

times, the theological phrasing in Robertson's writings cries out for a closer reading, but Smitten is not an expert in historical theology: the Book of Acts is not 'a gospel' (p. 66), and the idea of assurance of faith is characteristic of orthodox Calvinism rather than alien to it (p. 68). Yet he does make very good use of manuscript notes on Robertson's sermons, showing his close engagement with the biblical text and his articulation of the doctrines of sin, redemption and sanctification. We are reminded that the pulpit of Old Greyfriars was not the only thing that Robertson shared in common with the Evangelical John Erskine, who admired his colleague's piety and even vouched for his orthodoxy. Smitten overlooks the fact that Erskine and Robertson were co-signatories to John Warden's *A system of revealed religion* (1769), but this confirms Erskine's claim that Robertson did not favour Arian and Socinian heterodoxy. Both Erskine and another Evangelical, Sir Henry Wellwood Moncrieff, emphasised that Robertson was opposed to the push (led by some of his fellow Moderates) to end clerical subscription to the Westminster Confession. This reflected his determination to manage rather than inflame party divisions within the Kirk, and his reluctance to make an open breach with Reformed theology, even if he preached in a distinctly neo-Arminian voice. Moreover, for all his secular impartiality, Robertson wrote historical works that still carried a providentialist undertone; David Hume complained of 'the godly Strain of his History' (p. 122).

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Christian slavery. Conversion and race in the Protestant Atlantic world. By Katharine Gerbner. (Early American Studies.) Pp. xii + 280 incl. 14 figs and 4 maps. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. £32.978 0 8122 5001 5 JEH (70) 2019; doi:10.1017/S0022046919000125

Christian slavery examines the religious history of slavery in the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Caribbean. Historians have long downplayed the role of religion in the region and dismissed colonists, white planters and the enslaved African majority alike, as irreligious. As Gerbner shows, however, the Caribbean was home to many churches and the focus of intense missionary activity. Religious life in the Protestant areas of the Caribbean was nevertheless unique. Local control of religious institutions and the plantation economy posed problems for missionaries who desired to convert Africans to Christianity and the enslaved men and women who sought to become Christians.

Gerbner makes a three-fold argument to better understand slavery and religion in the early Protestant Caribbean. First, in the seventeenth century planters and other whites articulated an ideology of 'Protestant supremacy' that justified slavery because Africans were not Christians. Second, as missionaries – Anglican, Quakers and Moravians – began arriving in the region, they found whites, inculcated in ideas of religious supremacy, hostile to slave conversion. Planters feared that Christianisation would bring manumission. In response, missionaries envisioned a 'Christian slavery' that made slavery and Protestantism compatible. These missionaries sought to change the minds of the planters and ensure that conversion did not bring freedom by changing the law. Thus, 'Christian slavery' helped to racialise slavery. Instead of religion being used to justify slavery, race

became paramount by the late seventeenth century. In short, white supremacy supplanted 'Protestant Supremacy'. Neither of these arguments are new. In *White over black: American attitudes towards the negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, NC 1968), Winthrop Jordan made a similar argument regarding the transformation of the justification for slavery from religion to race. Numerous local studies have demonstrated the same transformation.

Nevertheless, those two points lay the groundwork for the final part of the argument. Gerbner complicates the meaning of conversion for enslaved people, emphasising that their 'engagement with Christianity should be understood as a process in which Protestantism itself evolved as a lived practice' (p. 192). Here, the author effectively applies the 'lived religion' paradigm, popular with historians of Puritan New England and the Great Awakening, to enslaved people and missionaries in the Caribbean. In her reading of the sources, Gerbner found religious practice and the meaning of conversion always contested and in flux. Over time, missionaries increasingly accommodated planters and embraced white supremacy, but slaves created their own interpretations of Scripture and religious practice. The attempts to convert slaves in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, then, had bifurcated outcomes. While 'Christian slavery' created precedents for pro-slavery Christianity and anti-abolitionism, the power and meaning of conversion for enslaved people laid the groundwork for black liberation theology.

Gerbner's book makes other important contributions. While the religious to racial supremacy argument has been made previously, few works have examined the phenomenon in the Caribbean. Gerbner does wonderful work tracking the disappearance of religious bigotry and the rise of racial language, including quantifying the use of the word 'white' in Barbadian law (Figure 4). In addition, the author marries slave conversion to larger debates over the course of empire. By looking at the life of Christopher Codrington, a Barbadian-born, Oxford-educated planter who became governor of the Leeward Islands in 1698, she demonstrates how complicated the issue of slave conversion was. It involved actors from the metropole, in the colonies, and outside the empire entirely, the latter of which was demonstrated by Codrington's admiration for Jesuit missionising.

Christian slavery draws from many different sources. Gerbner uses published travel narratives from the early Caribbean, religious tracts advocating conversion and missionary activity, official imperial correspondence, and letters between missionaries and their home institutions. The last two chapters of the book focus on Moravian missions in the Danish Caribbean colonies. These records, written in an obscure German script, *Sütterlin*, are inaccessible to most scholars, but Gerbner effectively deploys them.

Using all these sources, Gerbner challenges two long-standing, yet problematic paradigms in the study of slavery and Christianity. In her examination of Quakers and conversion, she rejects the teleology of abolitionism imposed by scholars. Usually when historians read the work of Quakers, it is with the benefit of hindsight and they view most of their writing as proto-abolitionist. Gerbner, however, shows how in the late seventeenth century, Quakers were among the largest promoters of 'Christian slavery.' Abolition developed later. More significantly, by attempting to account for all the enslaved converts yielded by these early missionary activities, Gerbner rejects the idea that enslaved people only became Christian with the

arrival of Evangelicalism. Rather, by the time of the Great Awakening, mainline sects and radical Protestant groups had attracted numerous African and African American converts.

These challenges aside, there are some unresolved issues with how the book is framed. Despite the title, the book is not about the 'Protestant Atlantic world'. It focuses on the Anglophone Caribbean with two final chapters about the Danish West Indies. There are occasional asides to examine British North American colonies such as the discussion of Elias Neau in New York. The biggest issue, however, is that there is little justification for why the author used these case studies. The vastness of Protestant empires in the Atlantic and the recent literature on the 'Protestant International' by scholars like Edward Andrews, Mark Peterson and Mark Valeri necessitates some explanation. What Gerbner chose not to emphasise raises as many questions as what she did include. This issue affects the structure of the book, as there is little logical connection between the first six Anglocentric chapters and the last two about the Moravians. The missionary connections between Anglicans and Moravians that the author highlights could also be found between Anglicans and Puritans or Scots Presbyterians and the Dutch Reformed Church.

Overall, *Christian slavery* will appeal to readers interested in slavery and religion in the early modern Atlantic world. It is unique in that it takes the religious life of the early Caribbean seriously. While the overall argument will not be revelatory to specialists and there are some issues with framing and approach, it nevertheless helps to revise some long-held paradigms regarding the Christianisation of enslaved people.

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Race and redemption. British missionaries encounter Pacific peoples, 1797–1920. By Jane Samson. (Studies in the History of Christian Missions.) Pp. x + 274. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2017. £41.99 (paper). 978 0 8028 7535 8
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Jane Samson's new book brings a new and welcome edginess to our current understanding of British Protestant missions in the Pacific in the modern era. It serves simultaneously to challenge reductionist thinking, to offer a more cohesive conceptual approach and to break open new ways of understanding the vexed relationship between missionaries and anthropology on the one hand and between missionaries and cultures on the other. As such it sits within a wider body of historical scholarship which, in the last decade or so, has enabled us to comprehend historically missionary-indigenous encounters in ways that are more nuanced and which create further room for creative dialogue. In particular it provides a welcome space for both theology and anthropology to be considered together as mutually constitutive influences.

Samson's intent is to add value to current post-colonial and historical scholarship by taking the religious factor 'both seriously and critically in order to bring greater nuance to the debate about missionary encounters with indigenous peoples' (p. 4). Trying to move beyond such binaries as science versus religion or progressive narratives of religion supplanted by science, Samson instead