



Stevenson, Ala.

Nov. 18th. 1863.

My Dear Children

I suppose this letter will arrive at its destination about Thanksgiving Day. Hoping it may add to your happiness on that occasion & sit up a few moments although it is time to go to bed and every one around is asleep. Perhaps, children, you do not understand the real meaning of Thanksgiving Day. In the 1st place, you have enough to eat. That is, God has made the grain and fruits to grow during the past season, and so you have food. If now, there had been a scarcity of rain, or if war had prevailed around your home the crops would have failed. Down here there are many sections in which the corn was cut-off for want of showers. In other sections it was all destroyed by the army. The people have scarcely nothing to eat. Papa has seen numbers of these people - men, women and children. They had none of those good things that contribute to your comfort and for which you should give God thanks.

In the 2^d place, you have a snug and quiet home. In this part of the country families are often driven from their houses. They have to leave nearly everything and

flee away to strange places - Often times women and their little ones are compelled to walk day and night - If the weather is cold or wet they suffer much and frequently become sick - You are not disturbed in this way and there is a reason - why you should thank God who rules over all things - In the 3^d place, you have books, papers, schools and various privileges which thousands of children in other parts of the country know nothing about - It is a bad thing to grow up in ignorance - It is a bad thing to live where the people do not go to meeting or have good books and maps and the means of acquiring knowledge - God has cast your lot where you have the benefit of almost every advantage to become learned and wise and useful - I hope you will so far understand this as to be thankful for your opportunities and not neglect them -

Now, my children, Thanksgiving Day is appointed that we may call to mind how much we owe to the Great and Good God - We are very apt to think too little of our common blessings - But if they are taken from us we begin to see their value - I hope you may never lose your schools, or your home, or the chance of enough to eat - But none of these things are sure to you unless it pleases God to grant them - He

has bestowed them upon you this year and the duty upon you is to make a proper return of thanks - There is another duty - If you wish God to remember you hereafter - to give you food and clothing - friends and all desirable blessings - you must live in a way to please Him - The wicked he punishes by cutting off their support - by withholding the rain - by bringing upon them trouble and calamity - He will do this or something worse to you if you break his laws - But if you obey Him - be obedient - be merciful - be industrious - be truthful - he will certainly provide for your wants and make your lives happy -

I should like very much, dear children, to sit down with you at the Thanksgiving Supper - Perhaps another year God will permit us to meet on this anniversary - Whatever may be our condition let us be very thankful - Papa sends his best wishes and his tender affection to each of you and also to Mother and Grandmother -

From your loving father,

Andrew Upson -

Ida Maria Upson

Francis Root Upson

William Balkins Upson

Mary Brooks Upson

Children