

Nov. 18, 1863  
To Ida, Frank, Willie & Mary  
Plantsville, Conn.  
Care of Mrs. A. Upson

(Envelope is postmarked Nashville, Ten. Nov. 21 with a 3-cent stamp. Letter is on one large sheet of stationery folded in half and is written on three sides in red ink.)

Stevenson, Ala.  
Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 I 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2d 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 (**Pg. 2**) 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 3d 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 (**Pg. 3**) 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 remember you hereafter – to give you

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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 Calkins Upson  
Mary Brooks Upson