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# IV: New Day in Birmingham

On Wednesday, April 3, 1963, the Birmingham News appeared on the stands, its front page bright with a color drawing showing a golden sun rising over the city. It was captioned: "New Day Dawns for Birmingham," and celebrated Albert Boutwell's victory in the run-off vote for mayor. The golden glow of racial harmony, the headline implied, could now be expected to descend on the city. As events were to show, it was indeed a new day for Birmingham; but not because Boutwell had won the election.

For all the optimism expressed in the press and elsewhere, we were convinced that Albert Boutwell was, in Fred Shuttlesworth' apt phrase, "just a dignified Bull Connor." We knew that the former state senator and lieutenant governor had been the principal author of Alabamak Pupil Placement Law, and was a consistent supporter of segregationist views. His statement a few days after election that citizens of Birmingham respect and understand one another" showed that he understood nothing about two-fifths of Birmingham' citizens, to whom even polite segregation was no respect.

Meanwhile, despite the results of the run-off, the city commissioners, including Bull Connor, had taken the position that they could not legally be removed from office until 1965. They would go into the courts to defend their position, and refused in the interim to move out of their City Hall offices. If they won in court (and conflict in the laws of Birmingham made this theoretically possible), they would remain in office for another two years. If they lost, their terms would still not expire until April 15, the day after Easter. In either case, we were committed to enter the situation in a city which was operating literally under two governments.

We had decided to limit the first few days' efforts to sit-ins. Being prepared for a long struggle, we felt it best to begin modestly, with a limited number of arrests each day. By rationing our energies in this manner, we would help toward the buildup and drama of a growing campaign. The first demonstrations were, accordingly, not spectacular, but they were well organized. Operating on a precise timetable, small groups maintained a series of sit-ins at lunch counters in the downtown department stores and drugstores. When the demonstrators were asked to leave and refused, they were arrested under the local "trespass after warning" ordinance. By Friday night, there had been no disturbances worth note. Evidently neither Bull Connor nor the merchants expected this quiet beginning to blossom into a large-scale operation.

After the first day we held a mass meeting, the first of sixty-five nightly meetings conducted at various churches in the Negro community. Through these meetings we were able to generate the power and depth which finally galvanized the entire Negro community. The mass meetings had a definite pattern, shaped by some of the finest activists in the civil-rights movement. Ralph Abernathy, with his unique combination of humor and dedication, has a genius for lifting an audience to heights of enthusiasm and holding it there. When he plants himself behind the lectern, squat and powerful, his round face breaking easily into laughter, his listeners both love and believe him. Wyatt Walker, youthful, lean and bespectacled, brought his energetic and untiring spirit to our meetings, whose members already knew and admired his dedicated work as a behind-the-scenes organizer of the campaign. There was a special adulation that went out to the fiery words and determined zeal of Fred Shuttlesworth, who had proved to his people that he would not ask anyone to go where he was not willing to lead. Although for the first week I was busy on matters that prevented my taking an active part in the demonstrations, I spoke at the mass meetings nightly on the philosophy of nonviolence and its methods. Besides these "regulars," local speakers appeared from time to time to describe the injustices and humiliation of being a Negro in Birmingham, and occasional visitors from elsewhere across the country brought us welcome messages of support.

An important part of the mass meetings was the freedom songs. In a sense the freedom songs are the soul of the movement. They are more than just incantations of clever phrases designed to invigorate a campaign; they are as old as the history of the Negro in America. They are adaptations of the songs the slaves sang—the sorrow songs, the shouts for joy, the battle hymns and the anthems of our movement. I have heard people talk of their beat and rhythm, but we in the movement are as inspired by their words. "Woke Up This Morning with My Mind Stayed on Freedom" is a sentence that needs no music to make its point. We sing the freedom songs today for the same reason the slaves sang them, because we too are in bondage and the songs add hope to our determination that "We shall overcome, Black and white together, We shall overcome someday."

I have stood in a meeting with hundreds of youngsters and joined in while they sang "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round." It is not just a song; it is a resolve. A few minutes later, I have seen those same youngsters refuse to turn around from the onrush of a police dog, refuse to turn around before a pugnacious Bull Connor in command of men armed with power hoses. These songs bind us together, give us courage together, help us to march together.

Toward the end of the mass meetings, Abernathy or Shuttlesworth or I would extend an appeal for volunteers to serve in our nonviolent army. We made it clear that we would not send anyone out to demonstrate who had not convinced himself and us that he could accept and endure violence without retaliating. At the same time, we urged the volunteers to give up any possible weapons that they might have on their persons. Hundreds of people responded to this appeal. Some of those who carried penknives, Boy Scout knives—all kinds of knives— had them not because they wanted to use them against the police or other attackers, but because they wanted to defend themselves against Mr. Connor's dogs. We proved to them that we needed no weapons—not so much as a toothpick. We proved that we possessed the most formidable weapon of all—the conviction that we were right. We had the protection of our knowledge that we were more concerned about realizing our righteous aims than about saving our skins.

The invitational periods at the mass meetings, when we asked for volunteers, were much like those invitational periods that occur every Sunday morning in Negro churches, when the pastor projects the call to those present to join the church. By twenties and thirties and forties, people came forward to join our army. We did not hesitate to call our movement an army. But it was a special army, with no supplies but its sincerity, no uniform but its determination, no arsenal except its faith, no currency but its conscience. It was an army that would move but not maul. It was an army that would sing but not slay. It was an army that would flank but not falter. It was an army to storm bastions of hatred, to lay siege to the fortresses of segregation, to surround symbols of discrimination. It was an army whose allegiance was to God and whose strategy and intelligence were the eloquently simple dictates of conscience.

As the meetings continued and as the battle for the soul of Birmingham quickened and caught the attention of the world, the meetings were more crowded and the volunteers more numerous. Men, women and children came forward to shake hands, and then proceeded to the back ofthe church, where the Leadership Training Committee made an appointment with them to come to our office the following day for screening and intensive training.

The focus of these training sessions was the socio-dramas designed to prepare the demonstrators for some of the challenges they could expect to face. The harsh language and physical abuse ofthe police and the self-appointed guardians of the law were frankly presented, along with the nonviolent creed in action: to resist without bitterness; to be cursed and not reply; to be beaten and not hit back. The S.C.LC. staff members who conducted these sessions played their roles with the conviction born of experience. They included the Reverend James Lawson, expelled from Vanderbilt University a few years back for his militant civil-rights work, and one ofthe countryk leading exponents of the nonviolent credo; the Reverend James Bevel, already an experienced leader in Nashville, Greenwood and other campaigns; his wife, Diane Nash Bevel, who as a student at Fisk had become an early symbol ofthe young Negroes' thrust toward freedom; the Reverend Bernard Lee, whose devotion to civil rights dated back to his leadership of the student movement at Alabama State College; the Reverend Andy Young, our able and dedicated program director; and Dorothy Cotton, director ofour ongoing Citizenship Education Program, who also brought her rich talent for song to the heart of the movement.

Not all who volunteered could pass our strict tests for service as demonstrators. But there was much to be done, over and above the dramatic act of presenting one's body in the marches. There were errands to be run, phone calls to be made, typing, so many things. If a volunteer wasn't suited to march, he was utilized in one of a dozen other ways to help the cause. Every volunteer was required to sign a Commitment Card that read:

1 HEREBY PLEDGE MYSELF—MY PERSON AND BODY—TO THE NONVIOLENT MOVEMENT. THEREFORE 1 WILL KEEP THE FOLLOWING TEN COMMANDMENTS:

l. MEDITATE daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.

1. REMEMBER always that the nonviolent movement in Birmingham seeks justice and reconciliation—not victory.
2. WALK and TALK in the manner of love, for God is love.
3. PRAY daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free.
4. SACRIFICE personal wishes in order that all men might be free.
5. OBSERVE with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
6. SEEK to perform regular service for others and for the world.
7. REFRAIN from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
8. STRIVE to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
9. FOLLOW the directions of the movement and of the captain on a demonstration.

I sign this pledge, having seriously considered what I do and with the determination and will to persevere.

Name

Address

Phone

Nearest Relative

Address

Besides demonstrations, I could also help the movement by: (Circle the proper items)

Run errands, Drive my car, Fix food for volunteers, Clerical work, Make phone calls, Answer phones, Mimeograph, Type, Print signs, Distribute leaflets.

ALABAMA CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS Birmingham Affiliate of S.C.L.C.

5051/5 North 17th Street

F. L. Shuttlesworth, President

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I had planned to submit myself to imprisonment two or three days after our demonstrations began. It didn't take long after returning to Birmingham, however, to recognize the existence of a problem that made it unwise and impractical for me to go to jail before something had been done to solve it.

We had been forced to change our timetable twice. We had had to make a strategic retreat until after the run-off and had lost contact with the community for several weeks. We had returned now to a city whose political power structure was divided. We had returned to find that our own people were not united. There was tremendous resistance to our program from some of the Negro ministers, businessmen and professionals in the city. This opposition did not exist because these Negroes did not want to be free. It existed for several other reasons.

The Negro in Birmingham, like the Negro elsewhere in this nation, had been skillfully brainwashed to the point where he had accepted the white man's theory that he, as a Negro, was inferior. He wanted to believe that he was the equal of any man; but he didn't know where to begin or how to resist the influences that had conditioned him to take the line of least resistance and go along with the white man's views. He knew that there were exceptions to the white man’s evaluation: a Ralph Bunche, a Jackie Robinson, a Marian Anderson. But to the Negro, in Birmingham and in the nation, the exception did not prove the rule.

Another consideration had also affected the thinking of some of the Negro leaders in Birmingham. This was the widespread feeling that our action was ill-timed, and that we should have given the new Boutwell government a chance. Attorney General Robert Kennedy had been one of the first to voice this criticism. The Washington Post, which covered Birmingham from the first day of our demonstrations, had editorially attacked our 'timing." In fact, virtually all the coverage in the national press at first had been negative, picturing us as irresponsible hotheads who had plunged into a situation just when Birmingham was getting ready to change overnight into Paradise. The sudden emergence of our protest seemed to give the lie to this

In Montgomery, during the bus boycott, and in the Albany, Georgia, campaign, we had had the advantage of a sympathetic and understanding national press from the outset. In Birmingham we did not. It is terribly difficult to wage such a battle without the moral support of the national press to counteract the hostility of local editors. The words "bad timing" came to be ghosts haunting our every move in Birmingham. Yet people who used this argument were ignorant of the background of our planning. They did not know we had postponed our campaign twice. They did not know our reason for attacking in time to affect Easter shopping. Above all they did not realize that it was ridiculous to speak of timing when the clock of history showed that the Negro had already suffered one hundred years of delay.

Not only were many of the Negro leaders affected by the administration's position, but they were themselves indulging in a false optimism about what would happen to Birmingham under the new government. The situation had been critical for so many years that, I suppose, these people felt that any change represented a giant step toward the good. Many truly believed that once the influence of Bull Connor had faded, everything was going to be all right.

Another reason for the opposition within the Negro community was resentment on the part of some groups and leaders because we had not kept them informed about the date we planned to begin or the strategy we would adopt. They felt that they were being pulled in on something they had no part in organizing. They did not realize that, because of the local political situation, we had been forced to keep our plans secret.

We were seeking to bring about a great social change which could only be achieved through unified effort. Yet our community was divided. Our goals could never be attained in such an atmosphere. It was decided that we would conduct a whirlwind campaign of meetings with organizations and leaders in the Negro community, to seek to mobilize every key person and group behind our movement.

Along with members of my staff, I began addressing numerous groups representing a cross section of our people in Birmingham. I spoke to 125 business and professional people at a call meeting in the Gaston Building. I talked to a gathering of two hundred ministers. I met with many smaller groups, during a hectic one-week schedule. In most cases, the atmosphere when I entered was tense and chilly, and I was aware that there was a great deal of work to be done.

I went immediately to the point, explaining to the business and professional men why we had been forced to proceed without letting them know the date in advance. I dealt with the argument of timing. To the ministers I stressed the need for a social gospel to supplement the gospel of individual salvation. I suggested that only a "dry as dust" religion prompts a minister to extol the glories of heaven while ignoring the social conditions that cause men an earthly hell. I pleaded for the projection of strong, firm leadership by the Negro minister, pointing out that he is freer, more independent, than any other person in the community. I asked how the Negro would ever gain his freedom without the guidance, support and inspiration of his spiritual leaders.

I challenged those who had been persuaded that I was an "outsider." I pointed out that Fred Shuttlesworth's Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights was an affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and that the Shuttlesworth group had asked S. C.LC. to come to Birmingham, and that as president ofS.CL C, I had come in the interests of aiding an S.C.L.C. affiliate.

I expanded further on the weary and worn "outsider" charge, which we have faced in every community where we have gone to try to help. No in fact, no American, is an outsider when he goes to any community to aid the cause of freedom and justice. No Negro anywhere, regardless of his social standing, his financial status, his prestige and position, is an outsider so long as dignity and decency are denied to the humblest black child in Mississippi, Alabama or Georgia.

The amazing aftermath of Birmingham, the sweeping Negro Revolution, revealed to people all over the land that there are no outsiders in all these fifty states of America. When a police dog buried his fangs in the ankle of a small child in Birmingham, he buried his fangs in the ankle of every American. The bell of man's inhumanity to man does not toll for any one man. It tolls for you, for me, for all of us.

Somehow God gave me the power to transform the resentments, the suspicions, the fears and the misunderstanding I found that week into faith and enthusiasm. I spoke from my heart, and out of each meeting came firm endorsements and pledges of participation and support. With the new unity that developed and now poured fresh blood into our protest, the foundations of the old order were doomed. A new order was destined to be born, and not all the powers of bigotry or Bull Connor could abort it.

By the end of the first three days of lunch-counter sit-ins, there had been thirty-five arrests. On Saturday, April 6, we began the next stage of our crusade with a march on City Hall.

Carefully selected and screened, the first waves of demonstrators conducted themselves exactly s they had been trained to do. They marched in orderly files of without banners or band or singing. When they reached a point, three blocks from their goal, where Bull Connor's officers loomed in their path, they stood silently by as their leaders politely but firmly refused to obey Connor's orders to disperse. Thereupon forty-two were arrested for 'parading without a permit." They were escorted with amazing politeness into the paddy wagons, and they, in turn, allowed themselves to be led without resisting, singing freedom songs on the way to jail. The sidewalks were lined with cheering Negroes, singing and lustily applauding their jail bound heroes—for this is exactly what they were in the eyes oftheir neighbors and friends. Something was happening to the Negro in this city, just as something revolutionary was taking place in the mind, heart and soul of Negroes all over America.

From then on, the daily demonstrations grew stronger. Our boycott of the downtown merchants was proving amazingly effective. A few days before Easter, a careful check showed less than twenty Negroes entering all the stores in the downtown area. Meanwhile, with the number of volunteers increasing daily, we were able to launch campaigns against a variety of additional objectives: kneel-ins at churches; sit-ins at the library; a march on the county building to mark the opening of a voter-registration drive. And all the time the jails were slowly but steadily filling up.

Birmingham residents of both races were surprised at the restraint of Connor's men at the beginning of the campaign. True, police dogs and clubs made their debut on Palm Sunday, but their appearance that daywas brief and they quickly disappeared. What observers probably did not realize was that the commissioner was trying to take a leaf from the book of Police Chief Laurie Pritchett of Albany. Chief Pritchett felt that by directing his police to be nonviolent, he had discovered a new way to defeat the demonstrations. Mr. Connor, as it developed, was not to adhere to nonviolence long; the dogs were baying in kennels not far away; the hoses were primed. But that is another part of the story.

A second reason Bull Connor had held off at first was that he thought he had found another way out. This became evident on April 10, when the city government obtained a court injunction directing us to cease our activities until our right to demonstrate had been argued in court. The time had now come for us to counter their legal maneuver with a strategy of our own. Two days later, we did an audacious thing, something we had never done in any other crusade. We disobeyed a court order.

We did not take this radical step without prolonged and prayerful consideration. Planned, deliberate civil disobedience had been discussed as far back as the meeting at Harry Belafontek apartment in March. There, in consultation with some of the closest friends of the movement, we had decided that if an injunction was issued to thwart our demonstrators, it would be our duty to violate it. To some, this will sound contradictory and morally indefensible. We, who contend for justice, and who oppose those who will not honor the law of the Supreme Court and the rulings of federal agencies, were saying that we would overtly violate a court order. Yet we felt that there were persuasive reasons for our position.

When the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation was handed down, leading segregationists vowed to thwart it by invoking "a century of litigation." There was more significance to this threat than many Americans imagined. The injunction method has now become the leading instrument of the South to block the direct-action civil-rights drive and to prevent Negro citizens and their white allies from engaging in peaceable assembly, a right guaranteed by the First Amendment. You initiate a nonviolent demonstration. The power structure secures an injunction against you. It can conceivably take two or three years before any disposition of the case is made. The Alabama courts are notorious for "sitting on" cases of this nature. This has been a maliciously effective, pseudo-legal way of breaking the back of legitimate moral protest.

We had anticipated that this procedure would be used in Birmingham. It had been invoked in Montgomery to outlaw our car pool during the bus boycott. It had destroyed the protest movement in Talladega, Alabama. It had torpedoed our effort in Albany, Georgia. It had routed the N.A.A.C.P. from the state of Alabama. We decided, therefore, knowing well what the consequences would be and prepared to accept them, that we had no choice but to violate such an injunction.

When the injunction was issued in Birmingham, our failure to obey it bewildered our opponents. They did not know what to do. We did not hide our intentions. In fact, I announced our plan to the press, pointing out that we were not anarchists advocating lawlessness, but that it was obvious to us that the courts of Alabama had misused the judicial process in order to perpetuate injustice and segregation. Consequently, we could not, in good conscience, obey their findings.

I intended to be one of the first to set the example of civil disobedience. Ten days after the demonstrations began, between four and five hundred people had gone to jail; some had been released on bail, but about three hundred remained. Now that the job of unifying the Negro community had been accomplished, my time had come. We decided that Good Friday, because of its symbolic significance, would be the day that Ralph Abernathy and I would present our bodies as personal witnesses in this crusade.

Soon after we announced our intention to lead a demonstration on April 12 and submit to arrest, we received a message so distressing that it threatened to ruin the movement. Late Thursday night, the bondsman who had been furnishing bail for the demonstrators notified us that he would be unable to continue. The city had notified him that his financial assets were insufficient. Obviously, this was another move on the part of the city to hurt our cause.

It was a serious blow. We had used up all the money we had on hand for cash bonds. There were our people in jail, for whom we had a moral responsibility. Fifty more were to go in with Ralph and me. This would be the largest single group to be arrested to date. Without bail facilities, how could we guarantee their eventual release?

Good Friday morning, early, I sat in Room 30 of the Gaston Motel discussing this crisis with twenty-four key people. As we talked, a sense of doom began to pervade the room. I looked about me and saw that, for the first time, our most dedicated and devoted leaders were overwhelmed by a feeling of hopelessness. No one knew what to say, for no one knew what to do. Finally, someone spoke up and, as he spoke, I could see that he was giving voice to what was on everyone' mind.

"Martin," he said, 'this means you can't go to jail. We need money. We need a lot of money. We need it now You are the only one who has the contacts to get it. If you go to jail, we are lost. The battle of Birmingham is lost."

I sat there, conscious of twenty-four pairs of eyes. I thought about the people in jail. I thought about the Birmingham Negroes already lining the streets of the city, waiting to see me put into practice what I had so passionately preached. How could my failure now to submit to arrest be explained to the local community? What would be the verdict of the country about a man who had encouraged hundreds of people to make a stunning sacrifice and then excused himself?

Then my mind began to race in the opposite direction. Suppose I went to jail? What would happen to the three hundred? Where would the money come from to assure their release? What would happen to our campaign? Who would be willing to follow us into jail, not knowing when or whether he would ever walk out once more into the Birmingham sunshine?

I sat in the midst of the deepest quiet I have ever felt, with two dozen others in the room. There comes a time in the atmosphere of leadership when a man surrounded by loyal friends and allies realizes he has come face to face with himself. I was alone in that crowded room.

I walked to another room in the back of the suite, and stood in the center of the floor. I think I was standing also at the center of all that my life had brought me to be. I thought of the twenty-four people, waiting in the next room. I thought of the three hundred, waiting in prison. I thought of the Birmingham Negro community, waiting. Then my mind leaped beyond the Gaston Motel, past the city jail, past city lines and state lines, and I thought of twenty million black people who dreamed that someday they might be able to cross the Red Sea of injustice and find their way to the promised land of integration and freedom. There was no more room for doubt.

I pulled off my shirt and pants, got into work clothes and went back to the other room to tell them I had decided to go to jail.

"I don't know what will happen; I don't know where the money will come from. But I have to make a faith act."

I turned to Ralph Abernathy.

"I know you want to be in your pulpit on Easter Sunday, Ralph. But I am asking you to go with me."

As Ralph stood up without hesitation, we all linked hands, and twenty-five voices in Room 30 at the Gaston Motel in Birmingham, Alabama, chanted the battle hymn of our movement:

"We Shall Overcome."

We rode from the motel to the Zion Hill church, where the march would begin. Many hundreds of Negroes had turned out to see us, and great hope grew within me as I saw those faces smiling approval as we passed. It seemed that every Birmingham police officer had been sent into the area. Leaving the church, where we were joined by the rest of our group of fifty, we started down the forbidden streets that lead to the downtown sector. It was a beautiful march. We were allowed to walk farther than the police had ever permitted before. We walked for seven or eight blocks. All along the way Negroes lined the streets. We were singing, and they were joining in. Occasionally the singing from the sidewalks was interspersed with bursts of applause.

As we neared the downtown area, Bull Connor ordered his men to arrest us. Ralph and I were hauled off by two muscular policemen, clutching the backs of our shirts in handfuls. All the others were promptly arrested. In jail Ralph and I were separated from everyone else, and later from each other.

For more than twenty-four hours I was held incommunicado, in solitary confinement. No one was permitted to visit me, not even my lawyers. Those were the longest, most frustrating and bewildering hours I have lived. Having no contact of any kind, I was besieged with worry. How was the movement faring? Where would Fred and the other leaders get the money to have our demonstrators released? What was happening to morale in the Negro community?

I suffered no physical brutality at the hands of my jailers. Some of the prison personnel were surly and abusive, but that was to be expected in southern prisons. Solitary confinement, however, was brutal enough. In the mornings the sun would rise, sending shafts of light through the window high in the narrow cell which was my home. You will never know the meaning of utter darkness until you have lain in such a dungeon, knowing that sunlight is streaming overhead and still seeing only darkness below. You might have thought I was in the grip of a fantasy brought on by worry. I did worry. But there was more to the blackness than a phenomenon conjured up by a worried mind. Whatever the cause, the fact remained that I could not see the light.

When I had left my Atlanta home some days before, my wife, Coretta, had just given birth to our fourth child. As happy as we were about the new little girl, Coretta was disappointed that her condition would not allow her to accompany me. She had been my strength and inspiration during the terror of Montgomery. She had been active in Albany, Georgia, and was preparing to go to jail with the wives of other civil-rights leaders there, just before the campaign ended.

Now, not only was she confined to our home, but she was denied even the consolation of a telephone call from her husband. On the Monday following our jailing, she decided she must do something. Remembering the call that John Kennedy had made to her when I was jailed in Georgia during the 1960 election campaign, she placed a call to the president. Within a few minutes, his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, phoned back. She told him that she had learned I was in solitary confinement and was afraid for my safety. The attorney general promised to do everything he could to have my situation eased. A few hours later President Kennedy himself called Coretta from Palm Beach, and assured her that he would look into the matter immediately. Apparently the president and his brother placed calls to

officials in Birmingham; for immediately after Coretta heard from them, my jailers asked if I wanted to call her. After the president's intervention, conditions changed considerably.

Meanwhile, on Easter Sunday afternoon, two of our attorneys, Orlell Billingsley and Arthur Shores, had been allowed to visit me. They told me that Clarence B. Jones, my friend and lawyer, would be coming in from New York the following day. When they left, none of the questions tormenting me had been answered; but when Clarence Jones arrived the next day, before I could even tell him how happy I was to see him, he said a few words that lifted a thousand pounds from my heart:

"Harry Belafonte has been able to raise fifty thousand dollars for bail bonds. It is available immediately. And he says that whatever else you need, he will raise it."

I found it hard to say what I felt. Jones's message had brought me more than relief from the immediate concern about money; more than gratitude for the loyalty of friends far away, more than confirmation that the life of the movement could not be snuffed out. What silenced me was a profound sense of awe. I was aware of a feeling that had been present all along below the surface of consciousness, pressed down under the weight of concern for the movement: I had never been truly in solitary confinement; God's companionship does not stop at the door of a jail cell. I don't know whether the sun was shining at that moment. But I know that once again I could see the light.