

To Coretta Scott King

[26 October 1960]
Reidsville, Ga.

King writes to his wife from the Georgia State Prison at Reidsville. He tells her "that it is extremely difficult for me to think of being away from you and my Yoki and Marty for four months" but that his ordeal "is the cross that we must bear for the freedom of our people."

Hello Darling,

Today I find myself a long way from you and the children. I am at the State Prison in Reidsville which is about 230 miles from Atlanta. They picked me up from the DeKalb jail about 4 'o clock this morning.¹ I know this whole experience is very difficult for you to adjust to, especially in your condition of pregnancy, but as I said to you yesterday this is the cross that we must bear for the freedom of our people.² So I urge you to be strong in in faith, and this will in turn strengthen me. I can assure you that it is extremely difficult for me to think of being away from you and my Yoki and Marty for four months, but I am asking God hourly to give me the power of endurance. I have the faith to believe that this excessive suffer-

1. King's attorney Donald Hollowell, who expected to see his client at the county jail that morning, complained that the pre-dawn transfer "came with astonishing . . . and unnecessary swiftness" (John Britton, "Motion to Revoke Conviction of King Rejected Following Early Morning Transfer to Reidsville," *Atlanta Daily World*, 27 October 1960). In a 1964 interview, King recalled the transfer: "They dealt with me just like I was a hardened criminal. They had me chained all the way down there, you know, the chains around my legs which kind of tied my legs" (King, Interview by Berl I. Bernhard, 9 March 1964).

2. In her memoir, Coretta King recalled speaking with her husband shortly after he had been sentenced: "I was trying not to cry when we went into the cell, but the tears were streaming down my face. When Martin saw me he said, 'Corrie, dear, you have to be strong. I've never seen you like this before. You have to be strong for me'" (*My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.*, pp. 193-194). Dexter Scott, the Kings' third child, was born on 31 January 1961.

26 Oct
1960

ing that is now coming to our family will in some little way serve to make Atlanta a better city, Georgia a better state, and America a better country. Just how I do not yet know, but I have faith to believe it will. If I am correct then our suffering is not in vain.

I understand that I can have visitors twice a month—the second and fourth Sunday. However, I understand that everybody—white and colored—can have visitors this coming Sunday. I hope you can find some way to come down. I know it will be a terrible inconvenience in your condition, but I want to see you and the children very badly. Also ask Wyatt to come. There are some very urgent things that I will need to talk with him about.³ Please bring the following books to me: Stride Toward Freedom, Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology Vol 1&2, George Buttrick The Parables of Jesus E. S. Jones Mahatma Gandhi, Horns and Halo, a Bible, a Dictionary and my reference dictionary called Increasing your Word Power.⁴ This book is an old book in a red cover and it may be in the den or upstairs in one of my [~~strikeout illegible~~] bags. Also bring the following sermons from my file: "What is Man" "The Three Dimensions" "The Death of Evil" "Why could not we cast him out?" "Why Jesus called A man A Fool" "The God Samaritan" "The Peril of the Sword" "Our God is Able" "Levels of Love" "Loving your enemies" "God of the Lost" "Vision of A world made New" "Keep moving From this Mountain" "A Religion of Doing" "Looking Beyond you circumstances" "The Impassable Gulf" "Love for Action" "Christ The Center of our Faith" Some of these are in the file; others are on the desk.⁵ Also bring a radio

Give my best regards to all the family. Please ask them not to worry about me. I will adjust to whatever comes in terms of pain. Hope to see you Sunday.

Eternally yours
[signed] Martin

ALS. MLKJP-GAMK: Vault Box 1.

3. In a 26 October telegram Walker wrote to King: "I will be to see you tomorrow afternoon."

4. King annotated his personal copies of E. Stanley Jones's *Mahatma Gandhi: An Interpretation* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948) and J. Wallace Hamilton's *Horns and Halos in Human Nature* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1954).

5. Several of these titles also appeared as chapters in King's 1963 book of sermons *Strength to Love* (New York: Harper & Row).