

WILLIAMSTON, N. C., }
April 20th, 1869. }

MRS. P. ANNA PHILLIPS—*Dear Sister in Christ*:—Your precious epistle of January 20th, was rather late coming to hand, but when it came, I found it richly laden with the glorious testimony of divine grace and truth, delineating the many trials and afflictions of a soldier of the cross, all of which goes to prove that you are marching under the banner of King Jesus. You are a true sentinel, and I think, at your post, and I do not think you will mistake the word of command, and you need not be afraid, but seek to fill the post assigned; and although the night be cold and dark, and you may be faint and hungry by the way, the order for discharge will soon come—all din of war will cease—the blessed day of peace will come—the glorious conquering King and Chief will appear with all the victories of his illustrious conquest, and the everlasting doors will be opened to let the King of glory in, with all his precious jewels redeemed by blood. Then will that song be sung, "For thou wast slain, and redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue and people, and nation." The vision beheld by the beloved John will then be most fully realized, when the question was asked, "what are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" And the answer was, "these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes." Is this not enough to encourage the true soldier of Jesus? As you justly remarked, no matter how hard the life of the soldier is, if he is victorious in arms, he regards no more the hardships undergone.—We know and most fully believe, that every soldier of the cross will come off conqueror over the world, the flesh and the devil, yea, more than conqueror through him who hath loved them and washed them in his own blood and each will have a golden

harp, and every string will be in tune. "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be all the glory."

What are all of the trials and tribulations of this life when compared with that eternal weight of glory in reserve for every child of grace? Tribulation is a part of the inheritance which Christ has bequeathed to his followers. And the apostle Peter says, "beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." When we trace the Old and New Testament saints, we find that they were an afflicted people—they trod a thorny road, often through floods and flames. The great cloud of witnesses which have gone before, followed the blessed Redeemer of sinners through dangers of every shape and name. In all ages down to the present time, God's people have ever been poor and afflicted; their conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil have been mighty; and had it not been for the power of all conquering grace they would have been overcome by these *terrible foes*. But how blessed the reflection, that the christian's God is the Captain of their salvation, he is the leader of his people and he has conquered all of His and their enemies, and he will just as certainly bring them all safe home to glory: "because I live, ye shall live also," says the blessed Jesus, and what he says is faithful and true.

But oh, my sister, here comes the struggle; am I His? Am I dead to the law and alive to Christ? Have I been washed and cleansed by His blood; and do I know what it is to follow Him in the regeneration? Have I passed from death unto life, is the *greatest* question which *searches* the christian's heart. Above all things in the world he fears being deceived. A true believer does not wish to rest or trust in any thing but Christ, the eternal rock of ages; this is the palladium of all his hopes. But these poor afflicted souls often go halting and stumbling by the way, feeling that they would give worlds if they possessed them, to know they were a child of grace, an heir of glory. O, the *conflict*, it will nigh sink the soul in despair at times; but how often he is cheered by the way, for his blessed guide knows his conflict, and he sends the blessed comforter to whisper sweet words of consolation to his fainting

spirit. "Fear not, I am with thee." "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." First one and then another precious promise will be applied, so that at times his soul is made "like the chariots of Aminadab." "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have might he increaseth strength." *How rich and full* are the *promises* of our heavenly Father. The volume of *inspiration* is full of them; and how often are his dear children chided for their unbelief, and made to cry, I believe, help thou my unbelief. Doubting Castle is a distressing place to be in; I know something about it, for I have realized something of the experience of Job, that my bread has been as ashes to me and my tears were my meat day and night.

You, my dear Sister, have *express the very sentiments of my soul*, when you said, "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! Time and again have I asked myself the question: Did you ever do or suffer any thing purely for Christ's sake? I sometimes nearly give up all for lost, and my hope dwindles into a very *small thing*. But I can here testify once for all, that I have no hope at all only as it centres in the atoning Lamb, and if this fails me, all is lost and lost forever; but blessed truth, He come to seek and save that which was lost, and if we are dead and our lives are hid with Christ in God, we are safe beyond the reach of harm, for when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory. This promise is sweet and dear: "Hereby ye shall know ye have passed from death unto life, because ye love the brethren."—How many times I have been led to bless God for this one blessed testimony, for when every other evidence has seemed to fail me, I have clung to this with an undying grasp, and even here the tempter has come in, and I have questioned whether I truly possessed that love which unites every heaven born soul. So the *conflict* is, all the way through.

If the christian had his rest here, he would not know how to prize it in

heaven; but when his conflict with the world, *sin* and *Satan* is all over, the rest of the saints will be glorious, and they will walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and range the fields of immortal bliss, clothed in the habiliments of immortality, and will forever bathe their weary souls in the ocean of eternal love around the white and dazzling throne of God and the Lamb. It seems to me that those happy myriads will well nigh forget all their sufferings here below. Can it be that such a wondrous world as I can be bound to such immortal bliss? If I should reach this happy place, I will sing loudest of all the heavenly host for such wondrous love:

"For I of all the race that fell,
Of all the heavenly host,
Have greatest cause, with humble soul,
To love and praise Him most."

O, my Sister, the things of the kingdom are so great and glorious I am well nigh ready to lay down my pen, for I cannot begin to say any thing, and it seems folly for me to attempt it, even what my feeble mind seems to grasp, I cannot communicate. Wondrous things are to be beheld in the law of God, and the stupendous plan of salvation devised for fallen man, is so great. Well may the angels desire to look into the profound mystery, but eternity alone will unfold the boundless love of God. Ages will roll on and still roll on, and its depths will not be fathomed.

What influence more powerful can be exerted upon a believer to stimulate him to love and good works, than the love of Jesus? Our great Captain and leader has set us an example that we should follow His steps, and we should be followers of Him as dear children, and seek to obey implicitly His heavenly commands, and be ready to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Him through evil as well as good report. We are well assured, that the conflict will never end until mortal life shall cease, then the deliverance of every child of God will be triumphant and glorious. And until that blessed day arises, may we be found with all his dear people, with our "skins girt about with truth," and having on the breastplate of righteousness. How beautifully the apostle describes the christian's armor in Eph. sixth chapter. Many are the ways and snares set to entrap and lead astray, and the enemies of truth will most assuredly make an attack at the *shield* of the faith