

Extracts from primary sources: spiritual bondage

From William Edmundson, *A Journal of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry, Of ... William Edmundson* (London, 1715), pp. 74-5

After the Meeting, Priest *Ramsey* went to the Governour Sir *Jonathan Atkins*, and made a great Complaint against me, that I was a *Jesuit* come out of *Ireland*, pretending to be a *Quaker*, and to make the *Negroes* Christians; but would make them Rebels, and rise and cut their Throats; upon which the Governour was about to send his Warrant to apprehend me, I heard of it, and went to him before the Warrant came...

When we came to the Governour, and he knew my Name, and who I was, he said, he had heard of me, and would take a Course with me, using many rough Words, and threatning highly... but before the Marshal came, we had much Discourse, and amongst other things he told me, he was inform'd, That I was making the *Negroes* Christiaans, and would make them rebel, and cut their Throats. I told him, *It was a good Work, to bring them to the Knowledge of God and Christ Jesus and to believe in Him, that died for them, and for all Men, and that would keep them from Rebelling, or cutting any Man's Throat; but if they did rebel and cut their Throats, as he said, it would be through their own doings, in keeping them in Ignorance, and under Oppression giving them Liberty to be common with Women, (like Beasts) and on the other hand starve them for want of Meat and Cloaths convenient; so giving them Liberty in that, which God restrain'd, and restraining them in that, which God allow'd, and afforded to all Men, which was Meat and Cloaths.* After some time he grew very moderate.

From Anne Martindell, *The Relation of the Labour, Travail and Suffering of that faithful Servant of the Lord Alice Curwen* (London, 1680), p. 18.

There was a Widdow-Woman in Barbadoes that had Negro's to her Servants, who were convinced of God's Eternal Truth, and I hearing of them was moved to go to speak to the Woman for their coming to our Meetings; and when I did speak to her she did deny me, and then I did write to her as followeth.

Martha Tavernor;

I Cannot pass by, but in Love write to thee, for in Love we came to visit thee, and to invite thee and thy Family to the Meeting; but thou for thy part art like him that was invited to work in the Vineyard, and went not: And as for thy Servants, whom thou callst thy Slaves, I tell thee plainly, thou hast no right to reign over their Conscience in Matters of Worship of the Living God; for thou thy self confessedst, that they had Souls to save as well as we: Therefore, for time to come let them have Liberty, lest thou be called to give an Account to God for them, as well as for thy self: So in thy old Age chuse rather, as a good Man did, that both thou and thy whole Family may serve the Lord; for I am perswaded, that if they whom thou call'st thy Slaves, be Upright-hearted to God, the Lord God Almighty will set them Free in a way that thou knowest not; for there is none set Free but in Christ Jesus, for all other Freedom will prove but a Bondage,

From thy Friend,

Alice Curwen.