If we in the North can, with circumspection, be of specific help, please let us know. In the meantime, our thoughts and prayers will be with you, especially as the trials begin.

Cordially,

[signed]
Homer A. Jack

TLS. MLKP-MBU: Box 91.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

From Thelma Austin Rice

18 March 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

As King awaited trial, expressions of support came not only from around the country but from within his own congregation. As part of his reorganization of Dexter during his first months as pastor, King had asked parishioners to join one of twelve fund-raising clubs according to their month of birth. Rice, president of the January Club, expresses concern for King and encloses a collection of poems and biblical quotations that members selected for him, entitled "Comforting Sense of Direction—Tidbits for Our Pastor and Club Member."1

TO: The Reverend M. L. King, Jr.
FROM: The January Club
ON: The Eve of the March 19th Trials

It comes a time in the life of each individual when he or she faces trying moments. At such times, it often happens that solace as well as sense of direction come through a spoken or unspoken word.

Realizing these circumstances, we, the members of the January Club share with you our favorite sources of comfort, hope and sense of direction, whether or not these sources are poems, quotes from the Bible, a printed prayer or words out of the creations of our own thinking. Whatever the case, these that we share have sustained and offered us a sense of direction, and we share them with you that

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1. Thelma Austin Rice (1917– ) was born in Montgomery and earned her B.S. (1937) and M.Ed. (1946) from Alabama State College. Rice taught in Mobile public schools from 1937 to 1945 and then, from 1945 to 1952, at the Mobile campus of Alabama State. In 1945 she organized the Metropolitan Council of the National Council of Negro Women, serving as its president until 1952. She returned to Montgomery in 1954 to head Alabama State's math department, where she remained until 1962. She was also an active member of the Women's Political Council, the NAACP, the Business and Professional Women's Club of Montgomery, and the Mobile Non-Partisan Voters League.
you may find in them a spark to comfort and sustain you as you face a trial situation made by man and all that such an experience could mean.

We are joined in this bond of expression of our concern for you.

Very sincerely yours,

THE JANUARY CLUB

[signed]

Thelma Austin Rice, President

Enclosures: In alphabetical order of the members.

TALS. MLKP-MBU: Box 119.

To W. E. B. Du Bois

19 March 1956

Montgomery, Ala.

Earlier in March Du Bois had sent King the first stanza of the poem Battle Hymn, written by Gustavus Adolphus in 1630: ‘Fear not, O little flock the foe / That madly seeks thine overthrow / Dread not his rage and power / What through thy courage sometime faints? / Its seeming power o'er God's saints / Lasts but a little hour.' King may not have seen the verse; his office sent Du Bois this form letter of thanks.1

Dear Friends:

This is a note to express my deepest gratitude to you for your kind letter. Such letters from friends sympathetic with our momentous struggle for justice give us renewed vigor and courage to carry on.

With every good wish, I am

Cordially yours,

[signed]

M. L. King, Jr.,

President

MLK/ehr

TLSr. WEBD-MU.

1. Du Bois to King, March 1956. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, earned his B.A. (1888) from Fisk University and his B.A. (1890), M.A. (1891), and Ph.D. (1895) from Harvard University. He taught at Wilberforce University (1894–1896), the University of Pennsylvania (1896–1897), and Atlanta University (1897–1910). A founder of the NAACP, Du Bois was the director of publications and the editor of The Crisis magazine from 1910 to 1934. He rejoined Atlanta University as head of its sociology department in 1933, returning briefly to the NAACP in 1944 to head the special research department (to 1948). Du Bois also served as editor of Phylon (1940–1944). In 1961 Du Bois joined the Communist Party and moved to Ghana to become editor in chief of Encyclopedia Africana. Du Bois contributed numerous articles to magazines and journals and authored many books on American race relations, most notably the classic Souls of Black Folk (1903).