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"To Loose The Bands Of Wickedness, To Undo The Heavy Burdens, And To Let The Oppressed Go Free" The Apocalyptic Abolition Of Granville Sharp

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Abstract

Recent historians have attempted to examine the British Abolitionist Movement in terms of economic influence, evangelical coalitions and nationalist sentiment. In my research I have examined the evolution of Granville Sharp, one of the foremost members of the early movement, in order to show how he was primarily motivated by Scriptural and religious concerns in his writings and critiques of chattel slavery. Although Sharp was motivated by religious sentiments, his greatest successes were not the result of a moral appeal to Britain, but rather, an appeal to law and to justice. I show that Sharp's first success in the case of *Somerset v. Stewart* set the paradigm for abolitionism, and that Sharp's concern about the judgement of God was a later development, directly resulting from an adherence to the doctrine of Original Sin.

1. Body of Paper

Writing to the Maryland Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1793, Granville Sharp reminded his readers that "They [the slave owners] ought to have known that the limited temporal permission which had been granted to the Israelites to hold slaves was absolutely annulled by a subsequent command of God 'to let the oppressed go free' and 'to break every yoke.'"[1] The desire to end the oppression of slavery was embodied in an effort to initiate God's kingdom and to establish a society that reflected God's laws for humanity. This concern was one of the decisive factors in the success of the British abolitionist movement, and within half a century of Sharp's first foray into the battle over slavery, the British Empire abolished one of the world's most powerful institutions.[2] Among the early figures of the movement, Granville Sharp stands out as the most notable and consistent voice of opposition. His distinctive approach to the question of slavery is epitomized by the Scriptural passage of Isaiah 58; God reminds the Israelites that he does not desire fasting for the sake of fasting, or the Sabbath for the sake of the Sabbath. More than an outward expression of religious piety, the Israelites are commanded to "loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens… to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out."[3] This passage, and others which emphasized justice and mercy, formed the template for the British abolitionist movement, from which they offered a religious critique of slavery.[4] Recent scholarship has begun to re-emphasize the importance of religious sentiment in abolition literature and the Scriptural argument against slavery in general.[5] In light of that scholarship, Granville Sharp's own unique role in the abolition of the slave trade should be reconsidered. Sharp regularly emphasized Scriptural arguments which highlighted both the judgement of God and the imminence of the apocalypse. With regard to God's judgement, Sharp was not alone in trying to repair in England what one historian has termed a "ruptured relationship with heaven."[6] Indeed, the British abolition movement has enshrined such notable religious men as John Newton and William Wilberforce, two Anglicans who worked tirelessly to end slavery because of their Christian faith.[7] But on the second point, the apocalypse and return of Christ, Sharp was somewhat of an anomaly for the abolition movement as a whole.[8] Recent historians have failed to note the development of apocalypticism in Sharp's work, and the clear transition from an Enlightenment era conception of "rational Christianity." Apocalypticism has been a common theme in Christian literature since Christ and the Apostles.[9] But this transition is

particularly remarkable in the case of Sharp because apocalypticism represented a reaffirmation of the historical Christian understanding of the doctrine of Original Sin. Whereas many British abolitionists saw the judgement of God against England as a tangible danger, Sharp took the Scriptures a step further and emphasized the global concern of Christ's Parousia, and attempted to accomplish more than simply calling England to repentance.

One of the main challenges of interpreting British abolition is the extent to which an historian must emphasize the broader historical trends against the actions of unique and influential individuals. To this end, Sharp has been characterized as a successful "Don Quixote," "tilting at the windmills" of slavery and injustice.[10] Because of his radical tendencies, Sharp's activities after the famous case of *Somerset v. Stewart* have received far less attention from historians, who have largely ignored his later endeavors by overemphasizing his successors. Because of this tendency, the historical debate over abolition has centered on four prominent views which have received the most attention from scholars. An early nineteenth century view contextualized the popular movement against slavery as the province of a small, but dedicated coalition of orthodox Christians, including Anglicans, Presbyterians and other evangelicals. This *evangelical coalition* view posits that men like Sharp, William Wilberforce, and Olaudah Equiano formed a political faction based on the authority of Scripture and a shared condemnation of the slave trade, and because of their indefatigable efforts, popular opinion shifted in England against the institution.[11] It is important to note that the Anglicans in this account were orthodox, on matters of the Trinity and other fundamental doctrines, but were politically liberal and thus, outside the mainstream.

A second account, a *patriotism narrative*, has emphasized how socially conservative members of the Anglican Church were influential opponents against slavery, and that ending slavery was the result of nationalistic pride.[12] This approach attempts to show the conservative nature of abolitionists and the popular appeal of national piety; however, it significantly downplays the more "radical" elements of the movement.[13] Other debates have also emphasized broader trends, as some historians have highlighted the role of Enlightened rationalism and the influence of eighteenth century philosophical discourse on British anti-slavery.[14] This view has recently prompted Anthony Page to note the role of Unitarians and other "Rational Dissenters" who were marginalized in earlier histories.[15] Additionally, mainly throughout the twentieth century, the history of abolitionism focused on economic trends, as Marxist historians began to argue that slavery ended because it had largely become economically untenable.[16]

The dominance of the *evangelical coalition* narrative was largely due to the rise of evangelical forces within the Anglican Church and England throughout the middle and latter half of the nineteenth century. Since the abolition of the slave trade (1811) evangelical Christians have largely considered British Abolitionism to be the crowning achievement of their moral and intellectual virtue.[17] The influential Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon once remarked that "Not so very long ago our nation tolerated slavery in our colonies. Philanthropists endeavored to destroy slavery, but when was it utterly abolished? It was when Wilberforce roused the Church of God, and when the Church of God addressed herself to the conflict, then she tore the evil thing to pieces!"[18] Spurgeon, like other evangelicals of his time understood abolition from a Whig historiographical approach, i.e. one that emphasized the peripheral groups of people who challenged the centers of power.[19] In order to assert the importance of Anglicans, histories such as *The Life of Wilberforce* dismissed the crucial role of non-peripheral figures like Thomas Clarkson and Anthony Benezet.[20]

However, a significant amount of research has recently focused on the other side of the abolition movement. Two contemporary historians, Nicholas Hudson and Anthony Page, have illustrated the divergence between broad historical trends, Enlightenment rationalism and a developing nationalist identity. Hudson, in his 2001 article "Britons Never Will be Slaves: National Myth, Conservatism, and the Beginnings of British Antislavery," argues that abolition was not primarily the result of moral influence or economic interests, but was instead the product of "xenophobic nationalism" that was embodied by figures like Sharp and Clarkson.[21] Hudson is the most recent to comment on the *patriotic narrative*. His views, although not widely accepted, are not entirely without historical precedent as David Brion Davis and others have noted the conservative elements of abolition.[22] In direct contrast to the role of nationalism, Anthony Page has argued for the essential character of Enlightenment thought in his paper "Rational Dissent, Enlightenment and Abolition of the Slave Trade." Significantly, Page has challenged the *patriotism narrative* by showing that Quakers, Unitarians, and even Deists were involved in the fight to end slavery.[23] Sharp is a notable figure in this regard because of his willingness to embrace the alliances, as well as the friendship, of many whom he strongly opposed on theological grounds.[24]

Another influential view, throughout much of the twentieth century, was reflected in the work of Eric Williams in his landmark book of 1944, *Capitalism and Slavery*.[25] For much of the century his interpretation of the emergence of a bourgeois middle class dominated scholarship. In 1974 F.O. Shyllon contributed to this approach in his work *Black Slaves in Britain*, but very little has been written in recent decades reflecting an economic perspective.[26] This is, in part, due to the overall decline of Marxist historiography, and a recognition of complex social structures which directly affected slavery more than economics. Furthermore there is a virtual consensus among historians that slavery was not in fact in decline, and that it would have continued to generate profit for slaveholders and colonial powers.[27] Although

the economic narrative is no longer defensible, it does not imply that economics were absent from any consideration of anti-slavery. This is apparent in a recent work by John Coffey, "*'Tremble Britannia'*: Fear, Providence and the Abolition of the Slave Trade," which emphasizes the importance of providential literature and judgement in the minds of the British abolitionists. Economics are notable because Coffey's argument hinges on the fact that impending judgement is generally only a strong motivator in a strong middle class which is sufficiently comfortable, and who fear losing that comfort.[28] Coffey's view, though a welcome addition, obscures the nuance of the abolitionists themselves. Coffey, while insisting on "putting the fear of God back in abolition" primarily shows the abolitionists reviving judicial providential literature in order to affirm British ideals.[29] A fundamental issue with his approach is the tendency to locate abolitionist sentiment in British nationalism. Hudson takes the same angle in his "xenophobic patriotism," but Coffey reformulates it in terms of a broken relationship between God and England. For Coffey, abolition was a nationalistic enterprise which appropriated religious terminology. In the case of Sharp in particular, Coffey fails to note the development of apocalypticism in his thought or the importance of Original Sin in any apocalyptic providential approach to abolition. My view assumes a fundamental continuity in the history of Christian thought, i.e. that Christians have been obsessed with the apocalypse since before the apostle Paul wrote his first epistle to the Thessalonians.[30] Apocalypticism in the Christian Church is therefore a necessary corollary to the slavery via the doctrine of Original Sin. It is notable that many of Sharp's ideas were not particularly original, and to a large extent depended upon an Augustinian view of Original Sin.[31]

In the first section of this essay I consider the interaction and influence of the Anglican Church on Sharp's abolition, as well as his life and early career. Second, I examine the writings and influence of Sharp's greatest success in the case of *Somerset v. Stewart*. The arguments and opinions Sharp used in Somerset are notably different than many of his later writings; the judgement of God and the apocalypse are less evident. However, especially in his early writings, Sharp strongly emphasizes the global nature of Christianity and the importance of law. In section three, following Coffey's recent analysis, I briefly consider the American War and its influence on abolitionist literature. In the final section I discuss the decline of Sharp's influence, specifically his failure to secure a conviction in the Slave Ship Zong trial and the debacle of Sierra Leone and note how apocalypticism became a major theme in his writing. Among the many various accounts of abolition, this paper attempts to contextualize Granville Sharp's contribution to the end of slavery in terms of apocalyptic providence and global Christianity, which must be considered in any fair analysis of abolition in the eighteenth century.

2. Early Abolitionist Sentiment

In a letter addressed to the Quaker John Fothergill, an English physician and abolitionist, in 1770, Sharp remarked on his upbringing and associations with those of different religious persuasions than himself. He recalled that, as a young man employed by a Quaker, he was "liable to receive prejudices of education even in favour of Quakerism."[32] After the death of the Quaker, Sharp notes that he was "turned over to a Presbyterian, or rather, as he was more properly called, an Independent. I afterward lived some time with an Irish Papist, and also with another person, who, I believe, had no religion at all."[33] This "extraordinary experience" as he termed it, caused him to "make a proper distinction between the OPINIONS of men and their PERSONS."[34] Born in 1735, Sharp grew up amidst a growing tension between Enlightenment era rationalism and traditional Christianity. Although he could boast strong Anglican credentials, (a father and brother both served as Archdeacons of Northumberland), Sharp has often been regarded as "radical" by historians. This commonly accepted characterization of Sharp led Nicolas Hudson to remark that "Sharp has been portrayed as a "radical" and eccentric outsider who rattled the cages of English orthodoxy by successfully challenging the right of British slave-owners, most notably in his landmark defense of the slave James Somerset in 1772. Yet Sharp had deep roots in the orthodox establishment."[35] These deep roots were influential in his efforts to establish an American Episcopacy, even after the loss of the colonies in the American Revolution.[36] Additionally Sharp's biblical criticisms in support of the deity of Christ further solidify the orthodoxy of Sharp's Christianity.[37] The question of the Trinity alone separated Sharp from many outside orthodox Christian belief in England, especially after the decline of Calvinist Presbyterians and as Unitarian congregations took their place.[38]

Although Sharp remained committed to the Anglican Church, his own beliefs and opinions did not hinder an inclusive approach to the question of slavery. Furthermore, his own opinions, at times, brought him into opposition with the Hanoverian government and aligned him directly with the political and religious dissenters of England.[39] Sharp's opposition to slavery, the American War, and the encroachment of the government on private land have been the main reasons he has been labeled radical.[40] In addition to these, his increasingly apocalyptic writings and his emphasis on global Christianity (both aspects intrinsically linked), placed him outside of the mainstream of Anglican thought because the Anglican Church was inextricably linked to English patriotism.[41] The King was the sovereign

head of the Church of Christ in England, and therefore the Anglican Communion was an integral part of conservative politics. Sharp's global concerns are almost certainly part of the reason why he refused several offers to accept a clerical office in Nottinghamshire. Replying to his uncle, the Reverend Granville Wheeler, Sharp rejected an offer of a clerical position by stating that:

> Even if I could flatter myself that I am at all capable of serving the cause of religion, yet I should apprehend that I might much more effectually do so as a layman, than as a Clergyman, especially in religious controversies, wherein a volunteer has many advantages with the public, both with respect to the estimation of his motives for defending the truth and also with regard to what may be expected of him.[42]

Apparent in Sharp's letter is a marked concern for public relations and how he might be most effectual in his endeavors. This letter is not evidence of opposition to the Anglican Church, but it clearly indicates that Sharp's concerns were farther reaching than a parish in Nottinghamshire.

Although Sharp was content to work with men of other religions or of "no religion at all" that did not prevent him from openly involving himself in several controversies of a religious nature. The first was with a Jewish scholar and the second was with a Socinian, both of whom accused him of misunderstanding Scripture because he did not know the original languages.[43] Sharp, with little formal education, taught himself Greek and Hebrew in his spare time, and would later write influential treatises concerning the uses of both languages. Not long afterward he found himself in a dispute with the scholar and publisher of a Hebrew Bible, Dr. Kennicott, over his remarks on the Hebrew text concerning the sacred vessels restored by King Cyrus.[44] Of more lasting importance was his treatise on the Deity of Christ in the New Testament passages of Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1.[45]

A second point of consideration is the extent to which Sharp was influenced by his Quaker acquaintances and his politically liberal correspondences outside of traditional Anglican conservatism. This is attested in his correspondence with the Quaker Anthony Benezet, as well as the American doctor Benjamin Rush. Steven Wise declares Anthony Benezet to be "Sharp's American alter-ego, determined, indefatigable, finally influential."[46] Although Wise remarks that Sharp was "anti-Quaker," those religious sentiments did not influence either their friendship or their common cause against slavery. Despite Sharp's intense devotion to the Anglican Church, his most prominent allies in the early days of abolition were members of marginalized religious sects. These "rational dissenters," who held unorthodox views on Original Sin, the Deity of Christ and the miracles of Jesus, were nonetheless committed to principles of law and justice.[47] While it is important to note that the anti-slavery movement was never monolithic, there was a marked emphasis on *legal* abolition.[48] Among the various programs in the early years of abolition, the Quakers and dissenters played a major role in the abolition movement; Anthony Benezet, Joseph Priestley, and John Fothergill, were influential abolitionists who maintained correspondence with Sharp. Virtually all committed religious persons of any Christian group agreed that the judgement of God was a present reality and not only a future state.[49] The common understanding among those of religious persuasion was that God dealt with nations in temporal ways. Sharp, however, while certainly willing to emphasize the importance of national judgement, began to argue for a more extreme judgement, i.e the judgement of the entire world. This apocalyptic turn was a break with rational dissenters and a continuation of traditional Christian eschatology.

Although Sharp was influenced by the more radical elements of anti-slavery in both England and the United States, his various religious endeavors proved his adherence to Anglican orthodoxy. Furthermore, his publications indicated the interconnected nature of his work. In a work on the particularities of Hebrew Syntax, published in 1803, Sharp remarked that "The aweful purpose of this text [Exodus 6:1-8], as an eternal example against *oppression*, is so clear and obvious that it needs no comment. And besides, I have fulfilled my duty in giving timely *warning* many years ago!"[50] Notwithstanding his insistence on avoiding the subject of slavery, it was still apparent that even his biblical criticism showed concern with the subjects of oppression and slavery.

3. Somerset v. Stewart and Religious Essays on Slavery

In 1772, Sharp acted as legal counsel to the escaped slave James Somerset. In the landmark trial of *Somerset v. Stewart* Judge Mansfield ruled that "therefore the man [James Somerset] must be discharged."[51]The exact meaning of this phrase has led to endless debate among historians, as many have questioned the extent of *Somerset* for the institution of slavery.[52] The particularities of this debate are not relevant to my purposes here, but it is worth noting that *Somerset* was *considered* to mark the *de jure* end of slavery by the people of England.[53] In practical terms, *Somerset* meant that Britons could now definitively claim that "The air of England was too free for a slave to breathe."[54] It was this case

in particular that made Granville Sharp a prominent figure in the nascent abolition movement. In fact, *Somerset* has long been viewed as a pivotal moment in the history of English law, as well as the spark that lit the fires of abolitionism in England and America.[55] Here it is my purpose to note Sharp's literature which helped cement *Somerset* in English common law, identifying definitively the rallying point for legal abolition, as well as the perceived basis of the American War which I will examine in the next section. Because of *Somerset*, and the contribution Sharp made through his *Representation* and his *Essay on Slavery*, the importance of legal means became paramount in abolitionist rhetoric. Sharp's argument relied on law and justice, as well as Reason and Revelation, to be the cornerstones of English society. Because of the prevalence of an Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin in Sharp's thought, all human institutions that were not entirely consistent with the laws of God and natural reason were inherently corrupt.[56]

Regardless of the actual intent of the ruling, *Somerset* became a fundamental pillar of English law.[57] First, it was widely discussed in the formative years of the United States Constitution, and many abolitionists noted the failure of the founding fathers to address slavery.[58] In an attempt to placate the slaveholding states the constitution of 1788 was conspicuously silent on the issue.[59] Despite this setback, however, the spirit of *Somerset* pervaded virtually all subsequent abolition attempts and was noted in most bills submitted to Parliament. Second, the general public perceived *Somerset* as a ruling which nullified slavery in England, and all attempts to legalize the institution would be in the form of positive law, which never had the support of Parliament.[60]

Sharp's contentions for James Somerset were eloquently expressed in his tract *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery* (henceforth *Representation*). The concerns that Sharp considered in his work are *both* moral and legal in nature. Throughout the *Representation*, there are four main themes that Sharp expounded in order to make his case. First, he relied strongly on the role of precedent in establishing his opinions. Rather than attempting to refute wrong opinions, he instead argued that correct opinions had recently been interpreted wrongly. Second, Sharp emphasized the intrinsic humanity of slaves and of people of African descent in general. This was not entirely a new approach, as other Enlightenment figures had made similar claims, but Sharp took it a step further by showing that Britons *already* acted in a way that betrayed their acceptance of the full humanity of slaves.[61] The same approach is evident with William Agutter, who, dedicating his 1783 sermon to Granville Sharp, stated that "There is no truth more obvious to the simple conceptions of man, than that the human race have natural rights and common relations to each other."[62] Third, Sharp refuted the objection, which had been raised by some slaveholders, that the laws of England do not address those of African descent because they were not taken into consideration when the laws were written. His refutation was based upon the presumption that the law was aware of the existence of slavery in other parts of the world but did not provide for the existence of slavery in England. Finally, Sharp argued that the very nature of slavery is detrimental to England as a whole. It is notable that the actual effects of slavery were considered last in his Representation.[63]

First, establishing precedent was a significant move for Sharp. It was not necessary for Sharp to convince the world that slavery was a moral evil; that was a foregone conclusion. Instead, he needed to convince the judge, in this case Lord Mansfield, that slavery was already illegal. This attempt to establish precedent was one of the most effective weapons in the abolitionists' arsenal. It represented, first and foremost, an appeal to the basic conviction that England was in fact a just society consistent with the laws of God. England was founded with wisdom and justice, and therefore precedence indicated that England should enforce its own laws, rather than make new ones.[64] By showing the role of precedence, and in noting that Talbot and York were right in their opinion in a conditional sense, Sharp was able to move the debate about slavery away from the *moral* argument, and towards a *political* and *legal* one. It is unclear whether his reason for this was because he did not have faith in an argument from morality to convince the magistrates, or, more likely, that a matter which would fall under legal jurisdiction would preclude any moral judgements without recourse to existing laws. It would be of little benefit to Sharp if the magistrate *personally* found slavery reprehensible, because a personal opinion did not necessitate a legal one. This is even more evident in Lord Mansfield's ruling by his now famous phrase "Let justice be done though the heavens may fall."[65] Mansfield handed down the ruling out of a commitment to the laws of England, not out of a personal prejudice in favor of Somerset. In fact, it is likely that the reverse was true in regard to his own opinions.[66]

The practicalities of Sharp's argument are noticeable early in his *Representation* when he notes that "there are many instances of persons being freed from Slavery by the laws of England; but (God be thanked) there is neither law, nor even a precedent (at least I have not been able to find one) of a legal determination to justify a master in claiming or detaining any person whatsoever as a Slave in England, who has not voluntarily bound himself as such by a contract in writing."[67] Sharp's interpretation rested on the fact that no positive law had ever existed to allow slavery, and the status of slavery would be contingent upon precedent. It was crucial for Sharp to maintain that slavery violated English law if he was to consistently argue that the English legal tradition was reflective of God's revealed law.[68]

Less well-known than his *Representation*, Sharp's *Essay on Slavery* provides a fascinating look into the motivations and indeed the nature of his early abolitionist position. Far from being a nationalistic endeavor, Sharp's tracts do not

betray any insistence on the preeminence of England in God's providential plan. England would certainly face judgements, but his writings do not convey a concern for England which excluded other nations. Sharp's sentiment in this regard was clearly expressed in his *Essay*, where he reminds his Christian audience, and the Christian minister he is responding to, that "The Glorious system of the Gospel destroys all narrow, national partiality; and makes us citizens of the world, by obliging us to profess universal benevolence; but more especially are we bound, as Christians, to commiserate and assist to the utmost of our power all persons in distress."[69] Narrow, national partiality would indicate concern with the judgement and condemnation of England to the exclusion of the rest of the world. Sharp's "citizens of the world" line echoes both Enlightenment era rationalism, as well as the global aspirations of Christianity to "Go into all the world."[70] It is significant that Sharp is here appealing to the religious reasons for abolition *before* the advent of the war with the colonies, and more importantly, before the loss of the colonies, which would later be considered the most tangible evidence of God's displeasure against England.

4. God's Judgement and the American War

The disaster of the American War was a watershed moment for the abolitionist movement.[71] After the events of the war Sharp would consider the anti-slavery warnings of Virginia colonists to be "prophetic." In a letter to the bishop of London in 1795 Sharp recalled the tendency toward abolition which was displayed in the colonies prior to the American Revolution, writing that "In April 1772, the Assembly of Virginia stated, in a respectful petition to his Majesty, the great inhumanity of the Slave Trade, and their fears that it would endanger the very existence of his Majesty's dominions."[72] More surprising is the fact that Sharp claimed to search for the cause of the American misfortunes, and found his answer in the toleration of slavery. Sharp recalled "thus I had traced the evil to its source."[73] Slavery, for Sharp, was not just *an* evil, it was the very *source* of evil. This language is more than reminiscent of Original Sin, and the clear implication of Sharp's words is that America had been founded on laws contrary to Scriptural commands, and therefore would be subject to decay and corruption.[74]

As tensions heightened in the American colonies, Sharp published one of his most important tracts emphasizing the "national judgements" that England was soon to face. In his *Law of Retribution*, he stated that "The African slave trade has been publicly supported and encouraged by the Legislature of this Kingdom for near a century… so that the monstrous destruction of the Human Species, which is annually occasioned thereby, may certainly be esteemed a national crime."[75] What is most surprising in regard to the American war is that the loyal Anglican, Granville Sharp, is implicitly blaming the crown for the American independence movement, not Parliament or the Americans themselves. This criticism is not wholly distinct from the politics of the time, but within the context of Anglicanism it is apparent that Sharp was publicly criticizing the head of the Church in the person of the King. In further evidence of his disagreement with the escalation of conflict in North America, Sharp requested several months of leave from his work as a barrister, and the outbreak of war and the end of any possibility of a peaceful settlement led to his formal resignation from his office. Directly resulting from his opposition to the king and the "unjust war," his resignation was an act of protest against an unchristian act of the King.[76] By resigning his office, he implicitly condemned the role of the King in the war. This sort of departure from political orthodoxy did not entail a departure from Anglican orthodoxy. But it is almost surprising that someone like Sharp who took a strong stance against the King did not seem to entertain sentiments of nonconformity; even after the defeat of the British in the American colonies, Sharp worked tirelessly to create an American Episcopacy.[77]

From the outbreak of war in 1776 until the end of his life Sharp had no formal employment and spent much of his time engaged with his wide circles of correspondence in his ongoing campaign against slavery.[78] Writing to James Oglethorpe in September of 1776, Sharp noted that "Though my poor attempts to warn the public of approaching evils should prove too weak to effect such a timely reformation as may be necessary to avert the judgements against national injustice and inhumanity, yet it is no small recompense and satisfaction for my labour… to find that my endeavors are approved by sincere lovers of justice."[79] Justice was the primary concern of the laws of England, and upholding justice would be the only way to forestall the perils which he believed England, and the world, would face because of their toleration of slavery.

5. Declining Influence and Later Apocalypticism

As a new generation of abolitionist became more prominent Sharp faded from relevance. Although he still campaigned against slavery, the ambiguity of the outcome of Sierra Leone, and his failure to secure a conviction in the Zong

Massacre, are evidence of Sharp's declining influence.[80] Edward Lascelles, Sharp's biographer of the early twentieth century, identifies the last twenty years of Sharp's life as a period of obsessive apocalypticism.[81]As Sharp took a less active role in the abolition movement, his waning influence can be, at least chronologically, traced to his increasingly apocalyptic writings about the state of God's wrath on the world. Although judgement and condemnation had been a strong motivator for Sharp in the past, in the last two decades of his life he was enabled to pursue those ideas with more zeal. One of his most significant endeavors was the Sierra Leone experiment, which was on precarious footing at best, for the first fifty years of its existence. The settlement of Sierra Leone, originally named the Province of Freedom, was Sharp's attempt to build a Christian society in order to preserve and spread the message of the Gospel. Through mismanagement and difficult conditions many members of the original settlement died and the entire affair was a financial catastrophe.[82] Though ultimately successful to an extent, Sierra Leone was certainly a blow to his reputation.[83] More damaging by far, however, was Sharp's failure to secure a conviction in the Zong Slave Ship Massacre, where the slave traders of the ship Zong walked free despite the murder of 130 men, women, and children.[84] This travesty of justice proved definitively, despite Sharp's success in 1772 with *Somerset*, that slavery would not die easily.

Toward the end of his life, Sharp had developed an increasingly alarmist and apocalyptic understanding of biblical prophecy, even going so far as to claim that Christ would return in 1814.[85] He was obsessively concerned with the "Little Horn" from the book of Daniel where the prophet warns that "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."[86] This prophecy, more so than others, concerned the aging Sharp, and he publicly identified the Pope and the Roman church as the Little Horn of Biblical prophecy.[87] Sharp continued to voice more anti-Catholic rhetoric in his later writings, as he published a long treatises on the 18th chapter of Revelation, identifying the City on Seven Hills (Revelation 17-18) with the Roman Catholic Church. This treatise, originally a letter written in 1801 and published in 1805, was appropriately titled *An inquiry, whether the description of Babylon, contained in the 18th chapter of the Revelations, agrees perfectly with Rome as a city?* For Sharp, the answer to his inquiry was beyond certain as the recent turmoil in France and the American continent proved.

Sharp's *Inquiry* was a sustained and acerbic attack on the Roman Church, and any manifestation of "superstitious popery" in general. Moreover, the *Inquiry* led to a bizarre conflation of Rome, Jacobins, and biblical prophecy. Sharp writes that "The 'Dragon' at Rome can be substituted in the prophetical character of the Antichrist, the image of the Beast, the Man of Sin, etc. (though the Rev. Mr. Kett and some other modern commentators have lately supposed the contrary); because "the little Horn before whom three Horn fell" (and which wears the three crowns upon the Jacobine Red Cap of the Roman Pontifex Maximus to this day, even as a fatal mark of the predicted character.)"[88] This amalgamation of the Jacobins with the pope was odd, even in the eighteenth century, and marked an extreme shift in Sharp's apocalyptic politics from his originally favorable attitude towards the French Revolution.[89] Even the late Edmund Burke, a notable opponent of the French Revolution, was still considered by Sharp to be representative of the antichrist and Jacobinism, as he noted that:

> The end of Satan's dominion, as "Prince of this world" is therefore manifestly to take place before the Millenium; and as that glorious era is, surely, (by the signs of the times,) very near at hand, we ought to be more particularly on our guard against the delusions of these spiritual enemies, and their alarms and incitement to war, such as were too plainly manifested in the fatal endeavors of the late Mr. Edmund Burke, who was himself a real Papist Jacobine, at the same time that he accused the English people of having 80,000 Jacobines among them, in order to inculcate the idea of a necessity to exercise a *power beyond the law*, and to promote the illegal measure of suspending it.[90]

In this attack, there is an undeniably consistent theme emphasizing law and justice. Sharp, above all, has a disdain for war and a respect for the rule of law. The Roman Church, and even Edmund Burke, were "Jacobins" (the term he used for all servants of Satan), and the most obvious proof was their willingness to break with established laws.

Sharp's apocalypticism has been largely ignored by historians who have noted Sharp's eccentric qualities but have not considered in depth the nature of his claims. Coffey remarks that his obsession with the "beast" and the "little horn" were anomalous, and Wise notes his anti-Catholic tendencies.[91] Sharp's anti-Catholicism and apocalypticism were an integral part of his abolitionist methods. In his *Inquiry*, he argues that "we need not hesitate to charge ALL the bloodshed, even of this last horrible war, to the counter-revolutionary spirit which actuated the original Papistical Jacobines some of them under the mask or cloak of furious advocates for liberty to enable them the easily to betray the real friends of liberty."[92] All violence, bloodshed, and slavery were linked to the antichrist and his rule on earth, but the days of Satan's dominion were coming to an end, and Sharp was ready to herald the new kingdom of Christ.

This is apparent in the way that he underscores the Scriptural argument in virtually all of his later writings and can be clearly seen in his tract against Rome. The same exegetical methods Sharp used for his interpretation of Isaiah 58, God's command to "Let the oppressed go free," were the methods he applied to his readings of the prophecies of Daniel and the book of Revelation. Crucially, the *Inquiry* reflects a traditional Protestant attitude which did not constitute a break from the past.[93]

Even as Sharp's influence declined, his approach to the question of slavery continued to define abolitionist sentiment. Thomas Clarkson, although ambiguous in his own religious sentiments, was sympathetic to the idea of Christianity as the most influential factor in the abolition of the slave trade, noting that "in whatever way Christianity may have operated towards the increase of this energy, or towards a diminution of human misery, it has operated in none more powerfully than by the new views, and consequent duties, which it introduced on the subject of charity, or practical benevolence and love."[94] Clarkson, like others, was quick to note the preponderance of charity and love in the basic tenets of Christianity and to apply those ideas to the moral failings of England. In a similar way, Hannah More the playwright and abolitionist argued that slavery was, above all, a rejection of law. In her poem *Slavery* (1788), she notes that the supporters of slavery were actively attempting "to spurn at order, and to outrage law."[95]Continually stressing that slavery was a rejection of law and justice solidified the abolitionist claim to represent the laws of England, as well as establishing a national precedent for abolition.

6. Conclusion

In 1772, when James Somerset was declared by Lord Mansfield to be a free man, until 1811, when the slave trade was permanently outlawed, English abolitionists worked tirelessly to end one of the most powerful institutions in the British Empire. From the beginning, a diverse coalition of evangelicals and other religiously minded individuals influenced the British Parliament and ruling political class to end slavery. Slavery was attacked pragmatically, primarily by using laws and the rule of law instead of an overt appeal to popular tactics. The popular tactics, such as petitions and boycotts, did come later, as did an appeal to a sense of national pride and the judgement of God. In short, the history of Christian thought within the era of Enlightenment rationality cannot be neatly divorced from the long and varied history of Christian apocalypticism, charity, and dissent, all of which influenced the abolition movement of the eighteenth century. The movement to end slavery in England captivated the imagination of the entire world and struck a blow for the rights of all humanity. Granville Sharp, the "Don Quixote" of England, remains a towering figure of immense importance and Christian charity, epitomizing Hannah More's words in his efforts to:

> Cheer the mourner, and with soothing hands
> From burning hearts, unbind the Oppressors bands;
> To raise the lustre of the Christian name
> And clear the foulest blot that dims its fame.[96]

7. Annotated Bibliography

7.1 Scholarly Sources

Braidwood, Stephen J. *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786-91*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994.

Stephen Braidwood attempts to pioneer a middle-way between economic and societal interests and individual philanthropic endeavors. Importantly, Braidwood's book was one of the first in the past three decades to reexamine Sierra Leone.

Brown, Christopher Leslie. *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.

Brown attempts to show the "moral foundations" for the British abolitionists, and his argument focuses on the idea of moral legitimacy in England.

Coffey, John. "'Tremble, Britannia!': Fear, Providence and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1758—1807." *The English Historical Review* 127, no. 527 (2012): 844-81. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23272689.

John Coffey is one of the most recent scholars to comment on British abolition, and his article focuses on the concept of a "ruptured relationship" between God and Britain. He deals primarily with providential literature but mentions briefly Granville Sharp's tendency to locate national judgement within apocalyptic concerns.

Cotter, William R. "The Somerset Case and the Abolition of Slavery in England." *History* 79, no. 255 (1994): 31-56.

William Cotter provides an in-depth analysis of the *Somerset* case, arguing that it ended slavery in a *de jure* sense. This was the most important case study of the late twentieth century and until Steven Wise's volume on *Somerset*, the most definitive.

Drescher, Seymour. *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Drescher's book on abolition is the most thorough one volume work on the subject. He examines the various historiographical streams of thought and presents a wealth of information on the early movement.

Guyatt, Nicholas. *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Nicholas Guyatt examines the role of providential ideology in the formation of the United States, further examining the convictions of the founders in regard to God's judgement and the question of slavery.

Hudson, Nicholas. ""Britons Never Will Be Slaves": National Myth, Conservatism, and the Beginnings of British Antislavery." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 4 (2001): 559-76.

Nicholas Hudson contends that a sense of nationalistic pride was one of the most decisive factors in the abolition of slavery in England. He emphasizes the patriotism of Sharp, Clarkson and Wilberforce.

Langford, Paul. *The Eighteenth Century*: in *The Oxford History of Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Paul Langford offers a helpful overview of the eighteenth century and the growing popular affinity for abolition in England.

Lascelles, E. C. P. *Granville Sharp and the Freedom of Slaves in England*. New York: 1918, Negro Universities Press, 1969.

Although this book is older, originally published in 1918, it is only the second biography of Granville Sharp. Lascelles provides an interesting look at the historiography of the early twentieth century, but echoes Hoare's emphasis on the quixotic aspects of Sharp's career.

Mathewes, Charles T. *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Charles Mathewes details the role of Augustinian epistemology in the history of Christian thought, specifically noting the idea of Original Sin and the connection to apocalypticism.

Metaxas, Eric. *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2013.

One of the more recent works, *Amazing Grace*, is one of the many works that acclaims Wilberforce, implicitly excluding others who were involved in the campaign against slavery.

Mills, Frederick V. "Granville Sharp and the Creation of an American Episcopate: Ordo Episcoporum Est Robur Ecclesiae." *Anglican and Episcopal History* 79, no. 1 (2010): 34-58. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42612738.

Frederick Mills details Granville Sharp's attempts at creating an American Episcopacy after the defeat of Britain, an important and difficult task considering the anti-British sentiment of the new country.

Outram, Dorinda. *The Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Outram addresses the concerns and innovations in terms of religion and slavery, as well as rationality and reason in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Page, Anthony. "Rational Dissent, Enlightenment, and Abolition of the British Slave Trade." *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011): 741-72.

In this article, Page argues that the importance of "rational dissenters" has been downplayed in most of the historical literature, and that they played an indispensable role in the abolition of the slave trade.

Schama, Simon. *Rough Crossings: Britain, The Slaves and the American Revolution*. London: BBC Books, 2005.

Schama details the complexities of the Atlantic slave trade, as well as the efforts of abolitionists in regard to the settlement of Sierra Leone.

Seed, John. "Gentlemen Dissenters: The Social and Political Meanings of Rational Dissent in the 1770s and 1780s." *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 2 (1985): 299-325.

John Seed defines the term "gentlemen dissenters" by noting how other traditional religious institutions had declined in England in the late eighteenth century.

Shyllon, F. O. *Black Slaves in Britain*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Shyllon was, to the best of my knowledge, one of the last to approach the question of slavery from an economic standpoint, although he does note the importance of Sharp's indefatigable efforts. Although this work is older, it was nonetheless a significant contribution to the field.

Wise, Steven M. *Though the Heavens May Fall: The Landmark Trial That Led to the End of Human Slavery*. London: Pimlico, 2006.

This book is the first book to focus entirely on the subject of *Somerset*, as well as providing a wealth of background information on Sharp's life and abolitionist tendencies.

Yoon, Young Hwi. "The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s-1770s." *Church History* 81, no. 2 (2012): 348-77. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23253818.

This recent essay contributes to the field by showing the early impulse (1730-1760) toward abolition in England and commenting on some of the Scriptural developments which led to the anti-slavery movement assuming a virtual monopoly of Scriptural arguments.

7.2 Primary Sources

Agutter, William. *The abolition of the slave trade considered in a religious point of view*. London: Printed for J.F. and C. Rivington and G. Philips, 1788. *The Making of the Modern World* (accessed November 27, 2018). http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8SHmb3.

The scholar and cleric, William Agutter, was primarily interested in promoting a religious critique of slavery, which by this time was well received in England.

Clarkson, Thomas. *The history of the rise, progress, and accomplishment of the abolition of the African slave-trade by the British Parliament*. Vol. 1. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1808. *The Making of the Modern World* (accessed November 1, 2018).

Clarkson was one of the most important abolitionists in England, and his own nonconformity and cavalier ways sometimes clashed with Wilberforce and Equiano. Nonetheless, he regarded Sharp as the patriarch of abolition.

Hoare, Prince. *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq. composed from his own manuscripts, and other authentic documents in the possession of his family and of the African Institution: with observations on Mr. Sharp's biblical criticisms*. Edited by Prince Hoare. Volume 1. 2nd ed. London, 1828.

Prince Hoare was Granville Sharp's first biographer and the first to compile his memoirs in 1828.

More, Hannah. *Slavery*. London: Printed for T. Cadell, [1788]. *The Making of the Modern World* (accessed April 7, 2019). http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/U0106571277/GDCS?u=ashv45734&sid=GDCS&xid=f699c8fe.

The poet and playwright, Hannah More, was one of the most important anti-slavery activists, as her popular works resonated more than Sharp's with the general public.

Sharp, Granville. *Letter to the Rev. Granville Wheeler*, 1767. In *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq. composed from his own manuscripts, and other authentic documents in the possession of his family and of the African Institution: with observations on Mr. Sharp's biblical criticisms*. Edited by Prince Hoare. Volume 1. 2nd ed. London, 1828.

This letter was Sharp's reply to his uncle, declining the office of a cleric in the Anglican Church. This offer was repeated several times, but Sharp insisted that he was not fit to be a member of the clergy, and so declined. His activities outside of the church, in his own assessment, were therefore not hindered by a strict adherence to clerical restrictions.

Sharp, Granville. *A representation of the injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating slavery; or of admitting the least claim of private property in the persons of men, in England.* London, 1769.

This was likely Sharp's most widely read tract against slavery; in this work he details objections based upon Blackstone's Commentaries on English Law.

Sharp, Granville. *Remarks concerning the encroachments on the River Thames near Durham-yard. Addressed to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, the worshipful the Aldermen and the Common-Council of the city of London*. London: Printed by G. Bigg, 1771.

This tract is another instance of Sharp clashing with the government, as he attempted to limit encroachments by the city of London on the river Thames.

Sharp, Granville. *A declaration of the people's natural right to a share in the legislature; which is the fundamental principle of the British constitution of state*. London: Printed for B. White, 1774

Sharp continually emphasized the importance of representative government, and here he remarks on the failures of England to respect the American colonies' claim to representation.

Sharp, Granville. *Remarks on a printed paper, lately handed about, intituled, "A catalogue of the sacred vessels restored by Cyrus. Addressed to all such gentlemen as have received or read the same. 2d. ed., 2nd ed. London: Printed for B. White, 1775.*

This was one of Sharp's first publications dealing with textual critical issues of the Bible, and his approach was indicative of his willingness to engage a variety of opinions on scholarly issues.

Sharp, Granville. *Letter to Anthony Benezet of Philadelphia, 1776*. In *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq. composed from his own manuscripts, and other authentic documents in the possession of his family and of the African Institution: with observations on Mr. Sharp's biblical criticisms*. Edited by Prince Hoare. Volume 1. 2nd ed. London, 1828. pp 100-103.

Benezet was a friend of Sharp's and a fellow abolitionist who was prominent in America. Their constant correspondence illustrates the nature of Sharp's abolitionist campaign.

Sharp, Granville. *The just limitation of slavery in the laws of God, compared with the unbounded claims of the African traders and British American slaveholders London, 1776*. Slavery and Antislavery.

As a committed Biblical literalist, Sharp had to contend with the fact that certain passages of Scripture were explicit in their support for slavery. Sharp's argument reflected two viewpoints, 1) that the slavery that was permitted to the Israelites was different than the chattel slavery of his day and 2) that the Israelites only had limited temporal permission to own slaves, which was subsequently annulled by a later divine command.

Sharp, Granville. *The law of passive obedience, or Christian submission to personal injuries: Wherein is shewn, that the several texts of scripture, which command the entire submission of servants or slaves to their masters, cannot authorize the latter to exact an involuntary servitude, nor ... justify the claims of modern slaveholders*. 1776.

In this tract, Sharp contends that the Scriptural commands concerning "submission" were relevant only within a certain context of Roman law and society, and that they were subsequently annulled, implicitly, by any society which made Scripture the supreme law of the land.

Sharp, Granville. *The law of retribution; or A serious warning to Great Britain and her colonies, founded on unquestionable examples of God's temporal vengeance against tyrants, slave-holders and oppressors*. London: Printed by W. Richardson, for B. White, and E. C. Dilly, 1776.

Sharp's clear concern in this tract is the tangible evidence of divine wrath and judgement on England as punishment for the toleration of the slave trade; judgement clearly demonstrated by the American conflict.

Sharp, Granville. *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament* (London, 1778).

This treatise was Granville Sharp's most important effort defending Anglican orthodoxy and the Deity of Christ. His interpretation of the Greek text was controversial among Unitarians and Quakers, but it has nonetheless retained its validity with most modern Greek scholars.

Sharp, Granville. *Letter ... to the Maryland Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the relief of free negroes and others, unlawfully held in bondage.* Baltimore, 1793.

Even after the loss of the American colonies, Sharp continued to contribute to the abolition movement in America. He received a friendly reception in the United States because of his opposition to the war.

Sharp, Granville. *Letter to the Bishop of London*, 1795. In *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq. composed from his own manuscripts, and other authentic documents in the possession of his family and of the African Institution: with observations on Mr. Sharp's biblical criticisms*. Edited by Prince Hoare. Volume 1. 2nd ed. London, 1828.

An important consideration in assessing the influence of Sharp is the extent of his interactions with both peripheral and non-peripheral figures. His correspondence with the Bishop of London was incredibly significant for establishing a mainstream approach to the issue of slavery. This approach was echoed later by Wilberforce and others.

Sharp, Granville. *A Letter Respecting Some of the Particularities of the Hebrew Syntax*. 1803, MJR Press, Grand Rapids. 2017.

Although this work was a treatise on Hebrew grammar, the pervasive nature of Sharp's campaign against slavery is further demonstrated.

Sharp, Granville. *An inquiry, whether the description of Babylon, contained in the 18th chapter of the Revelations, agrees perfectly with Rome as a city? &c. London: Printed by W. Calvert, for Vernor and Hood, 1805.*

Although Sharp cooperated with many of different religious persuasions than himself, he nonetheless remained critical of the Roman Church throughout his life. This tract, originally a letter addressing some concerns he had regarding the city of Rome, represents a significant shift in his thinking.

Sharp, James. *Letter to Granville Sharp, 1776.* In *Memoirs of Granville Sharp, Esq. composed from his own manuscripts, and other authentic documents in the possession of his family and of the African Institution: with observations on Mr. Sharp's biblical criticisms*. Edited by Prince Hoare. Volume 1. 2nd ed. London, 1828.

This brief letter from his brother James indicated to Granville Sharp that his family was prepared to support his literary and activist endeavors for as long as he remained without employment. This proved to be a permanent arrangement, although he did earn some money from his published works, he never held any other employment.

Spurgeon, C.H, *A complete index to C.H. Spurgeon's sermons 1855-1917 in the New Park Street and Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit, volumes 1-63*. Vol. 29.

Charles Spurgeon was one of the many evangelicals who promoted Wilberforce and the anti-slavery movement as the definitive success of evangelical Christianity in the world.

8. Endnotes

1 Granville Sharp, *Letter to the Maryland Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes and Others, Unlawfully Held in Bondage.* Baltimore, 1793. 4.

2 Paul Langford, "The Eighteenth Century." *The Oxford History of Britain*. London. 1992. 469.

3 Isaiah 58:6-8 NASB. Although certain Scriptural passages were used by slave owners to justify the practice, they were largely reactionary to anti-slavery appeals to Scripture. Essentially the abolitionists had a monopoly on the Scriptural argument (see Coffey 849), largely because of the preponderance of anti-slavery tracts in the generation before Sharp. See Young Hwi Yoon, "The Spread of Antislavery Sentiment through Proslavery Tracts in the Transatlantic Evangelical Community, 1740s-1770s." *Church History* 81, no. 2 (2012): 348-77 for a further analysis.

4 Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital*. 2006. 175.

5 John Coffey, *'Tremble Britannia!':* Fear, Providence and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1758-1807. English Historical Review. 2012.

6 Coffey, 847.

7 See Langford, *The Eighteenth Century,* 175.

8 Coffey, 849

9 Amy Frykholm, "Christian Understandings of the Future*:" The Historical Trajectory.* 2016.

10 E. C. P. Lascelles, *Granville Sharp and the Freedom of Slaves in England* (New York: Negro Universities Press. 1969).

11 Eric Metaxas, *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery*. Milton Keynes, 2013.

12 Nicholas Hudson, *""Britons Never Will Be Slaves":* National Myth, Conservatism, and the Beginnings of British Antislavery*." Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 4 (2001): 559-76.

13 It is important to note that the term "radical" is used exclusively to denote a social and political liberalism and often, but not always, a rejection of the established church.

14 Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment, an Interpretation: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966).

15 Anthony Page, "Rational Dissent, Enlightenment, and Abolition of the British Slave Trade." *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011): 741-72.

16 Brown, 21.

17 Brown, 26.

18 C.H. Spurgeon, *A complete index to C.H. Spurgeon's sermons 1855-1917 in the New Park Street and Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit, volumes 1-63*. Vol. 29.

19 See James Davison Hunter and David Franz. "Religious Pluralism and Civil Society." A Nation of Religions, for an in-depth discussion of "peripheral" cultural influence.

20 Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce ... in Five Volumes* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1838).

21 Hudson, 566.

22 Lewis Fried and David Brion Davis, *Challenging the Boundaries of Slavery*. *African American Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 530.

23 Page, 749.

24 Page, 746.

25 Eric Eustace Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2010. Originally published in 1944).

26 F. O. Shyllon, *Black Slaves in Britain* (London: Published for the Institute of Race Relations by Oxford University Press, 1974).

27 Hudson, 565.

28 Coffey, 847.

29 Coffey, 849.

30 In his first letter to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul warns his readers of the imminent coming of the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

31 See Charles T. Mathewes, *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), for an analysis of Original Sin in the Augustinian tradition and the influence of the doctrine on apocalyptic thought.

32 Sharp, *Letter to John Fothergill* in *Memoirs of Granville Sharp*. 28.

33 Sharp, *Letter to John Fothergill*. 29.

34 Sharp, *Letter to John Fothergill*. 29.

35 Hudson, 561.

36 Frederick V. Mills, "Granville Sharp and the Creation of an American Episcopate*: Ordo Episcoporum Est Robur Ecclesiae*." Anglican and Episcopal History 79, no. 1 (2010): 34-58.

37 Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament* (London, 1778).

38 John Seed, "*Gentlemen Dissenters:* The Social and Political Meanings of Rational Dissent in the 1770s and 1780s*." The Historical Journal* 28, no. 2 (1985): 302.

39 Seed, 299.

40 Sharp, *Remarks concerning the encroachments on the River Thames near Durham-yard. Addressed to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, the worshipful the Aldermen and the Common-Council of the city of London*. London: Printed by G. Bigg, 1771.

41 Hudson, 562.

42 Sharp, *Letter to Granville Wheeler*, in *Memoirs*. 46.

43 Prince Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp. 29.*

44 Hoare, 131.

45 See Daniel B. Wallace, *Granville Sharp's Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2009), for a full discussion of the significance of the Granville Sharp construction.

46 Wise, 36.

47 Page, 745.

48 Page, 743.

49 Coffey, 861.

50 Granville Sharp, *A Letter Respecting Some of the Particularities of the Hebrew Syntax*. 22.

51 William R Cotter, *The Somerset Case and the Abolition of Slavery in England*. *History* 79, no. 255 (1994):

52 Cotter, 31.

53 Cotter, 38.

54 Hudson, 568.

55 Sharp, *Remarks on Somerset v. Stewart*, in *Memoirs*, 91.

56 Sharp, *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery; or of Admitting the Least Claim of Private Property in the Persons of Men, in England. London*. 1769, 92.

57 Cotter, 34.

58 Cotter, 32.

59 See David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation, for a further discussion of the importance of avoiding slavery in the Continental Congress. Pp 268-271.

60 Wise, 244.

61 Sharp, *A Representation,* 23.

62 William Agutter, *The abolition of the slave trade considered in a religious point of view*. London: Printed for J.F. and C. Rivington and G. Philips, 1788, 1.

63 Sharp, *A Representation,* 107.

64 Sharp, *A Representation*, 7.

65 Cotter, 37.

66 Hoare, 93.

67 Sharp, *Representation*, 5.

68 Sharp, *Letter ... to the Maryland Society,* 4.

69 Sharp, *An Essay on Slavery*, 22-23.

70 Matthew 28:18-19

71 Coffey, 856.

72 Sharp, *Letter to the Bishop of London*. *Memoirs,* 116.

73 Sharp, *Letter to the Bishop of London*. *Memoirs,* 118.

74 Sharp, *The Law of Retribution*, 6.

75 Sharp, *The Law of Retribution*, 1.

76 Sharp, *The Law of Retribution*, 4.

77 Hoare, 209.

78 James Sharp *Letter to Granville Sharp, Memoirs of Granville Sharp,* 127. His brothers acted as his benefactors from 1776 until the end of his life.

79 Sharp, *Letter to James Oglethorpe*, in *Memoirs*. 156.

80 Lascelles, 128.

81 Lascelles, 130.

82 Schama, 260.

83 Schama, 259.

84 Sharp, *Notes Concerning the Slave Ship Zong*, in *Memoirs*. 236.

85 Lascelles, 135.

86 Daniel 7:11-14 NASB.

87 Sharp, *Inquiry*. 26.

88 Sharp, *Inquiry.* 13.

89 Page, 744.

90 Sharp, *Inquiry.* 62.

91 Wise, 24.

92 Sharp, *Inquiry*. 68.

93 Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 67-83.

94 Thomas Clarkson, *The history of the rise, progress, and accomplishment of the abolition of the African slave-trade by the British Parliament*. Vol. 1. London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1808. 13.

95 Hannah More, *Slavery: A Poem*. 1788, 3.

96 More, *Slavery: A Poem*, 19.