

Could slaves become Christian? If so, did their conversion lead to freedom? If not, then how could perpetual enslavement be justified? When Protestant missionaries arrived in the plantation colonies intending to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity in the 1670s, they were appalled that most slave owners rejected the prospect of slave conversion. Slaveholders regularly attacked missionaries, both verbally and physically, and blamed the evangelizing newcomers for slave rebellions. In response, Quaker, Anglican, and Moravian missionaries articulated a vision of “Christian Slavery,” arguing that Christianity would make slaves hardworking and loyal.

Christian Slavery shows how the contentions between slave owners, enslaved people, and missionaries transformed the practice of Protestantism and the language of race in the early modern Atlantic world.

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