

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

I hope, therefore, that you may see fit to do whatever may lie in your power to induce the Board of Trustees to make this selection.

Again apologizing for this intrusion upon your time, I remain, Very truly yours,

[J. C. Napier]

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*An Editorial in Christian Endeavor World*

December 2, 1915

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

AN APPRECIATION BY A SOUTHERNER

“Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.”

Officially there will be a successor; personally there can be none. Generous as is Providence in other beneficence, He gives sparingly of really great men. One or two for a single race, and the limit of His favor for a generation has been reached.

Booker T. Washington was God's supreme gift to the negroes of this generation, and, on behalf of the negroes, to the world. Others as great, possibly even greater, may emerge; but he was the greatest that ever came, or that ever can come, “up from slavery.” Nor is there anything invidious in this. Opportunities, while they do not make men great, do disclose true greatness. Booker T. Washington had unexampled opportunities, and he made the most of them.

His theory was an inspiration. Race-betterment as he conceived it lay not in the direction of a vain clamor for social recognition — all men claim the right to choose their companions from the ranks of the consenting; it lay toward self-respect, self-support, and resulting racial pride. “Own, order, elevate, and protect your own home,” was the core of his creed, and for any race, that, in the spirit of Christ, is a saving faith, the plan of salvation. More than any other man, living or dead, he was responsible for the fact that thousands of negroes could sing, with the joy of proprietorship, the closing lines of Frank L. Stanton's inimitable poem,