



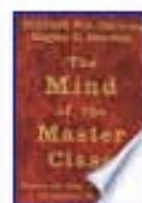
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suggesting that religious instruction, far from creating discontent among slaves, would make them better servants. In far away Massachusetts, less than a generation later, Cotton Mather was preaching the same message to Puritan masters.¹³

One of the most thoughtful formulations of the compatibility of religion and servitude appeared in a sermon of Stephen Hales, a reform-minded Anglican clergyman, before the trustees of the colony of Georgia in 1734. Hales thought that "our excellent Religion would inspire us with a generous and extensive Love to all Mankind" and "make us look upon the most rude and barbarous People as our Friends and Countrymen." One end of humane religion, despite "the Coldness and Indifference of some Planters," was the conversion of Negroes on British plantations. Countering the popular notion that Christianization produced inferior slaves, Hales contended: "So far from that, that it binds the Obligations to Duty more strongly upon us; for the Gospel Institution most strictly enjoins Obedience; it requires all not to be slothful in Business, and commands Servants to be obedient to them that are their Masters, according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling, in Singleness of Heart." Hence, if for no other reason, "out of a Principle of Self-Interest they [planters] should desire the Conversion of their Slaves."¹⁴

The sentiments of Godwyn, Mather, and Hales found their most concrete expression in the work of Thomas Bacon, another Anglican clergyman and wealthy government functionary in the Proprietary of Maryland. In four separate publications between 1749 and 1763, Bacon spelled out in practical lessons responsibilities of masters and slaves. Arguing before both black and white parishioners that clergymen must teach the Gospel "to the poorest slave, as well as the richest and most powerful," Bacon translated theory into practice by publishing tracts on