"Some of our good white citizens told me today that the relationships between white and colored used to be good, that the whites have never let us down and that the outsiders came in and upset this relationship. But I want you to know that if M. L. King had never been born this movement would have taken place. I just happened to be here. You know there comes a time when time itself is ready for change. That time has come in Montgomery, and I had nothing to do with it.

“Our opponents, I hate to think of our governmental officials as opponents, but they are, have tried all sorts of things to break us, but we still hold steadfast. Their first strategy was to negotiate into a compromise and that failed. Secondly, they tried to conquer by dividing and that failed. And now they are trying to intimidate us by a get-tough-policy and that’s going to fail too because a man’s language is courage when his back is against the wall.

“We don’t advocate violence. WE WILL STAY WITHIN THE LAW. When we are RIGHT, WE DON’T MIND GOING TO JAIL! (The applause rang out like a great clasp of thunder) If all I have to pay is going to jail a few times and getting about 20 threatening calls a day, I think that is a very small price to pay for what we are fighting for. (applause very loud and long).

“We are a chain. We are linked together, and I cannot be what I ought to unless you are what you ought to be.

“This good white citizen I was talking to said that I should devote more time to preaching the gospel and leave other things alone. I told him that it’s not enough to stand in the pulpit on Sunday and preach about honesty, to tell people to be honest and don’t think about their economic conditions which may be conducive to their being dishonest. It’s not enough to tell them to be truthful and forget about the social environment which may necessitate their telling untruths. All of these are a minister’s job. You see God didn’t make us with just soul alone so we could float about in space without care or worry. He made a body to put around a soul. When the body was made in flesh, there became a material connection between man and his environment and this connection means a material well being of the body as well as the spiritual well being of the soul is to be sought. And it is my job as a minister to aid in both of these.” (roaring applause)

TD. PV-ARC-LNT.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project

"Blast Rocks Residence of Bus Boycott Leader," by Joe Azbell

31 January 1956
Montgomery, Ala.

At 9:30 p.m., 30 January, a single stick of dynamite exploded on the King family’s porch; Coretta Scott King and a friend, Dexter member Mary Lucy Williams, had been in the living room when they heard an object land on the front porch. They bolted to the back room, where Yolanda was sleeping, just as the dynamite exploded, ripping a hole in the porch floor, shattering four windows, and damaging a porch column. King arrived home about fifteen minutes later to find a large and boisterous crowd—many
apparently armed—gathered outside and refusing to obey police orders to disperse. When he walked onto the porch, one onlooker reported, "the people let out with cheers that could be heard blocks away. With the raising of his hand they became quiet to hear what he had to say." In his remarks, King asked the crowd to go home peacefully. Police Commissioner Clyde Sellers and Mayor W. A. Gayle addressed the crowd next, promising to investigate the bombing and to defend the King family against future attacks. King spoke to the gathering again, urging them to be calm. The crowd then broke into spontaneous song, including hymns and "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," before finally dispersing at 10:45 P.M. The following comments by King were quoted in the Montgomery Advertiser article by Joe Azbell published the next day.

“We believe in law and order. Don't get panicky. Don't do anything panicky at all. Don't get your weapons. He who lives by the sword will perish by the sword. Remember that is what God said. We are not advocating violence. We want to love our enemies. I want you to love our enemies. Be good to them. Love them and let them know you love them. I did not start this boycott. I was asked by you to serve as your spokesman. I want it to be known the length and breadth of this land that if I am stopped this movement will not stop. If I am stopped our work will not stop. For what we are doing is right. What we are doing is just. And God is with us.” [quotations from Gayle, Sellers, and Sheriff Mac Sim Butler omitted]

The Rev. King addressed the crowd again saying "go home and sleep calm. Go home and don't worry. Be calm as I and my family are. We are not hurt and remember that if anything happens to me, there will be others to take my place."

PD. Montgomery Advertiser, 31 January 1956.

3. Matthew 5:44.

From Pinkie S. Franklin

31 January 1956
Birmingham, Ala.

King received scores of sympathetic letters after the bombing, from both friends and strangers. Franklin wrote this letter of solace while unable to sleep. She later became

1. Pinkie Smith Franklin (1915– ) was born in Selma and graduated from Alabama State College in 1938. She taught in Alabama schools before opening a grocery store in Birmingham with her husband in 1946. She was a member of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). As a participant in the Birmingham civil rights protests of 1963 she was jailed for two days.