

[From *The Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 1, 1774]

For the MASSACHUSETTS SPY.

Mr. Thomas,

You are requested to publish the following Address of the Africans, to the Council and house of Representatives.

To the honourable his Majesty's Council and the honourable House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay, in General Court assembled, at Boston, the 20th day of January, 1774.

THE many stedfast resolutions made by this large province, to maintain their liberties and privileges, wherewith GOD hath made them free (without which no man, even the meanest¹ of them can be happy in this life, for what is life without the enjoyment of it?) gives us who are unhappily, and unjustly deprived of that blessing; so great expectations of your taking up our last petition which we laid before your Honours the last sessions; and give us the thousands of poor unhappy Africans their freedom, which we as men, and by nature have a right to demand of your Honours in such a way, and in such a manner as your Honours would expect from such a body of fellowmen, professing the gospel of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST; we ask nothing from your Honours but what you would desire yourselves, were you in our situation: Nay even the very dumb beasts groan under the heavy load of slavery, and try all manner of ways to get rid of it; much more men who are made after the image of GOD, and have the sense of feeling, cannot but groan under this unjust burden laid upon us, without any colour of justice, but pleasure and custom, and against the wills or consents of our forefathers, or us their children: But since the all-wise GOD hath seen fit to permit it to be so for a number of years past, his will be done, we desire to submit to his will in all things; yet from the first settling of this province It was not so. But yet we can sincerely hope and pray, that GOD would preserve your liberties and privileges as at the beginning, and that peace and love may again be restored between the mother country and the provinces, and that his Majesty would hear your prayers, and that you would hear ours, and grant us an answer of peace, that we may rejoice when you rejoice, as well as mourn when you mourn, as we do this day; and as we are not void of fellow-feeling, we conclude we must be men.

¹ Poor; without resources.

[From *The Massachusetts Spy*, Sept. 8, 1774, page 1]

For the MASSACHUSETTS SPY.

To his Excellency THOMAS GAGE, Esquire, Governor of the Province of MASSACHUSETTS-BAY, in NEW-ENGLAND; to the Honorable his Majesty's COUNCIL, and the Honorable House of REPRESENTATIVES, in General Court assembled at SALEM, A.D. 1774. The Petition being the Third of us the Subscribers, in Behalf of all those, who by divine Permission, are held in a State of Slavery, within the Bowels of a FREE COUNTRY, humbly sheweth,

THAT your petitioners apprehend they have in common with other men, a natural right to be free, and without molestation, to enjoy such property, as they may acquire by their industry, or by any other means not detrimental to their fellow-men; and that no person can have any just claim to their services without their consenting by contract to become servants; we were dragged by the cruel hands of power (some of us) from our dearest connections, and others stolen from the bosoms of tender parents, and brought hither to be enslaved. Thus are we deprived of every thing that has a tendency to make life even tolerable. The endearing ties of husband, wife, parent, children, friends; children did we say? Alas! No sooner are they born, but they are either sold or given away helpless, without our consent, whereby we are rendered ignorant of them and they of us; and whenever any of those connections are formed amongst us, the pleasures are embittered by the cruel consideration of our slavery. By our deplorable situation we are rendered incapable of shewing our obedience to the Supreme Governor of the Universe, by being obliged to conform ourselves to the duties which naturally grow out of such relations, how can a slave perform the duties of husband or parent, wife or child? We are often under the cruel necessity of obeying man, not only in the omission of, but frequently in opposition to the laws of GOD, so inimical is slavery to religion! As we are hindered by our situation from an observance of the laws of GOD, so we cannot reap an equal benefit from the laws of the land with other subjects.

There is no law of Great-Britain, nor yet in this province, whereby we can be held in slavery without our consent. We are sensible that many objections have, and may be objected against our liberation; but we with gratitude to those honorable gentlemen who spoke so much in our favor last sessions though some may say we were amused, these with many other grievances we feel, we your humble petitioners hope your Excellency and Honors will again take up this our third petition, and cause an act or resolve to be passed to give your petitioners redress.

The candor and humanity of your Excellency, and the trust we put in the honorable House, encourage us to hope, that same method will be fallen upon to grant such a number of his Majesty's subjects, and useful members of society effectual relief.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, shall ever pray.