

JANUARY · 1893

am now willing to be misunderstood if I can aid in calling attention to the need of a better ministry.

I watch your efforts with interest. You are right in getting hold of the southern white ministers. We need their help. We must get nearer to each other. I like your unselfish, whole-souled manner.

Thank you for your encouraging words regarding our new department. We dedicate Feb 7 and I now extend you a hearty invitation to be present. Dr. Lyman Abbott delivers the address. Yours Sincerely,

Booker T. Washington

ALS GAGTh.

<sup>1</sup> Wilbur Patterson Thirkield (1854-1938?), a white Methodist clergyman, was the first president of Gammon Theological Seminary (1883-1900). He had graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and the theology school of Boston University. From 1900 to 1906 Thirkield was in Cincinnati as general secretary of the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He served as president of Howard University from 1906 to 1912. During most of his presidency BTW was a member of the board of trustees of Howard and one of Thirkield's strong supporters. Thirkield left Howard upon his elevation to bishop.

## A Speech before the New York Congregational Club

[New York, Jan. 16, 1893]

### THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGRO

Gentlemen of the Congregational Club: It is now but little more than 15 years ago since I left the hills of West Virginia with the purpose of reaching in some unknown way the Hampton Institute — an institution founded and still fostered by the American Missionary Association. At length I found myself in the city of Richmond without money, friends or shelter. An opening under a side walk afforded me shelter by night and an outgoing ship loading pig iron furnished me work by day till my purse was sufficiently full to enable me to reach Hampton with a surplus of 50¢, and there I found an institution founded by you which gave me the opportunity to work my way through. After finishing my studies I resolved that I would go into the far South and spend my life in trying to give the poor but worthy young men and