

Concord, Ga.,
Jan. 20, 1941.
5:00 A.M.

Dear Mrs. Williamson,

The last paragraph of your letter makes it necessary for me to write again, but before I get to that, there are other things I must say. This will be a hard letter to write, and I know it will be too long, for I am full of things I need to say, and I can only hope you won't be too hurt at the scolding. First of all, I am so grieved that things have not been going as well for you as we had hoped. I am furious about every bit of the discomfort and overwork, and very sorry about the illness. I knew of course that you would throw yourself wholeheartedly into the work, but I did hope that you would have sense enough (your own words) not to undertake too much. If I could see you, I'd preach you a sermon on the "Boomerang," somewhat different from the way you gave it to me, you and I don't agree on this question of work, and never will. You are a little too stubborn, - aren't you? - to try to see it otherwise. But I seriously doubt it being wholly Christian to push yourself as you do. I know you would not consider suicide, yet you are killing yourself just as much with overwork, as if you took an overdose of poison. It is slower, and that is about the only difference. You won't consider yourself, but do you not owe it to those who love you to keep yourself on earth as long as you can? I believe you think you are doing the best thing for them, perhaps the very necessary thing, but I can't agree. There must be some other solution. You can not keep up in this strain indefinitely. Please let me beg you, for the sake of your dear ones, especially for Norman's, to have a little mercy on yourself.

Since I have administered the scolding, very ineffectively, I fear, let me add this, my dear friend. I know that it is not just the strain of hard physical labor that is killing you, giving you backache, headache, and making you hollow-eyed. There were things in your letter you did not write, but were there to be read. And I want you to know that my heart aches with yours, that I grieve for you both, and pray for you always. It hurts that I can do no more. I can not even try to comfort, for

compared to you, I am a babe in experience. But I want to give you back a thought, or suggestion, you once gave me. You came up one day when Mr. King happened to be home, to talk to me, and pray with me. And you told me not to be thinking of the future, nor even of the days ahead, but just to live one day at a time, to trust God for strength for that day. A preacher cousin out in Texas wrote me the same thing, and told me how he had been helped by that thought when his wife died. And then, I found in one of the Hudson Taylor books, that he had expressed it in these words: "Well, it is but one day at a time. Today, by His grace, we can bear today's burden; tomorrow we may be with Him where there is no burden; or if not, He will be with us, and in His presence there is 'fulness of joy,' this world's tribulation notwithstanding."

I wonder if you are using "The Upper Room" for this quarter? The meditation for Jan. 2 was written by Grace Roll Howell, and she gave a quotation used by King George in a recent broadcast. "I said to the man who stood at the gate of the years: 'give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown,' and he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be better to you than a light, and safer than a known way.'" I think it was the same day I found the quotation used again in an article in your Baptist Home Mission magazine. I cut it out and sent it to Carol. The years ahead do look so dark right now, we need more than ever to remember that He is still here, keeping watch. I believe, I know that this darkness can not last, I do not know when the light will come, probably not till He comes, and I pray that may be soon. And in the meantime, with all the fears, the wonderings, disappointments and heartache that surround us, I still know it is better "to walk in the dark with God, than to go alone in the light." You know that too, of course, but do we sometimes forget?

Forgive me if my last letter seemed unkind. I did not mean it to be so, but could not write in the same vein as before. I was puzzled and hurt, yes, I think this long continued pain and being alone so much have intensified my natural sensitiveness, and I am hurt too easily. But though I had cause to wonder, I kept reminding myself of the many duties I knew you had, then I would remember the many kind things you had done for me, and I would say "I will not doubt their goodness, kindness or sincerity." I have never been sorry I

wrote that first letter as I did, though I was perfectly aware of the fact that you probably would not like it. I learned you well enough in those two years to know you shrink from anything approaching sentiment. But I wanted you to know how I felt, and to my mind there is entirely too little expression of love and appreciation in the world today.

And that brings me to that last paragraph, in which you mention my having had \$5.00 waiting for you there. I had to read that twice to make any sense to it at all, but finally guessed that some one, evidently the same person who sometimes sent you gifts while you were here, had sent you another five, and for some reason I can't begin to guess, you have connected it with me. And from your next sentence, I am afraid you are putting all those gifts to my credit. What in the world was there about this that gave you such an impression that you could say that so positively? Dr. Williamson used to pretend he thought I was responsible, but I thought you knew better. I wish with all my heart I could claim credit for having done such a lovely thing, and I am thankful indeed to know some one is kind enough and thoughtful enough to do what I am not able to do. Do you really believe that if I were able to hand out money like that (how much was it, anyway - \$100? - I may not have been told of it all) but do you think I would still be wearing that old winter coat, which is beginning its eleventh season of service? And glad I am to have it, too, this weather, though it does take some courage to appear in public wearing it. And please do not let my telling you that I can not afford such luxuries as being able to give as this friend does, make you doubt my willingness, my very real longing to help. I almost envy those who can. I hope the gifts will continue to arrive.

I thought of your pageant at Christmas, and wondered if you had been able to get it up. I am glad it was a success. I had the privilege of attending two church services while in Atlanta. On Christmas morning, we got up very early, (though I had been awake the whole night suffering with my head) and drove 5 or 6 miles, I imagine, in the rain, to attend a sunrise (?) service at St. Mark's Methodist Church. A fine service, and the

Church well filled, in spite of the weather. Part of the Emory Glee Club did the singing, which was good. But the service I enjoyed most was the regular service at the Peachtree Christian Church on the 29th. I had never been there before, but I knew its reputation for having beautiful music, and also I knew the criticism directed against the formality of their services. They have adopted rather too much of an Episcopalian formality, which is contrary to our belief and practice, but on this day I found nothing to criticize. The church is beautiful, and from the moment you enter the door you realize you are in a place for worship. The beauty of the church itself, the music of the organ and chimes, the singing of the two choirs, and the very dignity and solemnity of the entire service, seemed to bring us nearer to God. I was even grateful that no one spoke to us, for it was quiet I needed. It was my wedding anniversary, and besides Sammy had had an operation the day before, and I had been filled with anxiety. But do you know what one person said to me since when I told her how I had been uplifted that day? She said I did not know what true worship was, or words to that effect. Oh, well!

Sammy was not well all the week we were there. He continued working, for he was needed, but was under observation with appendicitis suspected. Fortunately, he was living in the hospital itself, in the intern's quarters, where he had help available at any minute. And they did operate on the 28th, in plenty of time, before the condition became acute. His recovery was remarkable, he was able to report for the first class of the year the following Saturday, and in two weeks was as well as ever, so far as the operation was concerned. But I am greatly concerned about him now, for flu has been so bad there, and he wrote me he had the worst cough he had ever had. I know he will be taken care of as far as they are able, but the entire hospital staff is worked to death right now, with so many doctors and nurses sick. I was happy to find that ~~Sam~~ Sammy was somewhat of a favorite with the staff, and has many good friends, among the interns and nurses. Yes, he is at last enjoying the companionship of girls, and there are some very fine ones there. To be frank, I checked up on his favorite, and found that all was well. And I like his attitude very much, also, perfectly sweet and frank about it all.

I hope you are taking this in installments, if you are taking it at all. You see, I can not say "to be continued in my next", so I am running the risk of giving you another headache. I wish I could have had a typewriter again, even if it is not correct to use it for personal letters. I wrote from Mary's last week. Had to go up there to see mamma, and knowing Jack had received a typewriter for Christmas, and having some business letters to write, I carried my stationery, and took the opportunity to write you at the same time. No one knew it, however, for I took the typewriter to the car where I could be alone to think out all my letters. No one knows I have written to you at all, or about the suit, either.

Now, I know you can not write to me, but please never say again, or think that I do not care to hear. You know that is not true. It is very hard to not know how you are, whether you are sick or well, alive or dead, or even where you are. You could be in Kalamazoo or Timbuctoo, and I might never know it. And even though your news might be not of the brightest, I'd want it just the same. So if ever in the months to come, you think of me and have the slightest inclination to write, please do. You will be performing a very real service, for one who is sometimes - rather lonely.

And once again, let me plead with you to give up either some of the housework, or some of the church work. Take better care of yourself. Let Norman be amazed, when he comes home in the spring, at the change for the better, the fuller face, brighter eyes, and best of all, the old sweet smile. Don't think me silly. I am going to tell you this one more time, Fannie Lee (please let me, just this once) that my life is richer and fuller now for having known you and Dr. Williamson, and also, it is emptier, for having lost you. And if either of you should leave this world soon, it

would become a much less desirable world to this person, at least you see, every word of that first letter is still true and in force, and always will be. It may not mean much to you, but my heart and my prayers are with you always.

Lovingly,
Florence.

Did you notice when I began this? It is now after 8, and except for taking time for a bite of breakfast, I have been writing ever since, which may account for the smudges. I hope it has not taken you 3 hours to read it.