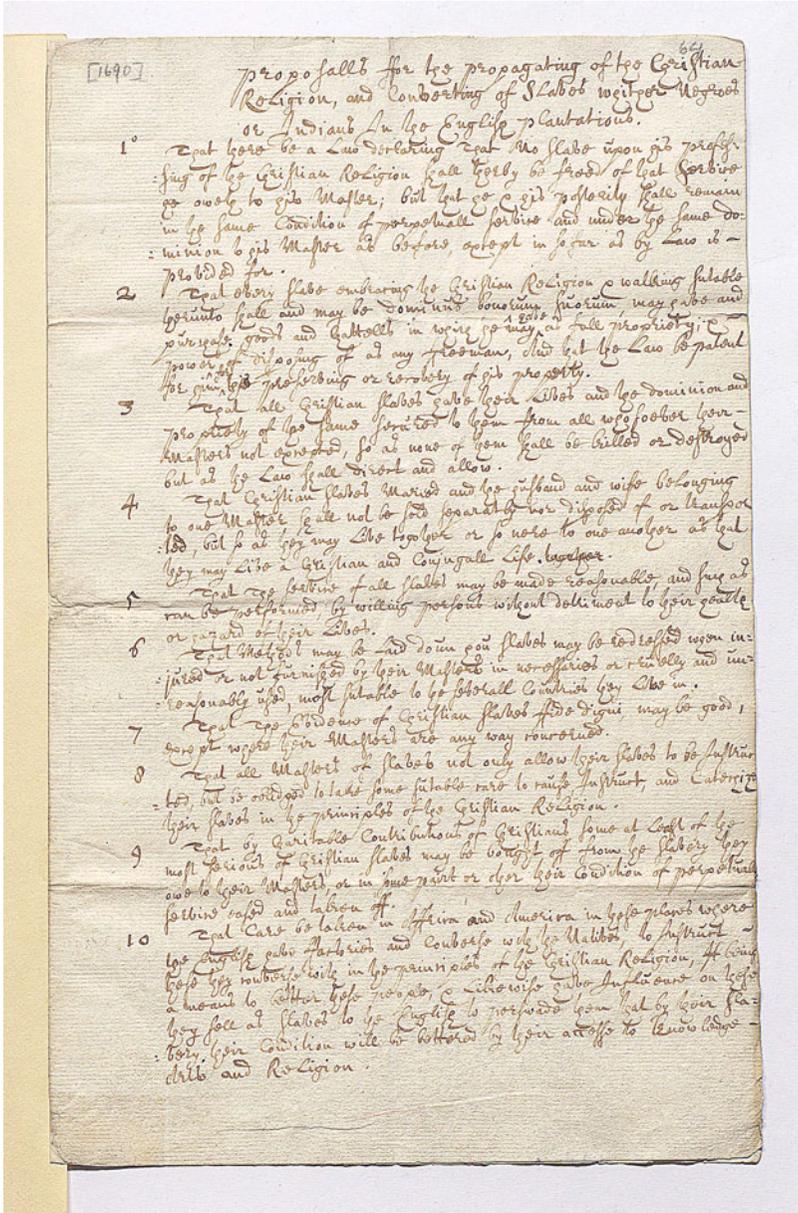
The evidence of Dunlop's authorship is compelling.⁷ The document was found among his personal papers, and it was unmistakably written in his hand. Dunlop's handwriting was distinctive. He used secretary hand, a cursive form developed in the sixteenth century, valued for its speed and widely used for business purposes. This handwriting was characterized by several unique letter formations, including lowercase h's shaped like q's, lowercase v's shaped like b's, lowercase r's shaped like capital E's, and plural s's shaped like the number 6 (see figure 1). The handwriting in the proposals matches that of letters written by Dunlop to business associates in the late 1680s. The spelling also belonged to Dunlop, especially the use of *ll* in words ending in *l*—*proposalls*, *conjuggall*, *chattell*, *perpetuall*—spelling that is not found in the Boyle copies.

While it could be argued that Dunlop personally copied Boyle's original using his own spelling, there were idiosyncrasies in Dunlop's syntax—his fingerprints, so to speak—that indicate his version was the original. For example, item eight of Dunlop's *Proposalls* provided that masters “be obliged to take some suitable care to cause Instruct, and Catechize their slaves in the principles of the Christian Religion.” Use of the verb *cause* immediately preceding an infinitive was unique to Scotland. Dunlop's correspondence from the 1680s shows multiple examples of this Scottish usage: *caused cut*, *cause survey*, and *cause buy*, meaning *have someone cut*, *survey*, *buy*, and *instruct*. Boyle's English scribes did not know what to make of this construction. Thinking it was an error, they transcribed it as “cause or instruct, & Catechize,” which makes no sense and indicates that they were copying, and imperfectly at that, from Dunlop's idiosyncratic original. Other minor differences in the two versions likewise point to copying errors by the amanuenses. For example, two of the Boyle copies incorrectly substitute “goods and cattels” for “goods and chattels” in the Dunlop document. In addition, a provision in Dunlop's version giving slaves “dominion and propriety” over their own lives is mistakenly written as “dominion and property” in the Boyle copies.⁸

The most persuasive evidence of Dunlop's authorship is related to content rather than form. In general, the document has a Reformed rather than an Anglican orientation. Of the four Christian slavery documents in the Boyle Papers, only the *Proposalls* fails to use baptism as the defining marker of Christian identity or as grounds for a converted slave's claim to freedom. Anglicans' fixation on baptism reflected their understanding that it was a quasilegal ritual that conferred rights and represented “inclusion in the English community,” as historian Rebecca Goetz has suggested. In contrast, Reformed teaching held that it was primarily a religious ritual that obligated

⁷While the forensic and circumstantial evidence that follows is strong, some ambiguity regarding Dunlop's authorship remains, and the argument must rely in part on conjecture, especially regarding the provenance of the document and precisely how it got into both Dunlop's and Boyle's hands. In the end, regardless of its origins, the document remains significant as an example of the breadth and complexity of the debate over Christianizing slaves in the era of the Glorious Revolution. My argument here, that Dunlop's conflicted experiences as religious refugee, colonizer, and enslaver shaped this document, reinforces this larger point by highlighting the hesitations and paradoxes of the Christian slavery debate.

⁸This analysis is based on a comparison of Dunlop's original with the version printed in “Parliament and Slavery.” For examples of Dunlop's idiosyncratic use of “cause,” see Dunlop to James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, no date, GD 3/5/772; and October 21, 1686, GD 3/5/775, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter NRS). On this usage as unique to Scotland, see “cause, v.1.1.d” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, revised March 2019.



[1690]

Proposalls for the propagating of the Christian Religion, and Converting of Slaves w^{ch} are Negroes or Indians In the English plantations.

- 1^o That there be a Law declaring that the Slaves upon the purchase of the Christian Religion shall freely be freed of that bondage or oath to his Master; but that he or she shall possibly take ransom in the same condition of servitude for his and under the same dominion to his Master as before, except in case as by Law is provided for.
- 2^o That every Slave embracing the Christian Religion & walking suitably hereunto shall and may be admitted, bounding, freedom, may give and purchase, good and chattell in w^{ch} he or she shall be proprietor; & upon the passing of at any pleasure, shall yet the Law be put in force for the prohibiting or recovery of his property.
- 3^o That all Christian Slaves shall have Liberty and the Dominion and sole property of the same, provided he learn from all w^{ch} he or she shall be separated, so as none of them shall be killed or destroyed but as by Law shall direct and allow.
- 4^o That Christian Slaves Married and the husband and wife belonging to one Master shall not be sold separately nor divided if or separated, but so as they may live together or so near to one another as that they may live a Christian and Conjugal life together.
- 5^o That any contract of all Slaves may be made rationally and free as well performed, by writing perfect without violence to their gentle or regard of their Liberty.
- 6^o That Slaves may be sold to any Slave may be sold except upon interest or not given by their Masters in no manner or rationally and reasonably used, most suitable to be sold to all Christian Slaves in.
- 7^o That any widows of Christian Slaves whose w^{ch} may be good, except they have their Masters are any way returned.
- 8^o That all Masters of Slaves not only allow their Slaves to be instructed, but is obliged to take some suitable care to raise instruction, and to instruct their Slaves in the principles of the Christian Religion.
- 9^o That any Christian Slaves who are Christian, some at least of the most Christian of Christian Slaves may be bought of from the Slaves by their Masters, or in their name or else, upon condition of propagating the same and labor of.
- 10^o That Care be taken in Africa and America in those places where the Slaves are taken and converted with the Liberty to instruct the same by their Masters, with the principles of the Christian Religion, & that they be made to suffer the same, & likewise with the same on the part of the Slaves to be taught to be rationally from that by their Slaves, upon condition will be returned by their owners to their Liberty and Religion.

the baptized persons or their sponsors to commit to Christian instruction and practice. Dunlop’s *Proposalls* does not use the word *baptism*. Instead, it frames conversion as “professing of the Christian religion” or “embracing the Christian religion and walking suitable thereunto,” thus drawing on the softer, less assured, and more ambiguous language of Dunlop’s Reformed tradition. Historians of early antislavery have given little

attention to these differences, but they would have been highly significant in local contexts.⁹

Beyond these issues of tone and theological orientation, the two documents had significant content differences. Dunlop's version included ten proposals, whereas the Boyle copies had only eight. If Dunlop copied Boyle's original, why would he add two provisions to it? It is much more probable that the copier omitted items from the original document rather than adding items to it, especially given the nature of the two omitted items. One required that the work of all slaves—not only Christian slaves—be safe, healthy, and “reasonable,” that is, comparable to work done willingly by a free person. The other provided that “by charitable contributions of Christians some at least of the most serious of Christian slaves may be bought off from the slavery they owe to their Masters, or in some part or other their condition of perpetuall service eased and taken off.” These were the two most radical provisions in the *Proposals*. They deprived enslavers of their absolute right to manage the work of their slaves and potentially rewarded the most pious slaves with freedom, thereby creating an expectation among enslaved people that piety equaled freedom and that conversion would eventually lead to manumission.¹⁰ The idea that Christians could not enslave other Christians and that conversion would require emancipation drove planters' resistance to baptism and animated baptized slaves' petitions for freedom. This was contrary to the stated goals of the English reformers; it was precisely opposite of what Boyle was trying to do. He, Godwyn, and other proponents of Christian slavery saw planter opposition as the main obstacle to Christianization. Breaking this connection between conversion and freedom was the main object of the reforms they were trying to enact.¹¹ Boyle intended to use the proposals to promote slavery reform in parliament. It is no surprise that he omitted provisions that undermined this goal. In contrast, Dunlop had no such political agenda. He had no standing in English parliament, and Scotland had no slave-based colonies in the Americas, thus no impetus for promoting slavery reform in its parliament. As a minister and colonizer in Carolina, Dunlop drafted these proposals based on what he believed would most effectively promote slave conversions, not what was politically possible. In short, Dunlop had no use for this document, no reason to copy it from someone else's original, and no purpose in creating it other than to satisfy the wishes of the English reformers.

⁹Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 90. The emphasis on baptism is especially pronounced in Goetz and PMH. For a fuller treatment of this problem, see Katherine Gerbner, “Theorizing Conversion: Christianity, Colonization, and Consciousness in the Early Modern Atlantic World,” *History Compass* 13, no. 3 (March 2015): 134–147.

¹⁰Dunlop, *Proposals*, items five and nine. Planters' insistence that conversion would require manumission is a main theme in the literature on seventeenth-century slavery reformers. As Alan Gally has noted, South Carolina had already made provisions for this before the Scots arrived. As early as 1682, South Carolina's Fundamental Constitutions stipulated that conversion to Christianity did not alter the status of the enslaved or limit the power of the enslaver. See “South Carolina's Entrance into the Slave Trade,” in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Gally (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 114. Debates over this issue continued well into the eighteenth century. See especially Travis Glasson, “Baptism doth not bestow Freedom’: Missionary Anglicanism, Slavery, and the Yorke-Talbot Opinion, 1701–30,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (April 2010): 279–318.

¹¹Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro's and Indians Advocate, Suing for their Admission into the Church* (London, 1680), 1–2, 38–39; *Trade Prefer'd before religion, and Christ Made to Give Place to Mammon: Represented in a Sermon Relating to the Plantations* (London, 1685).

He had ample opportunity to meet with these reformers in 1689 and 1690. His original version of the *Proposals* was undated, though someone later wrote “[1690]” in pencil in the upper left corner. This was probably the archivist at the National Library of Scotland, which received and processed the collection in 1962, though it might have been William Dunlop’s descendant J. G. Dunlop, who edited and published many of his papers in the 1930s through the 1950s.¹² In any case, 1690 is a highly probable date for the *Proposals*. Dunlop returned to Britain from Carolina in September 1689. He had been commissioned by the provincial government to present a petition to the king asking for reparations for Spanish attacks on Stuarts Town and one other settlement in 1686. Before going home to Scotland, he remained in London until at least January 1690, a period of four months, giving him plenty of time to consult with Boyle, Godwyn, or their like-minded associates.¹³ English reformers surely would have been interested in Dunlop’s ideas. He was a licensed preacher, held a master’s degree in theology, and understood firsthand the social and material conditions of the plantation colonies. He and Boyle shared an abiding interest in converting native people. Dunlop had gone to Carolina in part “to bring thes pur creturs to Christ,” as one of Dunlop’s correspondents reminded him. Boyle’s support for Indian missions in North America dated back to the 1660s and continued after his death through his bequest. Of the four reformist proposals in the Boyle Papers, only the *Proposals for propagating the Christian religion* mentions indigenous people, reflecting this shared interest as well as Dunlop’s experience in his Carolina colony, where Indian slaves were as common as Africans (indeed, Dunlop himself owned an indigenous female slave).¹⁴ It stands to reason that Boyle or his friends reached out to Dunlop and commissioned him to write down his ideas, then edited the document to make his proposals more palatable to lawmakers.

Though there is no definitive link between Dunlop and Boyle, the circumstantial evidence for such a link is strong. Dunlop’s lengthy stay in London gave him both motive and opportunity to draft the *Proposals*. The forensic evidence is even more compelling. The document is covered in Dunlop’s metaphorical fingerprints, from his handwriting, spelling, and Scottish usage to his Reformed orientation and his concern for indigenous

¹²The provenance of Dunlop’s *Proposals* is uncertain. His papers were donated to the National Library of Scotland in 1962. Prior to that they were in the possession of Mrs. Lorraine C. C. Bell. In personal correspondence with the author, the current archivist, Ralph McLean, stated that the date was probably inserted into the document by the archivist, though such intrusions are no longer practiced. The archivist who catalogued the Dunlop Papers did not leave any working notes explaining his or her decisions or other details relating to the collection.

¹³“Memorial of the hostilities committed in the province of Carolina by the Spaniards represented by Major William Dunlap [Dunlop] who is commissioned to that effect,” GD 26/7/277, NRS. For the length of Dunlop’s stay in London, see his correspondence with Lord Dundonald in J. G. Dunlop, ed., *The Dunlop Papers, Volume II: The Dunlops of Dunlop: and of Auchenskait, Keppoch, and Gairbraid* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1932), 51–57.

¹⁴For Dunlop’s sense of mission, see the letters from his mother, Bessi, and his sister, Margaret: *Dunlop Papers, Volume III*: 22, 28–30 (quotation from Margaret on page 30). For Boyle’s support of Indian missions, see his correspondence with John Elliot and others in *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle, Vol. IV: 1668–77*, ed. Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio, and Lawrence M. Principe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), 76–77, 137–140, 479–480. After his death, Boyle’s executors used funds from his estate to establish the Brafferton School in Williamsburg, Virginia, an Indian school designed to promote Christianization by educating young indigenous men and training them for the Anglican ministry; see “The Indian School at William & Mary,” William & Mary, <https://www.wm.edu/about/history/historiccampus/brafferton/indian-school/index.php>

slaves. On the other hand, minor but telling errors in the Boyle versions show that they were copies. Most importantly, the Boyle versions had two fewer provisions than the Dunlop document. The absence of provisions five and nine, which protected enslaved people from overwork and gave Christian slaves an expectation of freedom, suggests that Boyle adapted Dunlop's far more radical document for political purposes. Though Dunlop kept a copy of his original, he had no use for it in Scotland and gave no sustained attention to the Christianization of enslaved Indians and Africans after 1690.

II. Religious Slavery and Freedom in Scotland's Killing Times

As a result, Dunlop's *Proposals* are curiously disembodied in his papers, which are otherwise silent on the subject of Christianizing slaves. Does this mean that the proposals were just a one-off meant to serve the English reformers, assuage Dunlop's guilt, or morally compensate for the failure of Stuarts Town, not unlike Britain's turn toward abolition to acquire "moral capital" lost in the American Revolution? Perhaps, but such a narrow reading of the document does not do justice to the context that shaped it or the larger questions it poses about religion and slavery in the late seventeenth century.¹⁵ This context must be reconstructed by giving attention to the ways Christianity, freedom, and slavery intersected in Dunlop's own experience, which was very different from that of Boyle or Godwyn. The proposals were not only the product of an emerging humanitarian sensibility among metropolitan reformers like Boyle. Nor were they crafted by mission-minded, proslavery clerics like Godwyn whose chief concern was overcoming planter opposition to slave baptism. Rather, they were shaped by a much more violent and dynamic transatlantic context: the killing fields of Restoration-era Scotland and the labor grab of the southeastern borderlands, where almost everyone was fair game for the enslavers. Dunlop's proposals bring these far-flung contexts together and cast light on their paradoxical relationship to one another as they wrestle with the incompatibility of Christianity and chattel slavery.

The Covenanting movement to which Dunlop belonged originated in the religious wars of the 1640s, and its central objective was the independence of the church from state control. The Presbyterian system, which consisted of a series of church courts that gave local laypeople and clergy the power to appoint ministers and discipline church members, was designed to guarantee this independence.¹⁶ To be sure, few Covenanters gave much thought to the problem of chattel slavery.¹⁷ Yet the general principles behind their ecclesiastical concerns—mistrust of centralized power, a commitment to limited government, and a foundational belief that freedom was essential to true Christian practice—conditioned them to equate slavery with tyranny and liberty

¹⁵Brown, *Moral Capital*, 22.

¹⁶For the most recent work on the Covenanting movement, see the essays in the *Scottish Historical Review: Issue Supplement: Covenanters and Covenanting* 99 (December 2020). Of particular relevance is the essay by Craig Gallagher, "Them that are dispersed abroad: The Covenanters and Their Legacy in North America, 1650–1776," 454–472.

¹⁷Seventeenth-century Scots' silence on slavery is shared by their historians. Despite growing interest in the history of Scots and slavery, very little work has been done on the seventeenth century (see note 5 for this work and this "hidden history"). Indeed, two fairly recent reviews of the historical literature on early modern Scotland make only passing mention of slavery. See Karen Bowie, "Cultural, British, and Global Turns in the History of Early Modern Scotland," *Scottish Historical Review* 92, supp. no. 234 (April 2013), 46; Keith M. Brown, "Early Modern Scottish History—A Survey," *Scottish Historical Review* 92, supp. no. 234 (April 2013), 16.

with the will of God. These parallels were made explicit in the work of early Covenanter Samuel Rutherford, who argued that slavery was a violation of natural law and that slavish subjection to masters or kings opened the door to anti-Christian tyranny. Rutherford was referencing ancient biblical slavery and using it to illustrate the danger of Roman Catholicism in his own time, an association that surely made a powerful impression on his hearers. This antiauthoritarian impulse at the heart of the Covenanting movement, along with the explicit linking of slavery, tyranny, and popery, opened a space within seventeenth-century dissenting Presbyterianism for common ground with victims of tyranny in all its forms.¹⁸

As a second-generation Covenanter, William Dunlop learned to associate freedom with true religion at an early age. In the 1650s his father, Alexander, minister at Paisley, had joined the Protesters, an extreme and uncompromising Covenanter faction that insisted on absolute independence of the kirk from state meddling. After the Restoration, when Charles II required ministers who had been appointed by presbyteries to conform and accept reappointment by bishops, Alexander resigned his charge and was hauled before the Privy Council, which banished him from the realm for refusing to take the oath; the council later relented and confined him to Culross instead. William was eight years old when his family moved to Culross in 1662. He grew up in a time when hundreds of nonconforming ministers were put out of their parishes and lay resistors were meeting secretly in their homes or in the fields in defiance of the law. His mother, Elizabeth, was among them and was later arrested and banished from Edinburgh for attending one of these illegal conventicles. As the eldest son of activist parents who suffered for their principles, William inherited strong religious convictions and habits of spirited resistance to state intrusions on religious liberty.¹⁹

As Dunlop came of age in the 1670s, he earned his own Covenanting credentials. He served as tutor in the home of the high-powered Covenanter William Cochrane and his son, the plotter John Cochrane of Ochiltree. He contributed to the Hamilton Declaration, a moderate protest document that acknowledged the authority of the king but pleaded for a return to the presbyterian system in Scotland. He was brother-in-law and close friend to dissident leader William Carstares, one of the most prominent figures of the Covenanting movement. And he was manager of the Carolina colony, a venture organized and mainly funded by Covenanters.²⁰ At the same time, a new generation of Covenanting Presbyterians was moving beyond the familiar associations of tyranny, popery, and slavery, and explicitly linking Atlantic slavery to religious freedom. Among them was Alexander Shields, Dunlop's lifelong associate and a fellow student at Edinburgh (both earned their master's degrees there in 1675). Shields's widely read *A Hind Let Loose* combined a Whiggish preoccupation with state tyranny and slavery with traditional Reformed fears of popery, plus tales of Scottish suffering at the hands of these twin anti-Christian powers. Among other measures the enemies of the gospel devised to "build their *Babel of Popery & Slavery*," Shields wrote, the "Popish, Prelatical, & Malignant faction" in Scotland emptied the prisons and "sold as slaves to Carolina" dissenters who refused to take the oath. This was, Shields claimed, "a greater Barbarity" than could "be found, in the

¹⁸Moore, "Covenanters and Antislavery," 540–542. For an excellent discussion of the way Scottish Presbyterians linked liberty and anti-popery, see Gallagher, "Covenants and Commerce," 1–8.

¹⁹J. G. Dunlop, ed., *The Dunlop Papers, Volume III, Letters and Journals, 1663–1889* (London: Butler and Tanner, 1953), 108–110, 119–121. On the Protesters, see Elizabeth Hannan, "A Church Militant: Scotland, 1661–1690," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 54.

²⁰Dunlop, *The Dunlop Papers, Volume II*: 119, 121–124.

Reigns of Caligula or Nero.” The labor demands of American planters were growing in tandem with state oppression of religious dissenters, and Scotland’s Privy Council and enterprising merchants worked together to meet this demand with people imprisoned for standing by their religious principles. Shields and doubtless many others called banishment what it was—enslavement—thus adding another, much more immediate and concrete layer to the antislavery foundation of dissenting Presbyterianism.²¹

Stuarts Town was the communal expression of Covenanters’ commitment to religious and civil liberty.²² In their initial negotiations with Carolina’s Lords Proprietors, officials of the Carolina Company (the joint stock venture that managed the colony) sought changes in the colonial charter to safeguard “against the oppression of the people by their Administrators” in the neighboring English colony at Charles Town. They demanded clear title to the land from coastal Indians, a location geographically separated from Charles Town, protections against irregular elections for the colonial assembly, and the power to appoint justices and magistrates and administer justice within their own jurisdiction. They also insisted on and were granted provisions for multiple religious establishments. This gave Presbyterians complete autonomy, putting them on equal footing with Anglicans and allowing them to tax their parishioners to support their own church.²³ Alongside these institutional safeguards, Dunlop drafted a blueprint for the settlement that reflected the colony’s aspiration to be a safe haven for the gospel. His plan envisioned an egalitarian community of uniform dwellings built by a labor collective and geographically centered around the church and its ministers, where neighborliness was

²¹Moore, “Covenanters and Antislavery,” 542; Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, an Historical Representation of the Testimonies of the Church of Scotland, for the Interest of Christ* (s.n., 1687), 181, 190, 197.

²²There is considerable disagreement on the motives behind the colonization of Stuarts Town. On the desire to create a religious refuge, see George Pratt Insh, *Scottish Colonial Schemes, 1620–1686* (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson & Co., 1922), 187–191; Tom Barclay and Eric J. Graham, “The Covenanters’ Colony in Carolina, 1682–1686,” *History Scotland* 4 (July–August 2004): 18–27; Peter N. Moore, “Scotland’s Lost Colony Found: Rediscovering Stuarts Town, 1682–1688,” *Scottish Historical Review* 99, 1, no. 248 (April 2020): 26–50. On economic motives, see especially Allan I. Macinnes, M. D. Harper, and Linda G. Fryer, eds., *Scotland and the Americas: A Documentary Source Book* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 2002); Linda G. Fryer, “Documents Relating to the Formation of the Carolina Company in Scotland, 1682,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 99, no. 2 (April 1998): 110–134. For the claim that the company and its colony were mainly created to provide cover for plotters against the Stuarts, see Richard L. Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom: British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–89* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 163–165; Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 367, 383–390, 426; L. H. Roper, *Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662–1719* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 75–80.

²³Alexander S. Salley, ed., *Records in the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina* [1630–1710] (Columbia: Historical Commission of South Carolina, 1928–47), 1: 212–219, 261–262 (hereinafter RBPRO); *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 11, 1681–1685* (hereinafter CSPC), ed. J. W. Fortescue (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898), items 807, 808, 809, 1284, 1774, 1780, accessed June 15, 2018 at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11>; Mattie Erma Edwards Parker, ed., *North Carolina Charters and Constitutions, 1578–1698* (Raleigh: Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1963), 181–182, 202–203, 227–228. On the importance of autonomy or “effective sovereignty” to the Stuarts Town colonizers, see two articles by Kurt Gingrich: “‘That Will Make Carolina Powerful and Flourishing’: Scots and Huguenots in Carolina in the 1680s,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 110, 1, no. 2 (January and April 2009): 6–34; and “‘To Erect a Collonie of Scottish Subjects in Aney Part of America’: The Quest for a Scottish Colony in North America in the 1680s,” *Journal of Early American History* 2 (2012): 68–98.

institutionalized in subsidies for families and care for indigent people. Here Presbyterian refugees would join exiled French Protestants, disgruntled planters from Charles Town and Antigua, and even Christianized Indians in a well-ordered community knit together under the cope of Reformed Protestant practice. This vision of Stuarts Town as a civil and religious refuge emerged out of the intensifying persecution of the early 1680s. It took on new urgency as this persecution culminated in a final push to extirpate Presbyterianism during the notorious “killing times” that followed the failure of the anti-Stuart plots in 1683.²⁴

III. Slavery and Christianity in the Southeastern Borderlands

Covenanters’ experiences of oppression and their belief that they could not honor God without political and religious liberty left little room for Dunlop, Shields, and their generation of Scottish Presbyterians to reconcile Protestantism with slavery, as Anglicans were already doing.²⁵ And yet, despite all that Stuarts Town stood for in the Covenanters’ imagination, social conditions in Port Royal and the southeastern borderlands were radically different from those in Scotland, and this would complicate things. Indeed, the entanglement of Christianity and slavery that was later embodied in Dunlop’s *Proposals* began before he even left Scotland, as shown in the case of the Cameronian exiles.

Among the passengers aboard the *Carolina Merchant*, the ship that carried the first group of colonists to Port Royal in 1684, were fifty-two political prisoners who had been banished to the plantations for their crimes. These extremists, later styled *Cameronians* after the radical Covenanter Richard Cameron, refused to take the oath, openly disavowed allegiance to the king, advocated violence to defend their religious principles, and renounced moderate ministers who had accepted indulgences and returned to their parishes. The Cameronians were denounced as rebels and imprisoned, and those who escaped execution were sold as slaves to British planters.²⁶ Walter Gibson, a merchant in Glasgow, contracted with the Privy Council to deliver fifty-two of them to Carolina aboard his ship, posting bonds of one thousand to ten thousand merks each—a sizable sum—to guarantee delivery. Gibson was paid ten pounds per prisoner and stood to profit further from the sale of the prisoners in Charles Town. Curiously, William Dunlop signed as cautioner or guarantor to Gibson, providing another layer of surety for Gibson’s bond. Dunlop’s precise agreement with Gibson is unknown, but he would not have risked getting stuck with the debt unless he, his company, or his colony stood to gain from the transport, sale, or enslavement of the prisoners.²⁷

What happened next is not quite clear. There were divisions among the prisoners: some warmed to Dunlop and wanted to hear him preach, but others refused because

²⁴William Dunlop, “Project of a Settlement,” *Dunlop Papers*, volume 9255, NLS.

²⁵The process was well under way in the English slave colonies. See Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, 2–3, 65.

²⁶On the Cameronians, see Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom*, 75; and Roper, *Conceiving Carolina*, 84. I follow Roper in using the label *Cameronians* as a catch-all for these imprisoned radicals. Strictly speaking, not all were followers of Richard Cameron, nor would those who were his followers have identified themselves as Cameronians.

²⁷Dunlop, ed., *Dunlop Papers, Volume II*: 127–128; *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 3rd ser., vol. 8: 1683–1684, ed. P. Hume Brown (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1915), 710–711 (Gibson, cautioner), and volume 9: 1684, 208 (Gibson). Based on the claim that the merchant Robert Malloch was paid ten pounds per prisoner, it is presumed that this was standard practice. See Sir John Lauder Fountainhall, ed., *The Decisions of the Lords of Council and Session, from June 6th, 1678, to July 30th, 1712* (Edinburgh: G. Hamilton and J. Balfour, 1759).

he had compromised his principles by taking the indulgence.²⁸ Indulged ministers were those who accepted the Privy Council's offer to return to their charges in a restricted capacity, agreeing not to organize presbyteries or preach outside their parishes. Over time many of these indulged ministers formed shadow presbyteries, creating an "alternative church" that helped Presbyterians resist episcopal takeover. Yet by accepting the indulgence, the Cameronians claimed, these ministers had recognized the church's subordination to the state; they were illegitimate and tainted by compromise. Dunlop was not an ordained minister, but he was licensed to preach and might have either accepted the indulgence in 1679 or received his license informally from one of the shadow presbyteries. Either way he was compromised in the eyes of many of the prisoners, and they resisted his ministrations.²⁹ When they refused to join with him for worship, the ship's captain, James Gibson (brother to Walter, the merchant), threatened them with his sword, shut the hatch on them when they sang psalms, and put them on very short water and food rations. One of the prisoners, John Alexander, reportedly died of thirst. Another, John Dick, had paid for part of his passage and bound himself to work off the rest, but Dunlop "would not hear of it but would take himself and his servant up the country with him where he died." Prisoners later claimed that friends in Scotland had donated a "considerable summe" of cloth and money for their use but that Dunlop, who was entrusted with the donation, kept it himself instead of "doaling it among them," so that they "got nothing of it." Such treatment prompted two prisoners, John Paton and John Smith, to try to escape. They failed and were "most cruelly used, and beat several times in a day, and bound to a perpetuall service."³⁰

The allegations against Dunlop were based largely on reports from his Cameronian enemies and must be read with caution.³¹ Yet even if they were false or exaggerated, the colony's dependence on convict labor, which Covenanters themselves identified as slavery, is undeniable. Before the *Carolina Merchant* even left Greenock, Dunlop found himself exploiting and multiplying the misfortunes of fellow Covenanters, extremists though they were, who had been imprisoned and banished for their resistance to episcopacy. And this was just the beginning. Once in the Carolina borderlands, the Stuarts Town colonizers would quickly find themselves stuck in a web of labor exploitation where Christianity and slavery intersected at every turn.

²⁸James McClintock to Thomas Linning, June 1684, Wodrow Quarto 36, Wodrow Papers, NLS, 204–206.

²⁹Hyman, "Church Militant," 58–59 (indulgences). Clearly the Cameronians believed Dunlop was licensed, though other sources are unclear. He was not licensed when dismissed from serving as Cochrane's tutor in 1678; see Dunlop, ed., *Dunlop Papers, Volume II*: 122–123. He might have been licensed under the general indulgence of 1679. See also Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, vol. 7 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928), 396, 633.

³⁰"Account of the Carolina Voyages," Wodrow Quarto 36, 223–224. The reference about who enslaved John Dick is unclear, but given the claim that Dick was taken "up the country," it seems to refer to Dunlop. This is consistent with Dunlop's later claim that he purchased seven white servants after coming to Carolina, and that all had died by early 1686. See William Dunlop to James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, no date, GD 3/5/772, NRS. Wodrow himself made James Gibson the enslaver. See *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Revolution*, vol. 4 (Glasgow: Blackie and Sons, 1832), 11.

³¹Wodrow's "Account" is based on a letter from an unidentified correspondent, probably one of the prisoners, who was clearly opposed to Dunlop. Roper, *Conceiving Carolina*, 84, takes this account at face value and reads more into it than is warranted by the source.

Labor conditions in the southeastern borderlands were highly fluid. There were multiple forms of unfree labor within indigenous, Spanish, and British polities, some of them well-established and codified, others ill-defined, unstable, or just plain illegal. The region constituted what Christina Snyder has called a “patchwork of slaveries”—indentured servitude, *repartimiento*, convict labor, chattel slavery, degrees of Indian captivity—all of them “broad and dynamic,” intersecting and evolving.³² The demand for labor in the English colonies was especially robust and extremely destabilizing. It fueled a thriving convict trade—the early 1680s were peak years—supplied not only by religious dissidents but also by the scores of “idle vagabonds whores and thieves” sold to Scottish merchants for the stated benefit of “their own more vertouse living.” To better facilitate this trade, the Navigation Act’s prohibition against Scottish ships trading in English ports was lifted for ships carrying servants. English demand also fueled an incredibly destructive trade in Indian captives, a modest but growing Caribbean traffic in African slaves, and a largely unknown commerce in “spirited” or kidnapped white indentured servants.³³

In this context, fear of enslavement was widespread throughout the region. Few people could take their freedom for granted, and the status of the most vulnerable people could change in an instant. This was the case with the English servant Kate Oats, who was spirited to Bermuda at age seven and taken to Charles Town ten years later where she was sold to the planter Paul Grimball. In 1686, at age nineteen, she was captured by Spanish corsairs in their raid on Stuarts Town and carried to St. Augustine, where she gave her testimony to Spanish officials and disappeared from the historical record. Juan Clar was a free Flemish sailor whose ship was pillaged by French pirates en route from Jamaica to Carolina. Clar washed up in Guale begging food from the Indians, who turned him over to their Spanish allies. Before they could transport him to St. Augustine, he was captured by English pirates, who sold him into servitude in Charles Town. Clar tried to return to Jamaica but ended up in the Bahamas, where he was forced to work for his passage before being captured by the Spanish pirate-catcher Alejandro De Leon and impressed into service for the 1686 attack on Stuarts Town. De Leon also received special permission from Florida’s Governor Marquez Cabrera to take Thomas Torre, a West Indian slave who belonged to the Spanish commander of Guale, on the Stuarts Town raid. In Carolina, Torre escaped with three Indians but was captured by Chiliques at Santa Elena and taken to the English, where he sold two of his companions and offered to lead English forces to St. Augustine for a retaliatory strike, swearing to personally kill the governor for imprisoning him and his father for fourteen years. The experiences of Torre, Oats, Clar, the

³²Christina Snyder, “Native American Slavery in Global Context,” in *What Is a Slave Society? The Practice of Slavery in Global Perspective*, eds. Noel Lenski and Catherine N. Cameron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 187; James Brooks, “Intersections: Slavery, Borderlands, Edges,” in *What Is a Slave Society? The Practice of Slavery in Global Perspective*, eds. Noel Lenski and Catherine N. Cameron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 434. On the varieties of slavery and antislavery also see Donoghue, “Out of the Land of Bondage,” 945.

³³*Register of the Privy Council*, 8: 526–527; I. H. Adams and M. Somerville, *Cargoes of Despair and Hope: Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1603–1803* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1993), 19–21 (convict trade); Eric J. Graham, *A Maritime History of Scotland, 1650–1790* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 44 (Navigation Acts); Russell Menard, *Migrants, Servants, and Slaves: Unfree Labor in Colonial British America* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2001), 88–89 (African slaves); John Donoghue, “Indentured Servitude in the 17th Century English Atlantic: A Brief Survey of the Literature,” *History Compass* 11, no. 10 (October 2013), 894–902 (spiriting).

unnamed Indian slaves, the Cameronian exiles, and many others reveal a world characterized by extreme violence, instability, and unfreedom. People were stolen, captured, sold, or impressed. When they could not escape, they sold their labor, knowledge, service, or companions to keep their freedom. There was no clear moral or legal center here for nonelites, only shifting circumstances, threats, and opportunities as they scrambled to seize the moment or simply survive while avoiding enslavement.³⁴

Stuarts Town was planted at the center of this opportunistic world. Situated on Port Royal Island, it was more or less equidistant from Charles Town to the north, the Spanish missions at Guale to the south, and Savannah Indian slave traders to the west. As such, it was nicely positioned to intercept runaway servants and slaves from Charles Town and witnessed a good bit of fugitive traffic in 1685 and 1686. The Scots captured and returned Elmo Mermique and Glodo Satrata, two Roman Catholic Savoyards who had bound themselves to four years of service in Charles Town. The runaways were given two additional years of service for their trouble, but they soon made a second attempt and successfully escaped to St. Augustine, having learned how to evade the Scots. Among other evidence, they testified of extensive slave trading in the region, telling Spanish officials that pirates had brought two hundred slaves from Vera Cruz to Charles Town and that the slave population there was equal to or higher than its free population. Mingo and his wife, who were two Africans belonging to Samuel Dibordieau of Charles Town, likewise eluded the Scots and their indigenous neighbors, and made it safely to St. Augustine. In addition, Dunlop reported a number of “rascal fellows” living as maroons on a nearby island who were building a boat to leave the province, probably for Spanish Florida. Some of them were presumably fugitives, while others were semiskilled craftsman from New England who may have banded together in hopes of avoiding enslavement. For many of these fugitives, the path to freedom from English Protestant slavery led to Catholic St. Augustine, which was the seat of popish tyranny in the eyes of the Scots. Dunlop would not have missed these glaring ironies.³⁵

More entanglements lay in store for the Scots as they entered the Indian captive trade. Captives were the most profitable commodities in Carolina, and the Scots could not long resist them. The decision to deal in captives was made by the titular head of the colony, Henry Erskine, Lord Cardross. It was a fateful decision that had profound consequences in the region, placing Stuarts Town at great risk, further destabilizing relationships between the English, Indians, and the Spaniards, and reigniting a region-wide slave trade that would eventually shatter indigenous societies.³⁶

³⁴John E. Worth, *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An Eighteenth Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 151 (Oats), 149–151 (Clar), 164, 170–171 (Torre).

³⁵Depositions of Elmo Mermique and Glodo Satrata, San Augustin, January 11, 1686, trans. St. Julien Ravenal Childs, Childs Family Papers, collection 1224, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston (Savoyards); J. G. Dunlop, ed., “William Dunlop’s Mission to St. Augustine in 1688,” *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 34, no. 1 (Jan. 1933), 4–5 (Mingo); Salley, *RBPRO*, 2, 80 (rascals).

³⁶The literature on the Indian slave trade in the southeast is extensive. For representative works, see Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002); Galloway, *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*; Robbie Etheridge and Sherrie M. Shuck-Hall, eds., *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and the Regional Transformation in the American South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

The Indian slave trade in the southeast predated European contact. Traditionally, indigenous people acquired captives for adoption, to replace lost members of their community, or as status symbols. With the spread of the plantation system in the Chesapeake and the Carolina lowcountry, however, captives could be converted to profits, either as plantation laborers or as commodities sold into slavery elsewhere.³⁷ The first indigenous people to capitalize on this commercial trade in Indian captives were the Westos, an Iroquoian people who migrated into Virginia in the 1650s and Carolina by the 1660s. Their migration south brought an end to six decades of peace and stability in the region. Armed with English muskets and frequently accompanied by English traders, the Westos raided in Apalachee in western Florida, Tama in the Georgia interior, Cofitachequi in central South Carolina, coastal Carolina among the Escamaçu of Port Royal, and Guale from the mouth of the Savannah River southward to the lower Georgia coast. After the Carolina colony was established in 1670, they redirected their trade from Virginia to Charles Town. Against the express orders of the Lords Proprietors, Charles Town traders and officials carried on an illicit and lucrative guns-for-slaves commerce with the Westos for the better part of a decade. In 1680, however, an unruly English faction known as the Goose Creek men incited war against the Westos in order to seize control of the captive trade. They armed the Savannah Indians, a Shawnee people, who destroyed the Westos. As it turned out, the Savannahs were poor suppliers of Indian captives, and the destruction of the Westos, combined with a crackdown on Indian slavery from the Lords Proprietors, put a halt to the trade by 1683. But the damage was done. The commercialization of the captive trade had reordered the human landscape of much of the southeast and displaced thousands of native people. The Guale retreated down the coast toward St. Augustine, Yamasees from Tama migrated into Guale or pushed deeper into the Chattahoochee valley of the Georgia interior, and the Cofitachequi and Escamaçu people in Carolina neared collapse.³⁸

The Westo raids had created a void from Port Royal southward for at least seventy miles. Given its central location on the contested Anglo-Spanish frontier, this space represented a power vacuum as much as a territorial one. In 1683 and 1684 two groups stepped into it: the Scottish Covenanters and the Yamasee Indians. The Yamasees migrated in two streams. One came from Guale on the lower Georgia coast, where they had been driven in the mid-1660s by the Westo raids. In exchange for Spanish protection, they had provided labor to St. Augustine, though they avoided the missions and remained infidels in the eyes of Spanish authorities. When English pirates raided Guale in 1683 and proved Spanish protection to be illusory, the Yamasees migrated north to Hilton Head Island, in British territory just south of Port Royal. When the Scots arrived in November 1684, some three hundred Yamasees were living on the adjacent island, and a second and much larger group was soon streaming in from the Georgia interior. With the dangerous Westos eliminated and the Scots moving in, the Yamasees clearly sensed an opportunity to establish their own territory and perhaps even control trade

³⁷On the different understandings of slavery by English and Indians, see Denise I. Bossy, "Indian Slavery in Southeastern Indian and British Societies, 1670–1730," in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, ed. Alan Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 208–209.

³⁸Eric E. Bowne, *The Westo Indians: Slave Traders of the Early Colonial South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005); Galloway, "South Carolina's Entrance," *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, 120–130; Worth, *Struggle for the Georgia Coast*, 17–25; Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 100–101; Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, 53–63; Roper, *Conceiving Carolina*, 62–67.

on the Anglo-Spanish coastal frontier. By March 1685 between 1,400 and 2,000 Yamasees were settled in the Port Royal area, dwarfing the tiny Scots colony and even surpassing the English population at Charles Town. Despite their common cultural origins, however, the Yamasees were a loose and multiethnic coalescence of peoples whose lives were disrupted by decades of Westo slaving, and they settled uneasily among one another.³⁹

Port Royal thus represented freedom for both Scots and Yamasees. The Scots had gone to great lengths to ensure territorial sovereignty and political and religious autonomy from Charles Town, and they envisioned Stuarts Town as a refuge for persecuted Presbyterians where the gospel could flourish in purity and truth. The Yamasees' choices, too, were shaped by what Amy Turner Bushnell has called an "ethos of liberty." This was expressed in their aversion to dependency on Spanish missions, their preference for gathering food over farming, and their appropriation of the vacant lands south of Port Royal.⁴⁰ The Proprietors were heartened by this dual migration into the area. With the Westos defeated, the "dealers in Indians" in Charles Town neutralized, and the Scots positioned as a counterbalance to the unruly Goose Creek faction that controlled the province, they hoped to curb the captive trade and make Carolina into a peaceful as well as a profitable colony. These were the forgotten alternatives Stuarts Town represented: after two decades of a destructive slave trade that had "ruined" many indigenous communities from western Florida to coastal South Carolina, the Scots and Yamasees, with their shared values and combined resources, had a window of opportunity to put a halt to slaving in the Anglo-Spanish borderlands.⁴¹

Instead they chose to become enslavers. Perhaps Lord Cardross, alarmed by the sudden influx of so many Spanish Indians into lands he had just acquired from Carolina Indians, insisted that the Yamasees prove their enmity to the Spaniards by raiding one of their missions.⁴² Or perhaps the Yamasees believed guns were necessary to secure their own liberties, and the fastest route to acquiring guns was by exchanging captives. Internal disputes between English against Scottish traders and rival Yamasee headmen also played a role. Certainly both groups were intent on establishing trade and securing and even expanding their territories, and a strike into the heart of Spanish Florida would send a message that the new settlers at Port Royal constituted a serious regional power.

Whatever their motives, in February 1685 a party of some sixty Yamasees, armed by the Scots with steel cutlasses and two dozen muskets, fell on the Timucuan mission

³⁹Worth, *Struggle for the Georgia Coast*, 36–37; John E. Worth, "Yamasee," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 14: Southeast*, ed. Raymond Fogelson, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2004), 251–252; Alex Y. Sweeney and Eric C. Poplin, "The Yamasee Indians of Early South Carolina," in *Archaeology in South Carolina: Exploring the Hidden Heritage of the Palmetto State*, ed. Adam King (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 62–66.

⁴⁰Amy Turner Bushnell, "Living at Liberty: The Ungovernable Yamasees of Spanish Florida," in *The Yamasee Indians: From Florida to South Carolina*, ed. Denise I. Bossy (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 27.

⁴¹Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, and George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina: Volume 1, 1514–1861* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 72 (counterbalance); Salley, *RBPRO*, 2, 27 (dealers); "Mr. Carteret's Relation of their Planting on Ashley River '70," in Alexander S. Salley Jr., ed., *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650–1708* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 118 (ruined).

⁴²Caleb Westbrook, an English trader and advisor to Cardross on Indian affairs, was especially concerned that the influx of Yamasees might be "a design of the Spaniards" to destroy the colony; Westbrooke to Dep. Gov. Godfrey, February 21, 1685, *CSPC* 12, item 28.

town Santa Catalina de Afuica in central Florida. It was an unprovoked attack of extraordinary violence. The raiders burned the settlement, killed at least eighteen people, and carried off twenty-two female captives along with an untold number of boys plus silver communion plate and prayer books. Possibly worried that the Yamasees would take their captives to Charles Town, Cardross and Dunlop intercepted them on the south side of the Savannah River and collected the “great booty” to which they were entitled. They sent some of the slaves to Charles Town and sold the others to two separate ships out of Stuarts Town. The Yamasee raiders kept the enslaved boys, presumably for adoption.⁴³

The English wasted no time reporting the Scots’ complicity in this slave raid to the Lords Proprietors, and while some shielded Cardross by shifting the blame to the English trader Caleb Westbrook, others made Cardross the chief instigator who was driven by his hatred of the Catholic church.⁴⁴ They were not far off the mark. Cardross had suffered for his principles. In Scotland he watched his chaplain hang, witnessed soldiers occupy his home twice, spent four years in prison, forfeited part of his estate, and slept in the fields to avoid arrest before sailing to Carolina. It would be no surprise if he sensed a Catholic plot behind both the efforts to extirpate Presbyterianism at home and the Yamasee migration to Port Royal in Carolina.⁴⁵ But to sponsor non-Christian Indians in an unprovoked attack on Christian natives, burning, killing, enslaving, and selling fellow Christians, Catholics or not, to human traffickers, showed, first, that the Scots and Yamasee could be as ruthless and efficient as the Westos and, second, that Christianity did not guarantee liberty in Carolina any more than in Scotland. While Anglicans like Godwyn argued for the compatibility of Christianity and slavery in the plantation societies of Barbados and Virginia, there was never any question that in the southeastern borderlands—where the labor of Indian *conversos* was coerced by Spanish missionaries, religious dissenters were traded like commodities, Christian indentured servants were spirited away and kidnapped by raiders, and British Protestants sold the bodies of indigenous Christian women to strangers—being a Christian offered no protection against enslavement.⁴⁶

The Scots benefited little from the raid on Santa Catalina de Afuica.⁴⁷ The Yamasees saw more potential in the English at Charles Town and soon discarded their Scottish partners. Within months they were pushing into Apalachicola with English trader Henry Woodward, where they confidently displayed their Scottish guns and their

⁴³CSPC 12, item 49 (booty). The Yamasees claimed to have killed fifty Timucuan, but the Spanish figure of eighteen is more reliable. See “The Examacon of several Yamasse Indians whose spokesman Caruse one of their Cassiques declared,” May 6, 1685, CSPC 12, item 66. For slight differences, see the deposition of Elmo Mermique, 3; “The Questioning of a Guale Indian Returned from English Territory to his Native Guale, December 29, 1685,” Antonio Matheos Documents, Phase III, John H. Hann Collection of Colonial Records, P. K. Yonge Library, University of Florida, Gainesville, 37–39; and Worth, *Struggle for the Georgia Coast*, 45–46.

⁴⁴CSPC 12, item 83 (Westbrook); Dunlop, ed., *The Dunlop Papers, Volume III*: 47–48 (hatred).

⁴⁵This is based mostly on Cardross’s own account of his sufferings, reprinted in Wodrow, *History of Sufferings, Volume III*, 162, 192–193; John Erskine, *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock, 1683–1687* (Edinburgh: Scottish Historical Society, 1893), 223–226.

⁴⁶On the illegality, unprecedented scale, and religious and moral discourse surrounding Indian slavery in Carolina, see Gally, “South Carolina’s Entrance,” 135–136.

⁴⁷Dunlop may have personally benefitted from the raid by keeping one of the Timucuan slaves for himself, though it is possible he acquired her elsewhere. See Joseph Morton to Dunlop, May 4, 1693, accession no. 9251, Dunlop Papers, NLS.

adopted Timucuan captives to their former hosts at Coweta and Cusseta. This partnership opened the interior to Charles Town traders and marked a new era in imperial and commercial relations in the southeast.⁴⁸ In the meantime Stuarts Town struggled to attract settlers, and in August 1686 the Spaniards retaliated, burning and plundering the Scots' settlement at Port Royal as far north as Governor Morton's plantation at Edisto Island, from which they took eleven African slaves. Three months later a second Spanish attack targeted the Yamasees. The raiders took twenty-two captives and drove the Yamasee towns inland to a more secure settlement on the Ashepoo River. The raid on Santa Catalina had triggered equally violent responses and reignited the Indian slave trade, which would eventually engulf not only the Yamasees but the powerful Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek Indians of the interior.

Dunlop viewed the destruction of Stuarts Town as a temporary setback, and he was determined to rebuild the plantation. He had cleared and enclosed thirty acres of good land, surveyed another twenty-four thousand acres, and had a good many cattle and pigs that had eluded the Spanish raiders. As Dunlop wrote to his partner in Scotland, Sir James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, he still hoped to attract French Protestants to Port Royal. He was working with Charles Town to organize a retaliatory attack against St. Augustine, and both he and Cardross expected their wives to join them soon. "I am by all means endeavouring on resettling of Stuarts town on Port Royall," he told Skelmorlie, but in order to do so he needed labor, and he urged Skelmorlie to "buy Negroes at Barbadoes." African slaves were "the only profitable" and the "best and lasting" servants who "with the least charge are maintained both in clothing and victuals which whyte servants do abundantly consume."⁴⁹ But Skelmorlie disappointed him. He brought neither wives nor slaves, and he refused to answer Dunlop's bills of credit. The French settlers failed to come, Cardross soon returned to Europe, and the Lords Proprietors intervened to prevent the counterattack on Spanish Florida. Stuarts Town withered. And there were further entanglements. When Dunlop finally led an expedition to St. Augustine in 1689 to seek reparations and negotiate the return of the eleven slaves from Morton's plantation, the Spaniards refused to give them back because they had converted to Catholicism. Like Mingo, Mingo's wife, and Elmo Mermique, these captive slaves found that the borderlands offered degrees of enslavement, and some were better than others. Whatever form of bondage these Africans experienced in Catholic Florida, they preferred it to returning to Protestant bondage in Carolina.⁵⁰

IV. Disentangling Slavery and Reformed Protestantism

Dunlop's *Proposals* mark a peculiar moment in the early modern history of Christianity and slavery. Scottish imperialists ventured into the greater Caribbean when freedom, slavery, and Protestantism were expanding in tandem with a reconfigured British empire.⁵¹ In the 1680s, both at home and abroad, these Scots experienced

⁴⁸CSPC, 12, item 83; Matheos to Márquez Cabrera, San Luis, May 21, 1686, Matheos Documents, Phase III. Cardross had eyed trade with native people in the interior and even dreamed of a water route connecting Port Royal with New Mexico, but he was outmaneuvered by Woodward.

⁴⁹William Dunlop to James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, October 21, 1686, GD 3/5/775, and November 21, 1686, GD 3/5/776, NRS.

⁵⁰William Dunlop to James Montgomery of Skelmorlie, July 13, 1687, GD 3/5/777, NRS; Dunlop, ed., "Dunlop's Mission to St. Augustine," 28–30.

⁵¹Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in the Age of Revolution, 1640–1661* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 12, 183–212.

slavery not as an abstraction or vague papist threat but as a concrete problem that clashed with their religious principles. These principles were embodied in the Covenanting movement. They had formed in a decades-long struggle to free the church from state control, which had bred a general distrust of inherited power, a watchful eye for tyranny, a fear of being enslaved by the centralizing state, and a growing sense that they, the Covenanters, were not merely a persecuted and oppressed people but a righteous remnant and the guardians of true faith. Their colony, Stuarts Town, was the communal expression of these ideals. Its purpose was collective, corporate, social, and historical. Its founders sought to establish a free society, autonomous and sovereign, so that the true church and the gospel it proclaimed might flourish.

On the ground in Carolina, however, the Stuarts Town colonists found themselves enmeshed in a web of slaveries, and they soon met with two unexpected questions. The first was, “Who can we enslave?” Whether this was an “unthinking decision” or a strategy for survival, the answers to this question led them into all kinds of entanglements. The Scots found themselves exploiting the labor of convicted religious rebels whose chief crime was resistance to an anti-Christian king. They armed non-Christian Yamasees to pillage, kill, and kidnap Christian Indians, whom they then sold to English planters and human traffickers. They pleaded for African chattel slaves from Barbados, and they attempted to intercept and re-enslave runaway servants and captive Africans who sought refuge from Protestant slavery in Catholic St. Augustine.

Out of this twisted context, and in the immediate aftermath of this experience, Dunlop crafted his *Proposals* in order to work out the problem these slaveries posed to Christianity, to disentangle the two. Here he encountered a second question: not “is it permissible to enslave a Christian?” but “is it possible to be a Christian slave?” Conditioned by his Reformed faith and historical experience as a Covenanter to equate slavery with tyranny and associate both with the antichrist, he understood that liberty—a great deal of liberty—was necessary to live an authentic Christian life. His proposals summarily dispensed with the lesser question—the central question for Boyle and Godwyn, “does conversion change the status of the enslaved?”—and got to the more important issue at the heart of the problem: “How much freedom is required for the Christian life?” As it turned out, slavery as it was then being defined in colonial law was not compatible with Christianity. Enslaved Christians must enjoy as “full propriety” over their property “as any freeman.” They must also have “dominion and propriety” over their own lives and bodies, which must be “secured to them from all whatsoever their Masters not excepted.”⁵² Slaveowners must not be permitted to separate married slaves from one another by sale; instead, enslaved husbands and wives must “live together ... that they may live a Christian and conjugall life.” They must enjoy protections against overwork and other “cruel and unreasonable” treatment, and they must be permitted to testify under oath. Masters would be required to provide for their slaves’

⁵²Dunlop, *Proposals*. As Holly Brewer has argued, the idea that slaves had “dominion and propriety” over their own lives was developed in Locke’s *Two Treatises* (also published in 1690). By challenging the Stuarts’ claims to “hereditary and perpetual” rule over others, Locke challenged by extension the feudal basis of Restoration-era slave laws in the colonies. I have not developed these links with the Glorious Revolution here, but clearly Dunlop’s *Proposals* were part of a liberal discourse and perhaps reflected Dunlop’s direct familiarity with Locke’s work. See Holly Brewer, “Slavery, Sovereignty, and ‘Inheritable Blood’: Reconsidering John Locke and the Origins of American Slavery,” *American Historical Review* 122, no. 4 (October 2017), 1056–1057.

religious instruction, and the most pious enslaved people would be “bought off from the slavery they owe their Masters” through the “charitable contributions of Christians.”⁵³

As radical as Dunlop’s *Proposals* must have seemed to Anglicans like Godwyn and Boyle—so much so that they had to be trimmed to align with their more moderate reform agenda—Dunlop was no radical. He was a pragmatist through and through, more manager than visionary or ideologue, and far too utilitarian to trouble himself with the ironies of Stuarts Town. His practical skills earned him a whole raft of administrative appointments in Carolina and Scotland: deputy to the Lords Proprietors, member of the palatine court, Grand Councilor, receiver and escheator, militia captain, emissary, manager of public projects, Principal of the University of Glasgow.⁵⁴ His proposals reflect this pragmatism. Indeed, their pragmatism is what made them extraordinary. Unlike other proposals that viewed slaveowners as the chief obstacle to conversion, the *Proposals*, by emphasizing freedom, insisted that enslaved people themselves were the key to Christianization. Remarkably, they imagine conversion from the perspective of the enslaved and ask a third, more implicit question: “what would it take to incentivize enslaved people to embrace the Christian religion and walk suitable thereunto?” His answer unfolded in a paradoxical and conflicted version of Christian slavery that grew out of his dual experience as a Covenanting preacher in Scotland and a colonizing enslaver in the southeastern borderlands.

Even in the heady days of the Glorious Revolution, the time was not ripe for such radical pragmatism. Slave law was hardening in the empire, leaving no room for a Christian slavery that checked the power of enslavers and honored the bodies, families, property, and words of enslaved Christians. Unlike other more moderate slavery reform proposals of this era, Dunlop’s struggled to imagine enslaved people living authentic Christian lives. This was unimaginable, and Dunlop was forced to conclude that Christianity and slavery, as it was then taking shape, were fundamentally incompatible. His proposals could not reconcile the two, and so they sought instead to soften slavery, to “ease and take off” its burden of perpetual servitude and force it to recognize the humanity of the enslaved. They used Christianization, which rested on the free consent of enslaved people, as a lever for slavery reform, not merely as an end in itself. As such, they offered only a stark choice: not Christian slavery, but Christianity or slavery.

[1690]⁵⁵

Proposals for the propagating of the Christian Religion, and Converting of Slaves whether Negroes or Indians in the English plantations.⁵⁶

1. That there be a law declaring that no slave upon his professing of the Christian Religion shall thereby be freed of that Service he oweth to his Master; but that he and his posterity shall remain in the same Condition of perpetuall service and under the same do-

⁵³Dunlop, *Proposals*.

⁵⁴For Dunlop’s many commissions see Legal and Family Papers, Some Relating to Carolina, accession numbers 9257–9258, Dunlop Papers, NLS; and Salley, *RBPRO*, 2:104.

⁵⁵The date is written in pencil and in a different hand. All citations relating to this document reference PMH 271. Differences in spelling and content but not punctuation are noted. The separate items are numbered in Dunlop’s original but not in PMH.

⁵⁶In PMH, “Proposals.”

minion to his Master as before, except in so far as by Law is provided for.⁵⁷

2. That every slave embracing the Christian Religion and walking suitable thereunto shall and may be dominus bonorum suorum may have and purchase goods and chattells in which he may have as full propriety; and power of disposing of as any freeman, and that the Law be patent for him for the preserving or recovery of his property.⁵⁸
3. That all Christian slaves have their lives and the dominion and propriety of the same secured to them from all whosoever their Masters not excepted, so as none of them shall be killed or destroyed but as the Law shall direct and allow.⁵⁹
4. That Christian slaves married and the husband and wife belonging to one Master shall not be sold separately nor disposed of or transported, but so as they may live together or so near to one another as that they may live a Christian and conjugal life.⁶⁰
5. That the service of all slaves may be made reasonable, and such as can be performed by willing persons without detriment to their health, or hazard of their lives.⁶¹
6. That methods may be laid down how slaves may be redressed when injured or not furnished by their Masters in necessities or cruelly and unreasonably used, most suitable to the severall Countries they live in.⁶²
7. That the Evidence of Christian slaves fide digni may be good, except where their Masters are any way concerned.
8. That all Masters of slaves not only allow their slaves to be Instructed, but be obliged to take some suitable care to cause Instruct, and Catechize their slaves in the principles of the Christian Religion.⁶³
9. That by charitable contributions of Christians some at least of the most serious of Christian slaves may be bought off from the slavery they owe to their Masters, or in some part or other their condition of perpetuall service eased and taken off.⁶⁴
10. That care be taken in Africa and America in those places where the English have factories and converse with the Natives, to Instruct those they converse with in the principles of the Christian Religion, it being a means to better those people, and likewise have Influence on those they sell as slaves to the English to persuade them that by their slavery, their condition will be bettered by their access to knowledge Arts and Religion.⁶⁵

⁵⁷In PMH, "remaine," and "perpetual service under."

⁵⁸In PMH, "embracing," "thereto," "cattels," and "recovering."

⁵⁹In PMH, "property," "shalbe," and "or allow."

⁶⁰In PMH, "conjugal."

⁶¹This item omitted from PMH. It is one of three items relating to all slaves, not just enslaved Christians. The other two such items appear in both versions.

⁶²In PMH, "redrest," "necessaries," and "several Countryes."

⁶³In PMH, "cause or instruct & catechize."

⁶⁴This item is omitted in PMH.

⁶⁵In PMH, "factoryes," "wilbe," and "Arts & Sciences."

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