Washington's Argument

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." . . . The captain of the distressed vessel . . . cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race . . . I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"—cast it down in making friends . . . of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. . . .

Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands . . . It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.

—From *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington

Du Bois' Argument

Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,—

First, political power,
Second, insistence on civil rights,
Third, higher education of Negro youth,—

and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years. . . . As a result of this tender of the palm-branch, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro.
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

—From *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois

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