

[Mr. Wright, of Boston, offered the following:

Resolved, That regarding a surrender of our *right of free discussion* upon the altar of southern slavery, as involving, on our part, the commission of moral suicide—treachery to the cause of civil liberty and of humanity—and guilt before High Heaven; we hereby pledge ourselves to one another—to the oppressor and the oppressed—to our country and our God—that, undeterred by threats of ‘persecution at common law,’ whether in the message of our governors; the pages of our theological reviews, or the reports of legislative committees, come what may—gag law or lynch law—we will never cease from its exercise, full, free, and undiminished, until the last fetter shall be broken, and slavery and prejudice shall be buried in one common grave. ...]

Sir, if the two millions and a half of my brethren could hear this resolution, they would be rejoiced—they would feel convinced that their cause was not to be given up. Doubtless, sir, it would be so. There would be a shout—as in the West Indies, that memorable day of emancipation in 1834—‘Free discussion shall never be given up.’ This would be the shout of the slave here; and he would cry, ‘Glory to God in the highest—the mouths of those who speak for us, who cannot speak for ourselves, shall never be shut!’ But, sir, my apprehension was, that the last part of the resolution was to be overlooked, and that some thought that prejudice was to be left off. That we must first kill slavery, and leave prejudice to take care of itself. Why, sir, prejudice is slavery. No man can really understand this prejudice, unless he feels it crushing him to the dust,

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because it is a matter of feeling. It has bolts, scourges, and bars, wherever the colored man goes. It has bolts in all the schools and colleges. The colored parent, with the same soul as a white parent, sends his child to the seats of learning, and he finds the door bolted, and he sits down to weep beside his boy. Prejudice stands at the door and bars him out. Does the child of the colored man show a talent for mechanics? The heart of the parent beats with hope. He sees the children of the white man engaged in employment, and he trusts that here is a door open to his boy, to get an honest living and become a useful member of society. But, when he comes to the work-shop with his child, he finds a bolt there. But, even suppose he can get this first bolt removed, he finds other bars. He can't work. Let him be ever so skilled as a mechanic, up starts prejudice, and says 'I won't work in the shop if you do.' Here he is scourged by prejudice, and has to go back, and sink down to some of the employments which white men leave for the most degraded. He hears of the death of a child, from home, and he goes in a stage or a steamboat. His money is received, but he is scourged there by prejudice. If he is sick, he can have no bed, he is driven on deck; money will not buy for him the comforts it gets for all who have not his complexion. He turns to some friend among the white men; perhaps that white man had sat at his table, at home, but he does not resist prejudice here. He says, 'Submit. 'Tis an ordinance of God—you must

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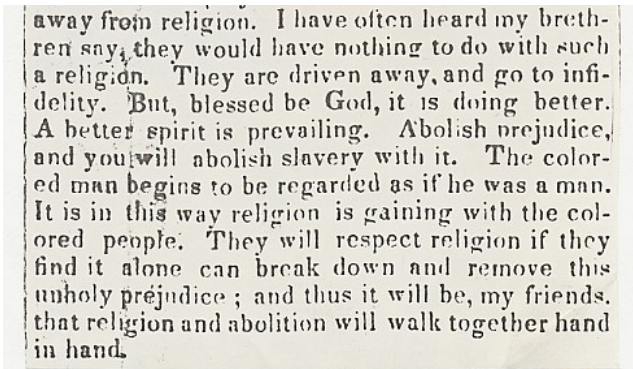
be humble.' Sir, I have felt this. As a minister, I have been called to pass often up and down the North River, in steamboats. Many a night have I walked the deck, and not been allowed to lie down in a bed. Prejudice would even turn money to dross, when it was offered for these comforts by a colored man. Thus, prejudice scourges us from the table, it scourges us from the cabin, from the stage-couch, from the bed, wherever we go, it has for us bolts, bars, and rods.

But it is asked, 'What do you colored people want us to do?' We do not ask you to break down any of the rules of society. Treat us just according to our moral worth and nothing more. We want you to treat us as honest people. Give us a motive for emulation, industry, and improvement. Leave us the same chance to find our level in society that other men have. You have no trouble among yourselves. You treat men according to their worth. If you find a virtuous man or woman, you treat them as such—just according to their moral and intellectual worth. All we ask is, let us educate our sons, if we can. If we have bright children, let us put them to trades. Try us, fairly, and see if the colored race cannot improve and elevate themselves in the scale of *moral being*. How can we contend against these prejudices? The colored man is even excluded from the house of God. Even at the Communion Table, he can only partake the crumbs offered to him after others have been served. This prejudice drives the colored man

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away from religion. I have often heard my brethren say, they would have nothing to do with such a religion. They are driven away, and go to infidelity. But, blessed be God, it is doing better. A better spirit is prevailing. Abolish prejudice, and you will abolish slavery with it. The colored man begins to be regarded as if he was a man. It is in this way religion is gaining with the colored people. They will respect religion if they find it alone can break down and remove this unholy prejudice; and thus it will be, my friends, that religion and abolition will walk together hand in hand.



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