[ADDRESS
of the Rev. Theodore S. Wright,

BEFORE THE CONVENTION OF THE NEW-YORK STATE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT, HELD AT UTICA, SEPT. 20.]

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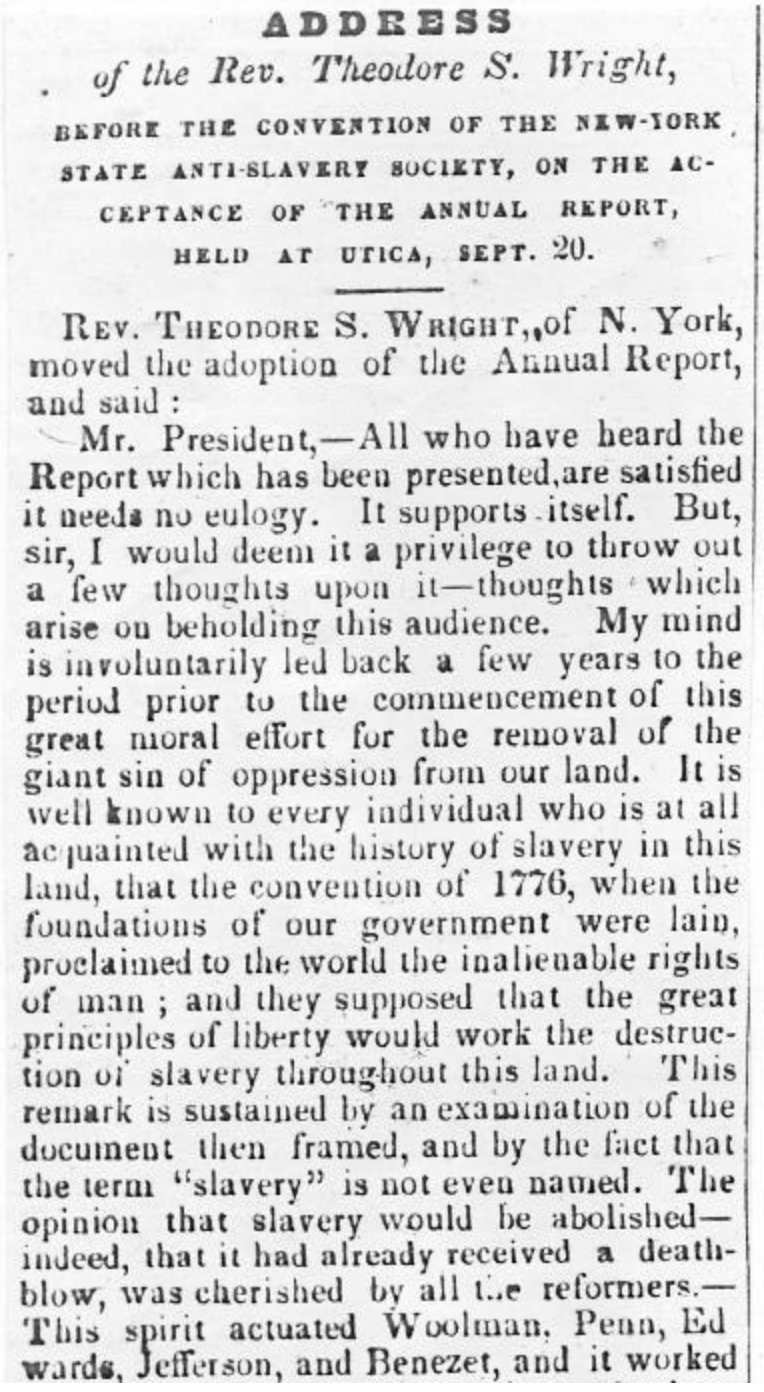
Mr. President,—All who have heard the Report which has been presented, are satisfied it needs no eulogy. It supports itself. But, sir, I would deem it a privilege to throw out a few thoughts upon it—thoughts which arise on beholding this audience. My mind is involuntarily led back a few years to the period prior to the commencement of this great moral effort for the removal of the giant sin of oppression from our land. It is well known to every individual who is at all acquainted with the history of slavery in this land, that the convention of 1776, when the foundations of our government were lain, proclaimed to the world the inalienable rights of man; and they suppose that the great principles of liberty would work the destruction of slavery throughout this land. This remark is sustained by an examination of the document then framed, and by the fact that the term "slavery" is not even named. The opinion that slavery would be abolished—indeed, that it had already received a deathblow, was cherished by all the reformers.—This spirit actuated Woolman, Penn, Ed[-]wards, Jefferson, and Benezet, and it worked



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But it is well known that about 1817, a
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tion, like a great sponge, went around in
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and sponged up all the benevolent feelings
which were then prevalent, and which prom-
ised so much for the emancipation of the en-
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land. That, sir, we call the dark period.—
Oh, sir! if any father who sits beside me
were to rise up and tell you how he felt,
and how men of his age felt, and how I felt,
(though a boy at that time,) sir, it would be
seen to have been a dark period. Why, sir,
the heavens gathered blackness, and there was
nothing cheering in our prospects. A spirit
was abroad, which said 'this is not your
country and home,' a spirit which would
take us away from our fire-sides, tear the
freeman away from his oppressed brother.—
This spirit was tearing the free father away
from his children, separating husband and
wife, sundering those cords of consanguinity
which bind the free with the slave. This
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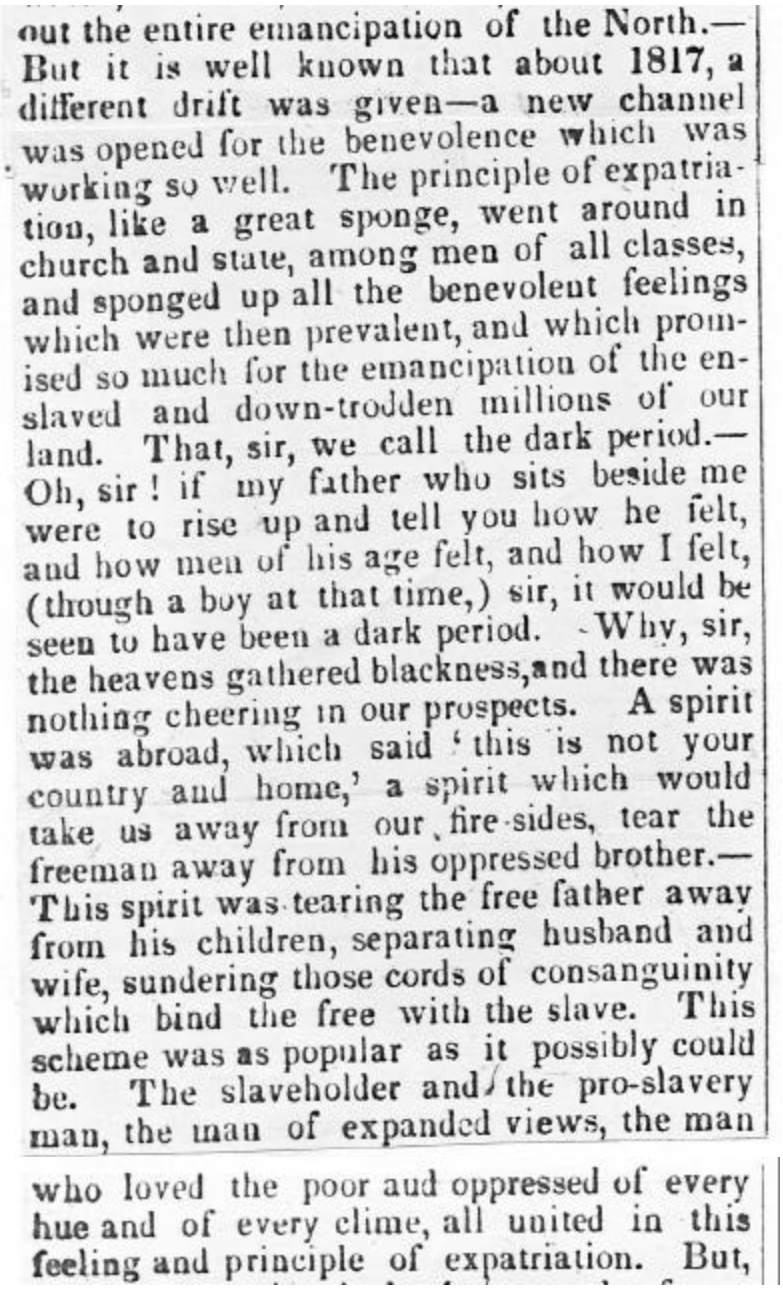
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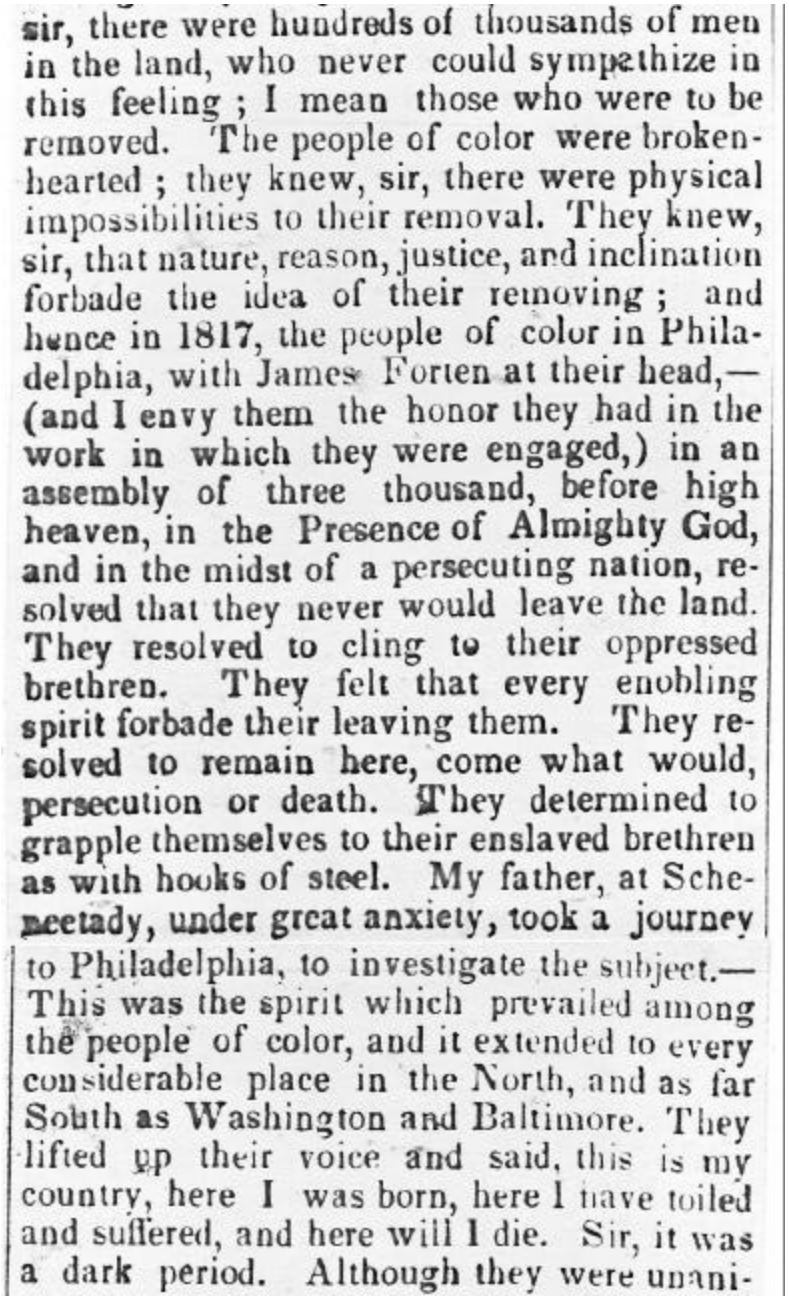
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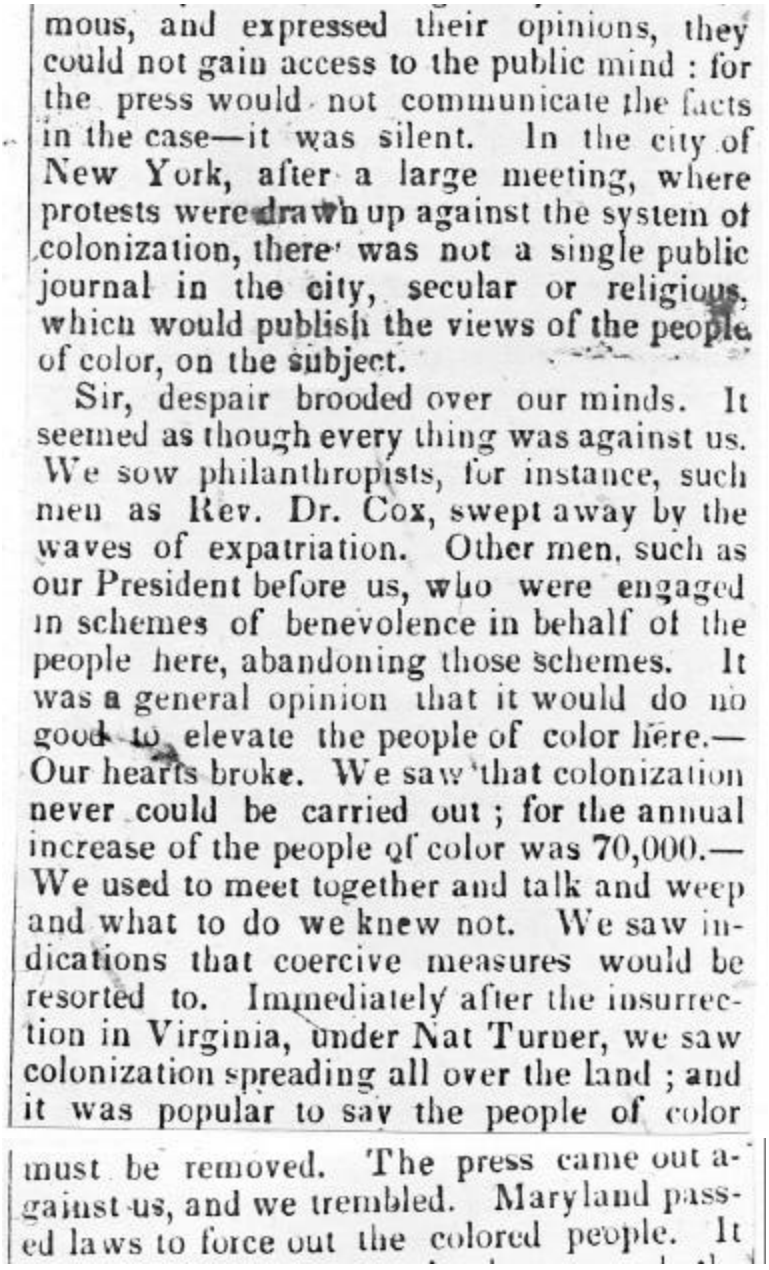
mous, and expressed their opinions, they could not gain access to the public mind: for the press would not communicate the facts in the case—it was silent. In the city of New York, after a large meeting, where protests were drawn up against the system of colonization, there was not a single public journal in the city, secular or religious, which would publish the views of the people of color, on the subject.

Sir, despair brooded over our minds. It seemed as though every thing was against us. We sow philanthropists, for instance, such men as Rev. Dr. Cox, swept away by the waves of expatriation. Other men, such as our President before us, who were engaged in schemes of benevolence in behalf of the people here, abandoning those schemes. It was a general opinion that it would do no good to elevate the people of color here.—Our hearts broke. We saw that colonization never could be carried out; for the annual increase of the people of color was 70,000.—We used to meet together and talk and weep and what to do we knew not. We saw indications that coercive measures would be resorted to. Immediately after the insurrection in Virginia, under Nat Turner, we saw colonization spreading all over the land; and it was popular to say the people of color must be removed. The press came out against us, and we trembled. Maryland passed laws to force out the colored people. It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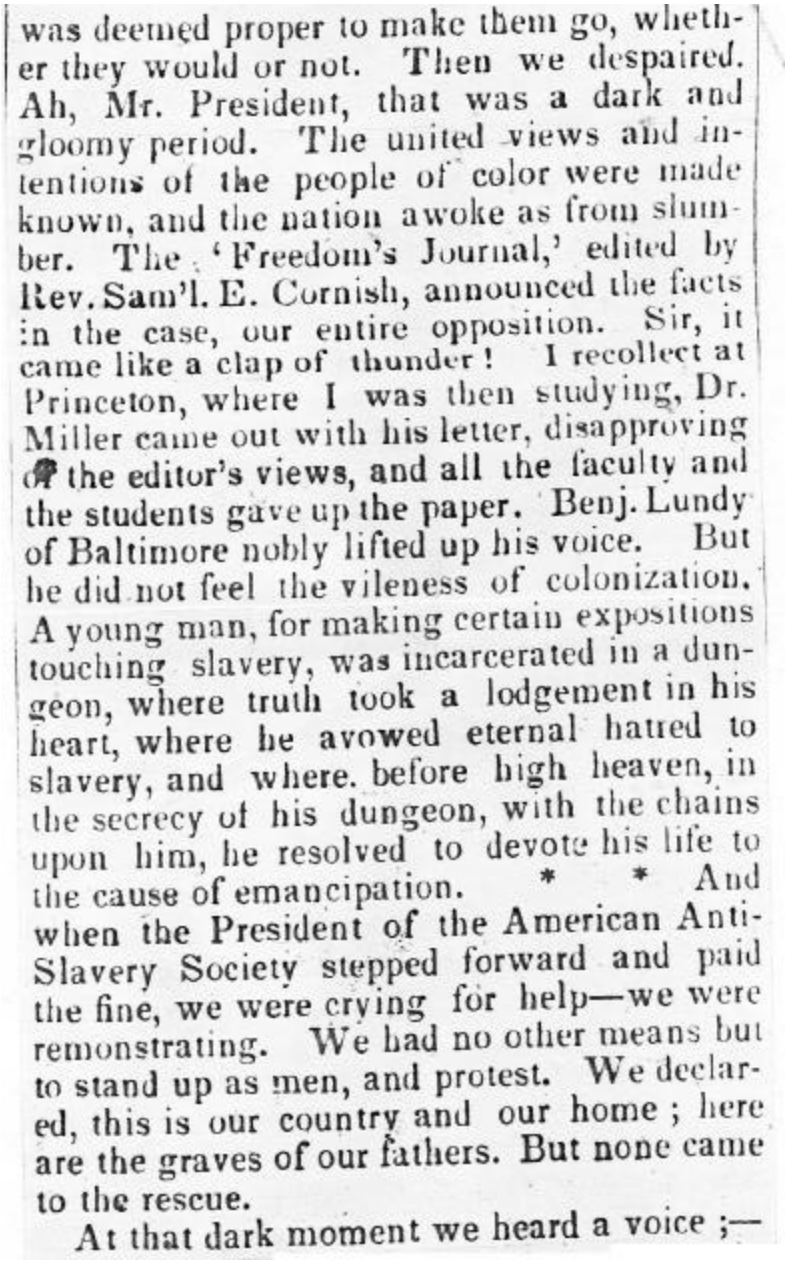
At that dark moment we heard a voice;—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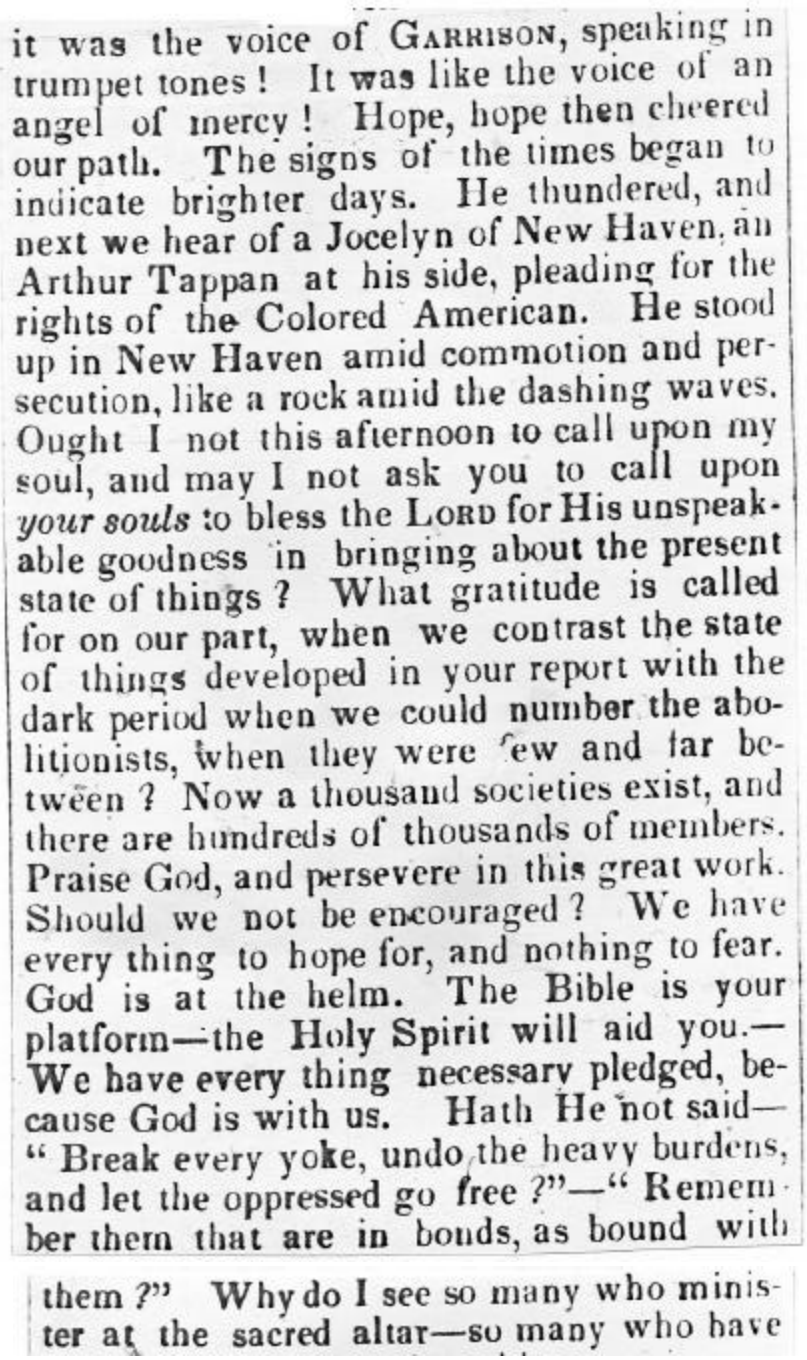
it was the voice of GARRISON, speaking in trumpet tones! It was like the voice of an angel of mercy! Hope, hope then cheered our path. The signs of the times began to indicate brighter days. He thundered, and next we hear of a Jocelyn of New Haven, an Arthur Tappan at his side, pleading for the rights of the Colored American. He stood up in New Haven amid commotion and persection, like a rock amid the dashing waves. Ought I not this afternoon to call upon my soul, and may I not ask you to call upon *your souls* to bless the LORD for His unspeakable goodness in bringing about the present state of things? What gratitude is called for on our part, when we contrast the state of things developed in your report with the dark period when we could number the abolitionists, when they were few and far between? Now a thousand societies exist, and there are hundreds of thousands of members. Praise God, and persevere in this great work. Should we not be encouraged? We have every thing to hope for, and nothing to fear. God is at the helm. The Bible is your platform—the Holy Spirit will aid you.—We have every thing necessary pledged, because God is with us. Hath He not said—"Break every yoke, undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free?"—"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them?" Why do I see so many who minister at the sacred altar—so many who have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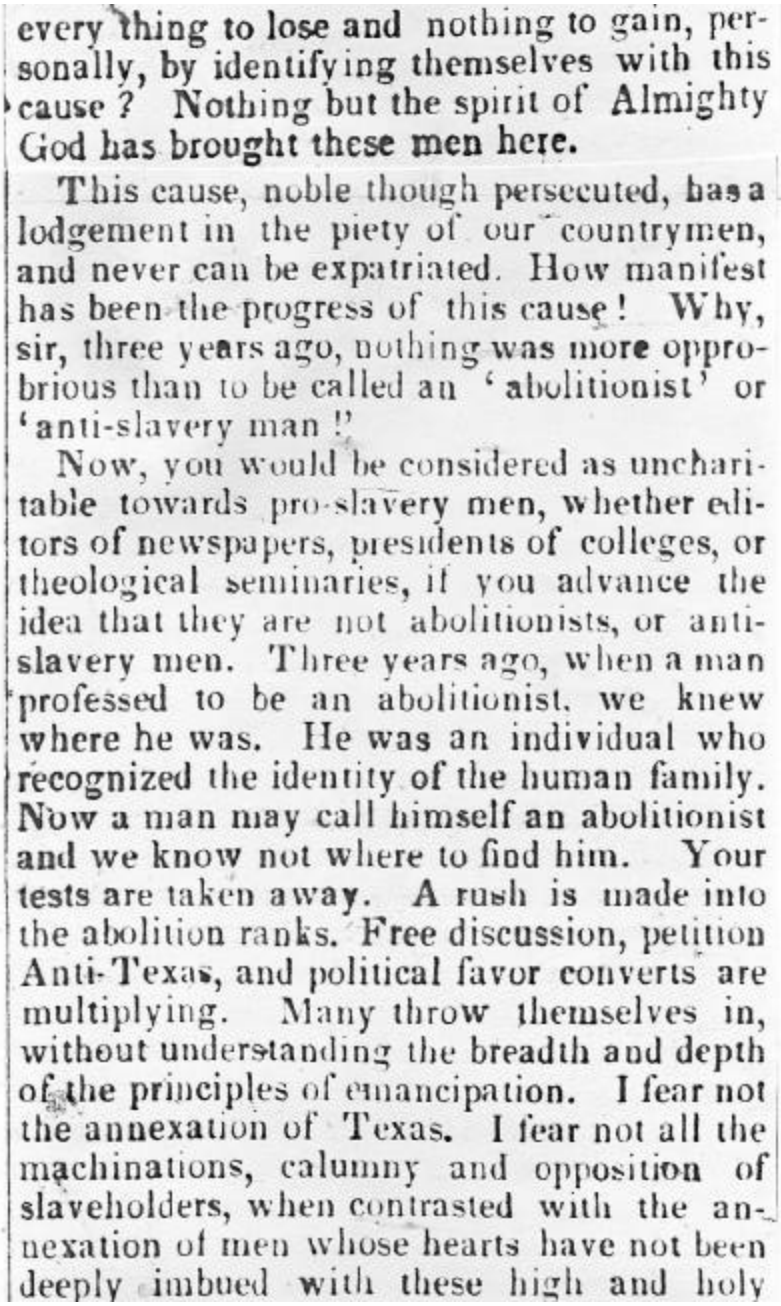
every thing to lose and nothing to gain, personally, by identifying themselves with this cause? Nothing but the spirit of Almighty God has brought these men here.

This cause, noble though persecuted, has a lodgement in the piety of our countrymen, and never can be expatriated. How manifest has been the progress of this cause! Why, sir, three years ago, nothing was more opprobrious than to be called an 'abolitionist' or 'anti-slavery man!'

Now, you would be considered as uncharitable towards pro-slavery men, whether editors of newspapers, presidents of colleges, or theological seminaries, if you advance the idea that they are not abolitionists, or anti-slavery men. Three years ago, when a man professed to be an abolitionist, we knew where he was. He was an individual who recognized the identity of the human family. Now a man may call himself an abolitionist and we know not where to find him. Your tests are taken away. A rush is made into the abolition ranks. Free discussion, petition Anti-Texas, and political favor converts are multiplying. Many throw themselves in, without understanding the breadth and depth of the principles of emancipation. I fear not the annexation of Texas. I fear not all the machinations, calumny and opposition of slaveholders, when contrasted with the annexation of men whose hearts have not been deeply imbued with these high and holy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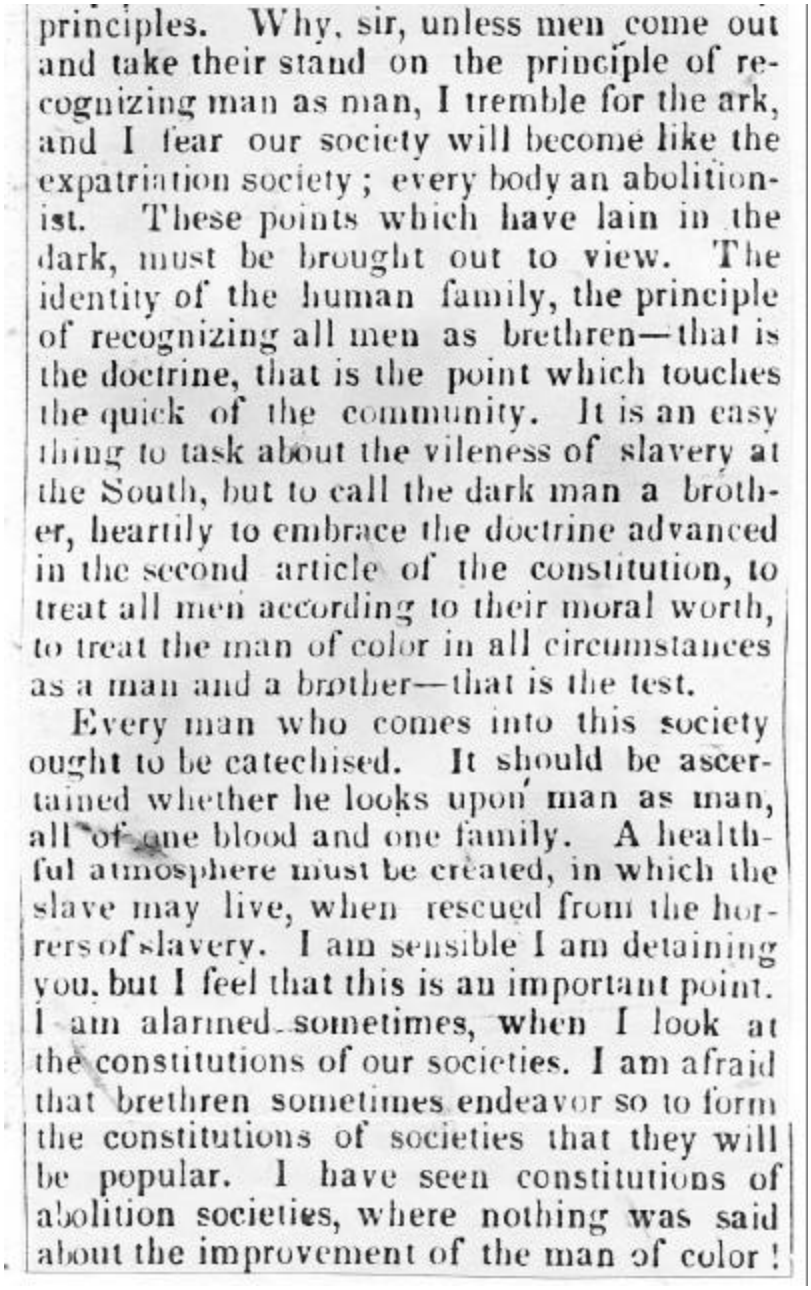
principles. Why, sir, unless men come out and take their stand on the principle of recognizing man as man, I tremble for the ark, and I fear our society will become like the expatriation society; every body an abolitionist. These points which have lain in the dark, must be brought out to view. The identity of the human family, the principle of recognizing all men as brethren—that is the doctrine, that is the point which touches the quick of the community. It is an easy thing to task about the vileness of slavery at the South, but to call the dark man a brother, heartily embrace the doctrine advanced in the second article of the constitution, to treat all men according to their moral worth, to treat the man of color in all circumstances as a man and a brother—that is the test.

Every man who comes into this society ought to be catechised. It should be ascertained whether he looks upon man as man, all of one blood and one family. A healthful atmosphere must be created, in which the slave may live, when rescued from the horrors of slavery. I am sensible I am detaining you, but I feel that this is an important point. I am alarmed sometimes, when I look at the constitutions of our societies. I am afraid that brethren sometimes endeavor so to form the constitutions of societies that they will be popular. I have seen constitutions of abolition societies, where nothing was said about the improvement of the man of color!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They have overlooked the giant sin of prejudice. They have passed by this foul monster, which is at once the parent and offspring of slavery. Whilst you are thinking about the annexation of Texas—whilst you are discussing the great principles involved in this noble cause, remember this prejudice must be killed, or slavery will never be abolished. Abolitionists must annihilate in their own bosoms, the cord of caste. We must be consistent—recognize the colored man in every respect as a man and brother. In doing this, we shall have to encounter scorn; we shall have to breast the storm.—This society would do well to spend a whole day in thinking about it and praying over it. Every abolitionist would do well to spend a day in fasting and prayer over it, and in looking at his own heart. Far be it from me to condemn abolitionists. I rejoice and bless God for this first institution which has combined its energies for the overthrow of this heaven-daring—this soul-crushing prejudice.

The successors of Penn, Franklin, and Woolman, have shown themselves the friends of the colored race. They have done more in this cause than any other church, and they are still doing great things, both in Europe and America. I was taught in childhood to remember the man of the broad-brimmed hat and drab-colored coat, and venerate him. No class have testified more to

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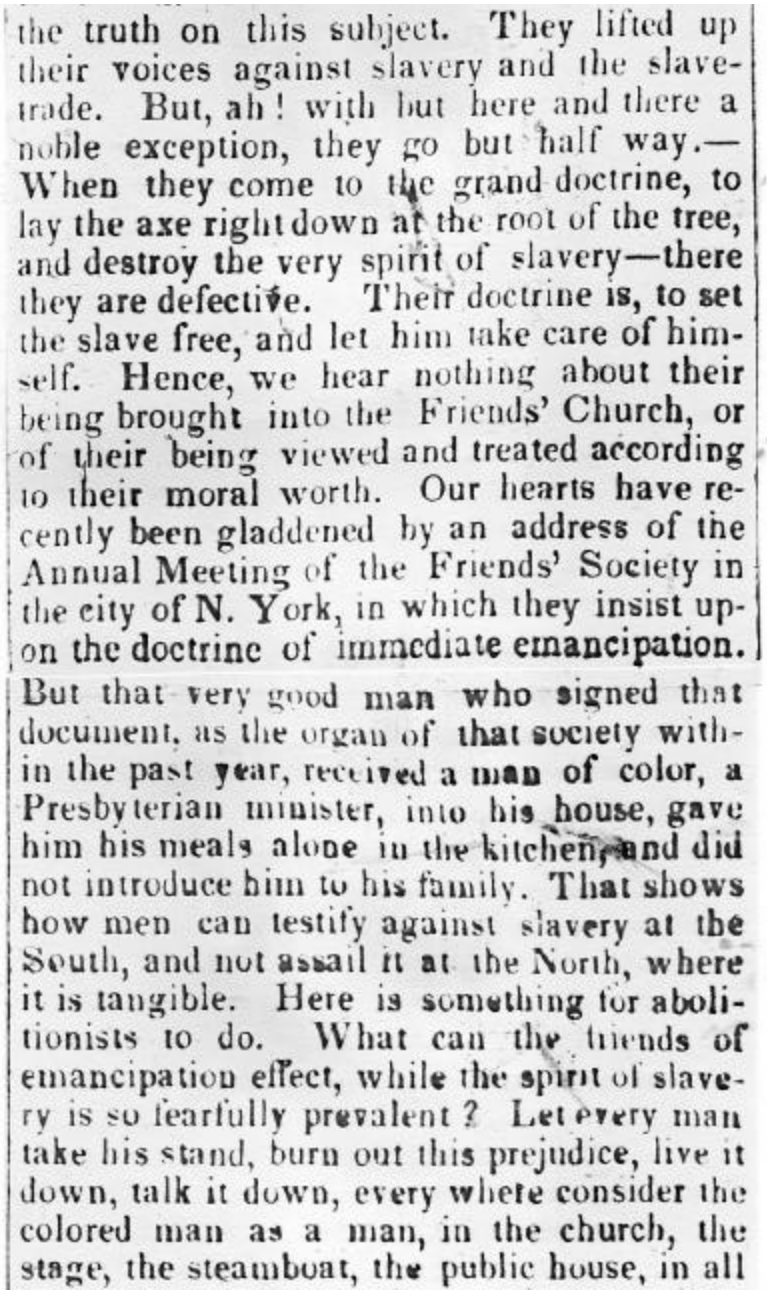
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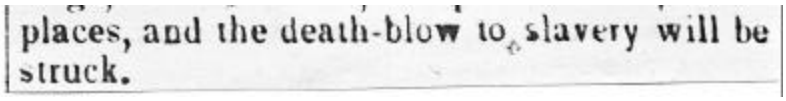
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