

LUTHERVILLE, GA., }
January 20th, 1869. }

Mrs. MARTHA M. HASSELL—
Dear Sister:—When I concluded my last letter to you, I did so with much reluctance: the subject was delightful and glowed with so much brilliancy, beauty and glory, flowing from the sacred cross of Christ upon sinners; clothing poor, helpless and needy; and so plainly beautifying the meek with salvation, that I beheld the sinner—so low and degraded in himself—exalted and crowned with God's own glory in the person of Jesus Christ; and grace as a reigning king holding out the sceptre of love and peace; and my soul expanded with joy, as my pen moved with the ease and rapidity of a ready writer to delineate a sinner thus blessed, beautified, and admitted to the royal presence and audience of the great God, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, to plead by permission—by invitation, by right, and with success, the blessings of a *Father*—nay, almost to *demand* them in the name and right of Jesus Christ: and what was more, I felt *myself* to be embraced, and to ask, and expect those blessings with much assurance, while it seemed really strange to me that I had so often and so stubbornly doubted this sweet and blessed access to the Father through faith in Christ: when faith itself was based upon what I so readily found in myself—conviction for sin and belief of the truth and certain other evidences confirmed by the unerring word of God—things, then, so clear and imposing that I was prepared to say, “surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all my days, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” And I most sensibly felt that the predominating desire of my soul was to “say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you,” even from the allurements of the world, from the snares of the flesh and the temptations of Satan, so effectually through the power of faith, that I was both to leave the subject of a christian walking in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless; but consoled myself with the determination to take up where I left off, and show the certain triumphs of a living, acting faith in Christ, that could not only believe to

the saving of the soul, that Jesus is the Christ—the Son of God—but overcome the world: and not only finish a course, but also run a whole race with joy; but alas! the prospect has changed. I see the provisions of grace treasured in Christ as full and free as ever. I hear the testimony of God declaring it for sinners as plain as ever. I hear the kind invitation to knock, to ask, &c., but find not the door, I find not the access. I know that I am a sinner, but I have lost my shield—the only weapon that can guard and guide to the door, and the only ticket of sure and safe initiation into the smiling presence and protection of my God; without this, I cannot write, or do anything to edification; Oh faith that overcomes the world—receives the smile of justice and the crown of mercy as it, on easy wings, enters the holy place of heaven and sips the crystal fount of eternal life and love, in the name of Jesus Christ at God's right hand! I would give every earthly consideration for thee to-day. Your letter of November found me in this mood, and I do assure you some of its expressions was as water to the thirsty—as wine to the weak. I imagined that I felt like some lone sentinel on post, while the night is long, cold and bleak, and I am weary, hungry and faint, I faintly hear the din and strife of war around. I see a courier or a straggling soldier now and then, but there comes no detail of relief—no order for a change of place, my signal of distress but guides the foe who guards the fronting line; seldom have I heard a word of cheer and encouragement from a passing comrade, and I think, surely I have mistaken the word of command and do not fill the post assigned me, and thereby receive the continual fire of the foe and perhaps the censure of my friends; and thus afraid to stay and more afraid to go, I stand on doubtful post, and wish for light. But, my dear Sister, your letter has given me strength and comfort, for no matter how hard the life and lot of a soldier is, if he is victorious in arms, he regards no more the hardships undergone. And was I not victorious when my quiver “richly laden with the blessed testimony of gospel grace, and full of consolation to the weak and humble followers of Jesus” was spent not in vain? My work was to comfort and to strengthen. There can be no deadlier aim at our arch enemy than the testimony of our God concerning grace that brings sal-

vation and produces belief in Jesus Christ; the stronger we believe the weaker grows his arm. To be faithless, is for the enemy to be so far successful. To grow in strength and learn to use the shield on one arm while we fight with the other, ensures our lives, and proves us good and skillful soldiers. How we (naturally) detest a straggler—a deserter, and more than all a traitor. How we love the *true* soldier to his country, what power they wield over us—I still feel the invigorating influence of your epistle of love and encouragement, and I have thought surely I have not fought in vain, I have not been striving as one that beateth the air, for it is a victory in my feelings to comfort, or strengthen one, just *one* of God's weary soldiers.

But, beloved Sister, I feel not the power of faith, I then felt; my time at present is dark, fearful and doubtful. Of all difficulties, I think of at present, to doubt is the greatest. If I was *certain* I was a christian, and that I obeyed implicitly the will of God concerning me; I feel that there is no power on earth that could deter, hinder, or frighten me: tribulations, trials, distresses of every kind would be a source of rejoicing, if I *knew* I suffered for *Christ's sake*. Oh what a privilege!—what a blessed privilege this would be! I have often asked myself—did you ever do or suffer anything, purely for Christ's sake? I can't find an instances for certain. I have often taken into consideration, my whole life as a professed believer, and asked the question, “are you truly a child of God?” And the blessedness that I once spoke of, and evidences that once seemed strong as death, dwindle to the visionary appearance of an idle dream. For the last few weeks, a passage of scripture in Jude concerning the archangel contending and disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, has often passed forcibly through my mind, and has given me some comfort and relief, as I have tried to solve the question in regard to myself. Is not this contention and disputation within me, the same? Am I dead to the law and alive to Christ? Is that dead wherein I was held? If so I am no longer bound. And why not be satisfied to contend and dispute, knowing that if I am not dead to the law, and it to me, there would be no occasion for contention; why not be satisfied to contend for my life by the faith of Christ, instead of searching to *see* and to *know*

the very grave of the law? Oh that I could, implicitly trusting the word of God, and entirely delivered from myself—looking away from works, say in faith to this tempter, “*The Lord rebuke thee*,” then I might say “By this I know that thou favorest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.” But am I truly dead to the law, and alive to Christ? If not, why is it that I so forcibly feel the seventh chapter of the Romans, when Paul speaks in reference to the law, and to his own contentions. I can witness the sentiments fully in the latter part of that chapter; and if I was dead to Christ how could I feel his spiritual inspiration? How could I strive? How could I contend or dispute, and how could I be at all concerned? How could I say with David, “O Lord rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure, for thine arrows stick fast in me; there is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart; I am ready to halt and my sorrow is continually before me—all my desire is before thee—my soul thirsteth for God—the living God.” If Paul and David and others were dead to the law and alive to Christ, and still had to contend, may I not hope also, even in my contentions? Dear Sister, I feel strengthened and more comforted by the slight investigation of the lives of whom we know had passed from death unto life. I believe I have done the very thing I forbade you to do—taking the testimony of an enemy—surely false witnesses risen up against me. Teach me oh Lord thy ways, and lead me in *plain* paths, because of mine enemies.

I feel disposed to speak further of those contentions—of this continual warfare—Jesus is our great Leader—we know that He was in this continual warfare while in the flesh, and we profess to be followers of him. He has said that he who would be His disciple must deny himself, take up his cross and follow him, and that he that suffers with him shall also reign with him. Shall we forget or disregard the way he led? Paul said “be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ.” Can we read the history of Paul and fully imbibe the truth of this assertion—“*even as I am of Christ?*” Were all his wars without and fears within embraced? Were all his spiritual contentings? “Be ye followers of me even as I am of