At the South, I was a member of the Methodist church. When I came north, I thought one Sunday I would attend communion at one of the churches of my denomination in the town where I was staying. The white people gathered round the altar; the blacks clustered by the door. After the good minister had served out the bread and wine to one portion of those near him, he said, “These may withdraw, and others come forward”; thus he proceeded till all the white members had been served. Then he drew a long breath and, looking out towards the door, exclaimed, “Come up, colored friends, come up! For you know, God is no respecter of persons!” I haven’t been there to see the sacrament taken since.

At New Bedford, where I live, there was a great revival of religion not long ago; many were converted and “received,” as they said, “into the kingdom of heaven.” But it seems the kingdom of heaven is like a net—at least, so it was according to the practice of these pious Christians—and when the net was drawn ashore, they had to set down and cull out the fish. Well, it happened now that some of the fish had rather black scales, so these were sorted out and packed by themselves. But among those who experienced religion at this time was a colored girl; she was baptized in the same water with the rest, so she thought she might sit at the Lord’s table and partake of the same sacramental elements with the others. The deacon handed round the cup, and when he came to the black girl, he could not pass her, for there was the minister looking right at him, and as he was a kind of an abolitionist, the deacon was rather afraid of giving him offense; so he handed the girl the cup, and she tasted. Now it so happened that next to her sat a young lady who had been converted at the same time, baptized in the same water, and put her trust in the same blessed Savior; yet when the cup, containing the precious blood which had been shed for all, came to her, she rose in disdain and walked out of the church. Such was the religion she had experienced!
Douglass, “The Church and Prejudice”


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