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Education and Work

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# Education and Work\*

BY W. E. BURGHARDT DuBOIS

## APOLOGY

Between the time that I was graduated from college and the day of my first experience at earning a living, there was arising in this land, and more especially within the Negro group, a controversy concerning the type of education which American Negroes needed. You, who are graduating today, have heard but echoes of this controversy and more or less vague theories of its meaning and its outcome. Perhaps it has been explained away to you and interpreted as mere misunderstanding and personal bias. If so, the day of calm review and inquiry is at hand. And I suppose that, of persons living few can realize better than I just what that controversy meant and what the outcome is. I want then today in the short time allotted me, to state, as plainly as I may, the problem of college and industrial education for American Negroes, as it arose in the past; and then to restate it as it appears to me in its present aspect.

## DILEMMA

First of all, let me insist that the former controversy was no mere misunderstanding; there was real difference of opinion, rooted in deep sincerity on every side and fought out

\* Commencement Address delivered at Howard University, Washington, D. C., June 6, 1930.

with a tenacity and depth of feeling due to its great importance and fateful meaning.

It was, in its larger aspects, a problem such as in all ages human beings of all races and nations have faced; but it was new in 1895 as all Time is new; it was centered and made vivid and present because of the immediate and pressing question of the education of a vast group of the children of former slaves. It was the ever new and age-young problem of Youth, for there had arisen in the South a Joseph which knew not Pharaoh,—a black man who was not born in slavery. What was he to become? Whither was his face set? How should he be trained and educated? His fathers were slaves, for the most part, ignorant and poverty-stricken; emancipated in the main without land, tools, nor capital,—the sport of war, the despair of economists, the grave perplexity of Science. Their children had been born in the midst of controversy, of internecine hatred, and in all the economic dislocation that follows war and civil war. In a peculiar way and under circumstances seldom duplicated, the whole program of popular education became epitomized in the case of these young black folk.

## FIRST EFFORTS

Before men thought or greatly cared, in the midst of the very blood

and dust of battle, an educational system for the freedmen had been begun; and with a logic that seemed, at first, quite natural. The night school for adults had become the day school for children. The Negro day school had called for normal teaching and the small New England college had been transplanted and perched on hill and river in Raleigh and Atlanta, Nashville and New Orleans, and half a dozen other towns. This new Negro college was conceived of as the very foundation stone of Negro training. But, meantime, any formal education for slaves or the children of slaves not only awakened widespread and deep-seated doubt, fear and hostility in the South, but it posed, for statesmen and thinkers, the whole question as to what the education of Negroes was really aiming at, and indeed, what was the aim of educating any working class. If it was doubtful as to how far the social and economic classes of any modern state could be essentially transformed and changed by popular education, how much more tremendous was the problem of educating a race whose ability to assimilate modern training was in grave question and whose place in the nation and the world even granted they could be educated, was a matter of baffling social philosophy. Was the nation making an effort to parallel white civilization in the South with a black civilization? Or was it trying to displace the dominant white master class with new black masters or was it seeking the difficult but surely more reasonable and practical effort of furnishing a trained set of free black laborers who might carry on in place of the violently disrupted slave sys-

tem? Surely, most men said, this economic and industrial problem of the New South was the first—the central, the insistent problem of the day.

#### TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

There can be no doubt of the real dilemma that thus faced the nation, the Northern philanthropists and the black man. The argument for the New England college, which at first seemed to need no apology, grew and developed. The matter of man's earning a living, said the college, is and must be important, but surely it can never be so important as the man himself. Thus the economic adaptation of the Negro to the South must in education be subordinated to the great necessity of teaching life and culture. The South, and more especially the Negro, needed and must have trained and educated leadership if civilization was to survive. More than most, here was land and people who needed to learn the meaning of life. They needed the preparation of gifted persons for the profession of teaching, and for other professions which would in time grow. The object of education was not to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men.

On the other hand, those practical men who looked at the South after the war said: this is an industrial and business age. We are on the threshold of an economic expansion such as the world never saw before. Whatever human civilization has been or may become, today it is industry. The South because of slavery has lagged behind the world. It must catch up. Its prime necessity after the hate and holocaust of war is a trained re-

liable laboring class. Assume if you will that Negroes are men with every human capacity, nevertheless, as a flat fact, no rising group of peasants can begin at the top. If poverty and starvation are to be warded off, the children of the freedmen must not be taught to despise the humble work, which the mass of the Negro race must for untold years pursue. The transition period between slavery and freedom is a dangerous and critical one. Fill the heads of these children with Latin and Greek and highfalutin' notions of rights and political power, and hell will be to pay.

On the other hand, in the South, here is land and fertile land, in vast quantities, to be had at nominal prices. Here are employers who must have skilled and faithful labor, and have it now. There is in the near future an industrial development coming which will bring the South abreast with the new economic development of the nation and the world. Freedom must accelerate this development which slavery so long retarded. Here then is no time for a philosophy of economic or class revolution and race hatred. There must be friendship and good will between employer and employee, between black and white. They have common interests, and the matter of their future relations in politics and society can well be left for future generations and different times to solve. "Cast down your buckets where you are," cried Booker T. Washington; "In all things that are purely social you can be as separate as the fingers, yet one hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

What was needed, then, was that

the Negro first should be made the intelligent laborer, the trained farmer, the skilled artisan of the South. Once he had accomplished this step in the economic world and the ladder was set for his climbing, his future would be assured, and assured on an economic foundation which would be immovable. All else in his development, if he proved himself capable of development, even to the highest, would inevitably follow. Let us have, therefore, not colleges but schools to teach the technique of industry and to make men learn by doing.

These were the opposing arguments. They were real arguments. They were set forth by earnest men, white and black, philanthropist and teacher, statesman and seer. The controversy waxed bitter. The disputants came to rival organizations, to severe social pressure, to anger and even to blows. Newspapers were aligned for and against; employment and promotion depended often on a Negro's attitude toward industrial education. The Negro race and their friends were split in twain by the intensity of their feeling and men were labeled and earmarked by their allegiance to one school of thought or to the other.

#### PRESENT CONDITIONS

Today all this is past; by the majority of the older of my hearers, it is practically forgotten. By the younger, it appears merely as a vague legend. Thirty-five years, a full generation and more, have elapsed. The increase in Negro education by all measurements has been a little less than marvelous. In 1895, there were not more than 1,000 Negro students of full college grade in the United

States. Today, there are over 19,000 in college and nearly 150,000 in high schools. In 1895, 60% of American Negroes, ten years of age or over, were illiterate. Today, perhaps three-fourths can read and write. The increase of Negro students in industrial and land-grant colleges has been equally large. The latter have over 16,000 students and the increasing support of the government of the States; while the great industrial schools, especially Hampton and Tuskegee, are the best endowed institutions for the education of black folk in the world.

#### WAS THE CONTROVERSY SETTLED?

What then has become of this controversy as to college and industrial education for Negroes? Has it been duly settled, and if it has, how has it been settled? Has it been transmuted into a new program, and if so, what is that program? In other words, what is the present norm of Negro education, represented at once by Howard University, Fisk, and Atlanta on one hand, and by Hampton Institute, Tuskegee, and the land-grant colleges on the other?

I answer once for all, the problem has not been settled. The questions raised in those days of controversy still stand in all their validity and all their pressing insistence on an answer. They have not been answered. They must be answered, and the men and women of this audience and like audiences throughout the land are the ones from whom the world demands final reply. Answers have been offered; and the present status of the problem has enormously changed, for human problems never

stand still. But I must insist that the fundamental problem is still here.

#### WHAT THE COLLEGE HAS DONE

Let us see. The Negro college has done a great work. It has given us leadership and intelligent leadership. Doubtless, without these colleges the American Negro would scarcely have attained his present position. The chief thing that distinguishes the American Negro group from the Negro groups in the West Indies, and in South America, and the mother group in Africa, is the number of men that we have trained in modern education, able to cope with the white world on its own ground and in its own thought, method and language.

On the other hand, there cannot be the slightest doubt but that the Negro college, its teachers, students and graduates, have not yet comprehended the age in which they live: the tremendous organization of industry, commerce, capital, and credit which today forms a super-organization dominating and ruling the universe, subordinating to its ends government, democracy, religion, education and social philosophy; and for the purpose of forcing into the places of power in this organization American black men either to guide or help reform it, either to increase its efficiency or make it a machine to improve our well-being, rather than the merciless mechanism which enslaves us; for this the Negro college has today neither program nor intelligent comprehension.

On the contrary, there is no doubt but that college and university training among us has had largely the exact effect that was predicted; it has turned an increasing number of our

people not simply away from manual labor and industry, not simply away from business and economic reform, into a few well-paid professions, but it has turned our attention from any disposition to study or solve our economic problem. A disproportionate number of our college-trained students are crowding into teaching and medicine and beginning to swarm into other professions, and to form at the threshold of these better-paid jobs a white collar proletariat, depending for their support on an economic foundation which does not yet exist.

Moreover, and perhaps for this very reason, the ideals of colored college-bred men have not in the last thirty years been raised an iota. Rather in the main, they have been lowered. The average Negro undergraduate has swallowed hook, line and sinker, the dead bait of the white undergraduate, who, born in an industrial machine, does not have to think, and does not think. Our college man today, is, on the average, a man untouched by real culture. He deliberately surrenders to selfish and even silly ideals, swarming into semi-professional athletics and Greek letter societies, and affecting to despise scholarship and the hard grind of study and research. The greatest meetings of the Negro college year like those of the white college year have become vulgar exhibitions of liquor, extravagance, and fur coats. We have in our colleges a growing mass of stupidity and indifference.

I am not counselling perfection; as desperately human groups, we must expect our share of mediocrity. But as hitherto a thick and thin defender of the college, it seems to me that we

are getting into our Negro colleges considerably more than our share of plain fools.

Acquiring as we do in college no guidance to a broad economic comprehension and a sure industrial foundation, and simultaneously a tendency to live beyond our means, and spend for show, we are graduating young men and women with an intense and overwhelming appetite for wealth and no reasonable way of gratifying it, no philosophy for counteracting it.

Trained more and more to enjoy sexual freedom as undergraduates, we refuse as graduates to found and support even moderate families, because we cannot afford them; and we are beginning to sneer at group organization and race leadership as mere futile gestures.

Why is this? What is wrong with our colleges? The method of the modern college has been proven by a hundred centuries of human experience: the imparting of knowledge by the old to the young; the instilling of the conclusions of experience, "line upon line, and precept upon precept." But, of course, with this general and theoretical method must go a definite and detailed object suited to the present age, the present group, the present set of problems. It is not then in its method but in its practical objects that the Negro college has failed. It is handing on knowledge and experience but what knowledge and for what end? Are we to stick to the old habit of wasting time on Latin, Greek, Hebrew and eschatology, or are we to remember that, after all, the object of the Negro college is to place in American life a trained

black man who can do what the world today wants done; who can help the world know what it ought to want done and thus by doing the world's work well may invent better work for a better world? This brings us right back to the object of the industrial school.

#### WHAT THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL HAS DONE

Negro industrial training in the United States has accomplishments of which it has a right to be proud; but it too has not solved its problem. Its main accomplishment has been an indirect matter of psychology. It has helped bridge the transition period between Negro slavery and freedom. It has taught thousands of white people in the South to accept Negro education, not simply as a necessary evil, but as a possible social good. It has brought state support to a dozen higher institutions of learning, and to some extent, to a system of public schools. On the other hand, it has tempered and rationalized the inner emancipation of American Negroes. It made the Negro patient when impatience would have killed him. If it has not made working with the hands popular, it has at least removed from it much of the stigma of social degradation. It has made many Negroes seek the friendship of their white fellow citizens, even at the cost of insult and caste. And thus through a wide strip of our country it has brought peace and not a sword.

But this has all been its indirect by-product, rather than its direct teaching. In its direct teaching, the kind of success which it has achieved differs from the success of the college.

In the case of the industrial school, the practical object was absolutely right and still is right: that is, the desire of placing in American life a trained black man who could earn a decent living and make that living the foundation stone of his own culture and of the civilization of his group. This was the avowed object of the industrial school. How much has it done toward this? It has established some skilled farmers and among the mass some better farming methods. It has trained and placed some skilled artisans; it has given great impetus to the domestic arts and household economy; it has encouraged Negro business enterprise. And yet we have but to remember these matters to make it patent to all that the results have been pitifully small compared with the need. Our Negro farm population is decreasing; our Negro artisans are not gaining proportionately in industry and Negro business faces today a baffling crisis. Our success in household arts is due not to our effective teaching so much as to the mediæval minds of our women who have not yet entered the machine age. Most of them seem still to think that washing clothes, scrubbing steps and paring potatoes were among the Ten Commandments.

Why now has the industrial school with all its partial success failed absolutely in its main object when that object of training Negroes for remunerative occupation is more imperative today than thirty-five years ago.

The reason is clear: if the college has failed because with the right general method it has lacked definite objects appropriate to the age and race; the industrial school has failed be-

cause with a definite object it lacked appropriate method to gain it. In other words, the lack of success of the industrial education of Negroes has come not because of the absence of desperate and devoted effort, but because of changes in the world which the industrial school did not foresee, and, which even if it had foreseen, it could not have prevented, and to which it had not the ability to adapt itself.

It is easy to illustrate this. The industrial school assumed that the technique of industry in 1895, even if not absolutely fixed and permanent, was at least permanent enough for training children into its pursuit and for use as a basis of broader education. Therefore, school work for farming, carpentry, bricklaying, plastering and painting, metal work and black-smithing, shoemaking, sewing and cooking was introduced and taught. But, meantime, what has happened to these vocations and trades? Machines and new industrial organizations have remade the economic world and ousted these trades either from their old technique or their economic significance. The planing mill does today much of the work of the carpenter and the carpenter is being reduced rapidly to the plane of a mere laborer. The building trades are undergoing all kinds of reconstruction, from the machine-made steel skyscraper, to the cement house cast in molds and the mass-made mail-order bungalow. Painting and masonry still survive, but the machine is after them; while printing and sewing are done increasingly by elaborate machines. Metal is being shaped by stamping mills. Nothing of shoemaking is left for the hands save mend-

ing, and in most cases, it is cheaper to buy a new shoe than to have an old one cobbled. When it comes to the farm, a world-wide combination of circumstances is driving the farmer to the wall. Expensive machinery demands increasingly larger capital; excessive taxation of growing land values is eliminating the small owner; monopolized and manipulated markets and carriers make profits of the individual farmer small or nil; and the foreign competition of farms worked by serfs at starvation wages and backed by world-wide aggregations of capital—all this is driving farmers, black and white, from the soil and making the problem of their future existence one of the great problems of the modern world. The industrial school, therefore, found itself in the peculiar position of teaching a technique of industry in certain lines just at the time when that technique was changing into something different, and when the new technique was a matter which the Negro school could not teach. In fact, with the costly machine, with mass production and organized distribution, the teaching of technique becomes increasingly difficult. Any person of average intelligence can take part in the making of a modern automobile, and he is paid, not for his technical training, but for his endurance and steady application.

There were many lines of factory work, like the spinning and weaving of cotton and wool, which the Negro could have successfully been set to learning, but they involved vast expenditures of capital which no school could control, and organized business at that time decreed that only white

folk could work in factories. And that decree still stands. New branches of industry, new technique are continually opening—like automobile repairing, electrical installments, and engineering—but these call for changing curricula and adjustments puzzling for a school and a set course of study.

In the attempt to put the Negro into business, so that from the inner seats of power by means of capital and credit he could control industry, we have fallen between two stools, this work being apparently neither the program of the college nor of the industrial school. The college treated it with the most approved academic detachment, while the industrial school fatuously assumed as permanent a business organization which began to change with the Nineteenth Century, and bids fair to disappear with the Twentieth. In 1895 we were preaching individual thrift and saving; the small retail store and the partnership for business and the conduct of industry. Today, we are faced by great aggregations of capital and world-wide credit, which monopolize raw material, carriage and manufacture, distribute their products through cartels, mergers and chain stores, and are in process of eliminating the individual trader, the small manufacturer, and the little job. In this new organization of business the colored man meets two difficulties: First, he is not trained to take part in it; and, secondly, if he gets training, he finds it almost impossible to gain a foothold. Schools cannot teach as an art and trade that which is a philosophy, a government of men, an organization of civilization. They can

impart a mass of knowledge about it, but this is the duty of the college of liberal arts and not the shop work of the trade school.

Thus the industrial school increasingly faces a blank wall and its astonishing answer today to the puzzle is slowly but surely to transform the industrial school into a college. The most revolutionary development in Negro education for a quarter-century is illustrated by the fact that Hampton today is one of the largest of Negro colleges and that her trade teaching seems bound to disappear within a few years. Tuskegee is a high school and college, but an unsolved program of the future of its trade schools. And the land-grant colleges, built to foster agriculture and industry, are becoming just like other colleges. And all this, as I said, is not the fault of the industrial school, it comes from this tremendous transformation of business, capital and industry in the Twentieth Century, which few men clearly foresaw and which only a minority of men or of teachers of men today fully comprehend.

#### THE LABOR MOVEMENT

In one respect, however, the Negro industrial school was seriously at fault. It set its face toward the employer and the capitalist and the man of wealth. It looked upon the worker as one to be adapted to the demands of those who conducted industry. Both in its general program and in its classroom, it neglected almost entirely the modern labor movement. It had little or nothing to teach concerning the rise of trade unions; their present condition, and their future develop-

ment. It had no conception of any future democracy in industry. That is, the very vehicle which was to train Negroes for modern industry neglected in its teaching the most important part of modern industrial development: namely, the relation of the worker to modern industry and to the modern state.

The reason for this neglect is clear. The Negro industrial school was the gift of capital and wealth. Organized labor was the enemy of the black man in skilled industry. Organized labor in the United States was and is the chief obstacle to keep black folk from earning a living by its determined policy of excluding them from unions just as long as possible and compelling them to become "scabs" in order to live. The political power of Southern white labor disfranchised Negroes, and helped build a caste system. How was the Negro industrial school easily to recognize, in this Devil of its present degradation, the Angel of its future enlightenment? How natural it was to look to white Capital and not to Labor for the emancipation of the black world—how natural and yet how insanely futile!

#### THE UNSOLVED PROBLEM

Here then are the successes and the failures of both Negro college and industrial school, and we can clearly see that the problem still stands unsolved: How are we going to place the black American on a sure foundation in the modern state? The modern state is primarily business and industry. Its industrial problems must be settled before its cultural problems can really and successfully be attacked. The world must eat before it can think.

The Negro has not found a solid foundation in that state as yet. He is mainly the unskilled laborer; the casual employee; the man hired last and fired first; the man who must subsist upon the lowest wage and consequently share an undue burden of poverty, crime, insanity and ignorance. The only alleviation of his economic position has come from what little the industrial school could teach during the revolution of technique and from what the college took up as part of its mission in vocational training for professions.

For the college had to become a trainer of men for vocations. This is as true of the white college as of the colored college. They both tended to change their college curricula into pre-vocational preparation for a professional career. But the effort of the Negro college here was half-hearted. There persisted the feeling that the college had finished its work when it placed a man of culture in the world, despite the fact that our graduates who are men of culture are exceptional, and if placed in the world without ability to earn a living, what little culture they have does not long survive.

Thus, at the end of the first third of the Twentieth Century, while both college and industrial school can point to something accomplished, neither has reached its main objective, and they are in process of uniting to become one stream of Negro education with their great problem of object and method unsolved. The industrial school has done but little to impart the higher technique of the industrial process or of the business organization and it has done almost nothing toward

putting the Negro working man in touch with the great labor movement of the white world.

On the other hand, the Negro college has not succeeded in establishing that great and guiding ideal of group development and leadership, within a dominating and expanding culture, or in establishing the cultural life as the leading motif of the educated Negro. Its vocational work has been confined to the so-called learned professions, with only a scant beginning of the imparting of the higher technique of industry and science.

#### THE NEW INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The result which I have outlined is not wholly unexpected. Perhaps we can now say that it was impossible fully to avoid this situation. We have a right to congratulate ourselves that we have come to a place of such stability and such intelligence as now to be ready to grapple with our economic problem. The fact of the matter is, we have up to this time been swept on and into the great maelstrom of the white civilization surrounding us. We have been inevitably made part of that vast modern organization of life where social and political control rests in the hands of those few white folk who control wealth, determine credit and divide income. We are in a system of culture where disparity of income is such that respect for labor as labor cannot endure; where the emphasis and outlook is not what a man does but what he is able to get for doing it; where wealth despises work and the object of wealth is to escape work, and where the ideal is power without toil.

So long as a lawyer can look forward to an income of \$100,000 a year while a maid servant is well-paid with \$1,000, just so long the lawyer is going to be one hundred times more respectable than the servant and the servant is going to be called by her first name. So long as the determination of a person's income is not only beyond democratic control and public knowledge, but is a matter of autocratic power and secret manipulation, just so long the application of logic and ethics to wealth, industry and income is going to be a difficult if not insoluble problem.

In the modern world only one country is making a frontal attack upon this problem and that is Russia. Other countries are visualizing it and considering it, making some tentative and half-hearted effort but they have not yet attacked the system as a whole, and for the most part they declare the present system inevitable and eternal and incapable of more than minor and stunted improvement.

In the midst of such a world organization we come looking for economic stability and independence. Of course, our situation is baffling and contradictory. And it is made all the more difficult for us because we are by blood and descent and popular opinion an integral part of that vast majority of mankind which is the Victim and not the Beneficiary of present conditions, which is today working at starvation wages and on a level of brute toil and without voice in its own government or education in its ignorance, for the benefit, the enormous profit, and the dazzling luxury of the white rulers of the world.

Here lies the problem and it is the problem of the combined Negro college and vocational school. Without the intellectual leadership of college-bred men, we could not hitherto have held our own in modern American civilization, but must have sunk to the place of the helpless proletariat of the West Indies and of South Africa. But, on the other hand, for what has the college saved us? It has saved us for that very economic defeat which the industrial school was established to ward off and which still stands demanding solution. The industrial school acted as bridge and buffer to lead us out of the bitterness of Reconstruction to the toleration of today. But it did not place our feet upon the sound economic foundation which makes our survival in America or in the modern world certain or probable; and the reason that it did not do this was as much the fault of the college as of the trade school. The industrial school without the college was as helpless yesterday as the college is today helpless without systematic training for modern industry.

Both college and industrial school have made extraordinary and complementary mistakes in their teaching force: the industrial school secured usually as teacher a man of affairs and technical knowledge, without culture or general knowledge. The college took too often as teacher a man of books and brains with no contact with or first-hand knowledge of real every-day life and ordinary human beings, and this was true whether he taught sociology, literature or science. Both types of teacher failed.

#### THE NEW EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

What then is the unescapable task of the united college and vocational school? It is without shadow of doubt a new broad and widely efficient vocational guidance and education for men and women of ability, selected by the most careful tests and supported by a broad system of free scholarships. Our educational institutions must graduate to the world men fitted to take their place in real life by their knowledge, spirit, and ability to do what the world wants done. This vocational guidance must have for its object the training of men who can think clearly and function normally as physical beings; who have a knowledge of what human life on earth has been, and what it is now; and a knowledge of the constitution of the known universe. All that, and in addition to that, a training which will enable them to take some definite and intelligent part in the production of goods and in the furnishing of human services and in the democratic distribution of income so as to build civilization, encourage initiative, reward effort and support life. Just as the Negro college course with vision, knowledge and ideal must move toward vocational training, so the industrial courses must ascend from mere hand technique to engineering and industrial planning and the application of scientific and technical knowledge to problems of work and wage.

This higher training and vocational guidance must turn out young men and women who are willing not only to do the work of the world today but to provide for the future world. Here

then is the job before us. It is in a sense the same kind of duty that lies before the educated white man but it has an essential and important difference. If we make a place for ourselves in the industrial and business world today, this will be done because of our ability to establish a self-supporting organization sufficiently independent of the white organization to insure its stability and our economic survival and eventual incorporation into world industry. Ours is the double and dynamic function of tuning in with a machine in action so as neither to wreck the machine nor be crushed or maimed by it. Many think this is impossible. But if it is impossible, our future economic survival is impossible. Let there be no misunderstanding about this, no easy-going optimism. We are not going to share modern civilization just by deserving recognition. We are going to force ourselves in by organized far-seeing effort—by out-thinking and out-flanking the owners of the world today who are too drunk with their own arrogance and power successfully to oppose us if we think and learn and do.

It is not the province of this paper to tell in detail just how this problem will be settled. Indeed, I could not tell you if I would. I merely stress the problem and emphasize the possibility of the solution. A generation ago those who doubted our survival said that no alien and separate nation could hope to survive within another nation; that we must be absorbed or perish. Times have changed. Today it is rapidly becoming true that only within some great and all-inclusive empire or league can

separate nations and groups find freedom and protection and economic scope for development. The small separate nation is becoming increasingly impossible and the League of Nations as well as Briand's proposed League of Europe shout this from the housetops. And just as loudly, the inevitable disintegration of the British empire shows the impossibility of world-embracing centralized autocracy. This means that the possibility of our development and survival is clear, but clear only as brains and devotion and skilled knowledge point the way.

#### TEACHERS

We need then, first, training as human beings in general knowledge and experience; then technical training to guide and do a specific part of the world's work. The broader training should be the heritage and due of all but today it is curtailed by poverty. The technical training of men must be directed by vocational guidance which finds fitness and ability. Then actual and detailed technical training will be done by a combination of school, laboratory and apprenticeship, according to the nature of the work and the changing technique.

The teachers of such a stream of students must be of a high order. College teachers cannot follow the mediaeval tradition of detached withdrawal from the world. The professor of mathematics in a college has to be more than a counting machine, or proctor of examinations; he must be a living man, acquainted with real human beings, and alive to the rela-

tion of his branch of knowledge to the technical problem of living and earning a living. The teacher in a Negro college has got to be something far more than a master of a branch of human knowledge. He has got to be able to impart his knowledge to human beings whose place in the world is today precarious and critical and the possibilities and advancement of that human being in the world where he is to live and earn a living is of just as much importance in the teaching process as the content of the knowledge taught.

The man who teaches blacksmithing must be more than a blacksmith. He must be a man of education and culture, acquainted with the whole present technique and business organization of the modern world, and acquainted too with human beings and their possibilities. Such a man is difficult to procure. Because industrial schools did not have in the past such teachers for their classes and could not get them, their whole program suffered unmerited criticism. The teachers, then, cannot be pedants or dilettantes, they cannot be mere technicians and higher artisans, they have got to be social statesmen and statesmen of high order. The student body of such schools has got to be selected for something more than numbers. We must eliminate those who are here because their parents wish to be rid of them or for the social prestige or for passing the time or for getting as quickly as possible into a position to make money to throw away; and we must concentrate upon young men and women of ability and vision and will.

#### IDEAL

Today there is but one rivalry between culture and vocation, college training and trade and professional training, and that is the rivalry of Time. Some day every human being will have college training. Today some must stop with the grades, and some with high school, and only a few reach college. It is of the utmost importance, then, and the essential condition of our survival and advance that those chosen for college be our best and not simply our richest or most idle.

But even this growth must be led; it must be guided by Ideals. We have lost something, brothers, wandering in strange lands. We have lost our ideals. We have come to a generation which seeks advance without ideals—discovery without stars. It cannot be done. Certain great landmarks and guiding facts must stand eternally before us; and at the risk of moralizing, I must end by emphasizing this matter of the ideals of Negro students and graduates.

The ideal of *Poverty*. This is the direct antithesis of the present American ideal of *Wealth*. We cannot all be wealthy. We should not all be wealthy. In an ideal industrial organization no person should have an income which he does not personally need; nor wield a power solely for his own whim. If civilization is to turn out millionaires it will also turn out beggars and prostitutes either at home or among the lesser breeds without the law. A simple healthy life on limited income is the only reasonable ideal of civilized folk.

The ideal of *Work*—not idleness,

not dawdling, but hard continuous effort at something worth doing, by a man supremely interested in doing it, who knows how it ought to be done and is willing to take infinite pains doing it.

The ideal of *Knowledge*—not guesswork, not mere careless theory; not inherited religious dogma clung to because of fear and inertia and in spite of logic, but critically tested and laboriously gathered fact martialed under scientific law and feeding rather than choking the glorious world of fancy and imagination, of poetry and art, of beauty and deep culture.

Finally, and especially, the ideal of *Sacrifice*. I almost hesitate to mention this—so much sentimental twaddle has been written of it. When I say sacrifice, I mean sacrifice. I mean a real and definite surrender of personal ease and satisfaction. I embellish it with no theological fairy tales of a rewarding God or a milk and honey heaven. I am not trying to scare you into the duty of sacrifice by the fires of a mythical Hell. I am repeating the stark fact of survival of life and culture on this earth:

“*Entbehren sollst du—sollst entbehren.*”

Thou shalt forego, shalt do without.

The insistent problem of human happiness is still with us. We American Negroes are not a happy people. We feel perhaps as never before the sting and bitterness of our struggle. Our little victories won here and there serve but to reveal the shame of our continuing semi-slavery and social caste. We are torn asunder within our own group because of the rasping pressure of the struggle without. We

are as a race not simply dissatisfied, we are embodied Dissatisfaction.

To increase abiding satisfaction for the mass of our people, and for all people, someone must sacrifice something of his own happiness. This is a duty only to those who recognize it as a duty. The larger the number ready to sacrifice, the smaller the total sacrifice necessary. No man of education and culture and training, who proposes to face his problem and solve it can hope for entire happiness. It is silly to tell intelligent human beings: Be good and you will be happy. The truth is today, be good, be decent, be honorable and self-sacrificing and you will not always be happy. You will often be desperately unhappy. You may even be crucified, dead and buried, and the third day you will be just as dead as the first. But with the death of your happiness may easily come increased happiness and satisfaction and fulfilment for other people—strangers, unborn babes, uncreated worlds. If this is not sufficient incentive, never try it—remain hogs.

The present census will show that the American Negro of the educated class and even of the middle industrial class is reproducing himself at an even slower rate than the corresponding classes of whites. To raise a small family today is a sacrifice. It is not romance and adventure. It is giving up something of life and pleasure for a future generation.

If, therefore, real sacrifice for others in your life work appeals to you, here it is. Here is the chance to build an industrial organization on a basis of logic and ethics, such as

is almost wholly lacking in the modern world. It is a tremendous task, and it is the task equally and at once of Howard and Tuskegee, of Hampton and Fisk, of the college and of the industrial school. Our real schools must become centers of this vast Crusade. With the faculty and the student body girding themselves for this new and greater education, the major part of the responsibility will still fall upon those who have already done their school work; and that means upon the alumni who, like you, have become graduates of an institution of learning. Unless the

vision comes to you and comes quickly, of the educational and economic problem before the American Negro, that problem will not be solved. You not only enter, therefore, today the worshipful company of that vast body of men upon whom a great center of learning, with ancient ceremony and colorful trappings, has put the accolade of intellectual knighthood, but men who have become the unselfish thinkers and planners of a group of people in whose hands lies the economic and social destiny of the darker peoples of the world, and by that token of the world itself.