

**“An act declaring that baptisme of slaves doth not exempt them from bondage” (1667)**

*In this act passed by the General Assembly in the session of September 1667, Virginia's colonial government attempted to better define the conditions by which people were enslaved or free.*

WHEREAS some doubts have risen whether children that are slaves by birth, and by the charity and piety of their owners made partakers of the blessed sacrament of baptisme, should be vertue of their baptisme be made ffree; *It is enacted and declared by this grand assembly, and the authority thereof,* that the conferring of baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or ffreedome; that diverse masters, ffreed from this doubt, may more carefully endeavor the propagation of christianity by permitting children, though slaves, or those of greater growth if capable to be admitted to that sacrament.

**Source:** William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1823), 2:260.

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