

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

to get a common school education. The Sociological Congress can do much to encourage the colored people in what they are doing to educate themselves, and to guide and foster every effort that is being made, from whatever direction, to improve the colored people and make them valuable and useful citizens of the communities in which they live.

As no color line is drawn in the courts in the matter of punishing crime, neither should any color line be drawn in the opportunity to get education in the public schools. The schools can always be supported out of the return that they bring to the State in the form of more efficient labor and better social order. The more money spent in educating the negro child, the less the State will have to pay for punishing crime. It should be the aim of this organization, in connection with those who are directing the schools, to prove to the South that education is one of the best investments that any country can make.

The white leaders in attendance on this Congress can use their influence in seeing to it that the negro gets fairer and more just treatment on the railroads throughout the South. In this connection I cannot forbear to commend to other portions of the South what has been done in the city of Memphis at the Union Station in providing adequate, comfortable, and even attractive accommodations for colored passengers. The time has come, too, when the strong white leaders of the South should no longer permit the negro to be used as a political "scarecrow." Too many selfish politicians have used the negro as a political "bogy man" in a way to deceive white people, and even to discourage some of the best black people in their communities. The negro is not seeking either social equality or political domination over the white man in any section of the South.

I want to see both races advance in the South. I have no racial prejudice. I want to see the negro lifted up for his own sake, but just as emphatically do I want to see the negro lifted up for the sake of the white man. I was born a slave here in the South. I love the South, and no white man can excel me in my devotion to the South. But I am aware of the fact that so long as the white man is surrounded by a race that is in a large measure ignorant, weak, and in poverty, so long will the white man be tempted to injure himself by unjust treatment of the weaker race by which he is surrounded. So long as there are hordes of ignorant colored women in any community, so long will they prove a temptation for some of the best white men of the South to degrade themselves.