

*The BOOKER T. WASHINGTON Papers*

ing colored people and from the officers and instructors in the large colleges and universities for my race located in this city about the interest that Vanderbilt University is constantly manifesting in the education of the colored people right here in this city. In fact, it has been less than two hours since I met a company of men who were speaking to me about the special acts of kindness shown by members of the faculty of the Theological Department of Vanderbilt University.

I was born a slave. I was born here in the South and I am proud that I have always lived in the South. By the grace of God, I intend always to live here and teach my children to live here, and right here in the heart of the South I hope to be buried.

In considering the claims of my race upon your sympathy and upon your thoughtful and unselfish helpfulness, I think it should always be borne in mind that, unlike any other portion of the American people, we did not come here of our own accord. Whatever problems, whatever difficulties have grown out of our presence here, please always remember that they are not of our especial making; so far as our desire to come to America is concerned, we were forced into this country against our will and against our most earnest protest. That fact alone, it seems to me, gives us a claim upon the generous and helpful consideration of the Christian men of America that cannot be true in the same degree of any other race.

Now, if in my talk this afternoon, I seem to omit the duty which the Negro race owes to himself and owes to you in the working out of the problems to which reference has been made, I hope you will bear in mind that when I am speaking to my own people, I speak frankly and plainly and pointedly concerning their duty to you. There is quite a difference, however, between speaking to a people and about a people. I was in New York City a few days ago and in an address which I was to deliver there, a gentleman urged me to speak something about the white people of the South. Well, I said to him, when I am in the South I will say to the Southern white people what I have to say to them.

I shall try to follow the instruction given me by your Dean, to speak to you for a minute concerning the manner in which I think the Christian men of the South can be of service to my race, and therefore, of service to our entire Southland.