

Feb 8, 1863
No. 48

Mrs. Andrew Upson
Plantsville, Conn.

(Envelope has a 3- cent stamp and postmark is unclear. Letter is on one sheet of lined stationery folded in half and is written on four sides in ink)

Sunday Morning
Feb. 8th, 1863 –

My Dear Wife,

We have another pleasant day & contrary to my expectations I am left in camp – Capt. Woodruff has gone on fatigue, building corduroy – Lt. Lewis has not yet turned out & generally things are quiet – Camp is never exactly still hardly so at dead of night – Somebody at this season is out chopping or knocking around - Just now the sound of axes is heard on the huts, a great many of which are not finished – Drums are beating in other camps; calling men to inspection, once in a while somebody out of the many voices in our own belches out a big oath - The whistle of engines on the RR south of us, & sometimes the scream of a boat on the Potomac, make up the medley that characterizes these holy hours – It is a difficult thing to believe such an institution as the Sabbath exists – We pull out our testaments & read their precious truths – Zion’s hymns still express most beautifully the hearts longings & (*Pg. 2*) emotions, but the surroundings of this service are uncongenial to the souls best experience – Apparently Heavens sure fortifications, where saints weekly rest from the toils of six previous days, are broken down, while the broad roads, hell ward lending, are opened & scarcely one watchful guard or warning voice is found to alarm the helpless thousands pressing out – Though war is more or less a violation of law, both moral & physical, that is not a reason for defying God at all points, but rather the most cogent argument for constant effort to hold Him & His Commands in devout remembrance – We believe this war is on our part just – at least I do, looking at public affairs from the standpoint on which you know me accustomed to view the times – But the conduct of the war by most of our generals is shamefully in violation of the plain declarations contained in Scripture & of course contrary to the dictates of human Wisdom – Those who break divine law with impunity soon run into ways of folly – I see exemplified all through the fact that moral delinquency in (*Pg. 3*) official action is marked by wordly short sightedness – Seldom do I see displayed either adequate common sense or real practical energy in the control of military affairs – But especially in the constant desecration of this day, without justifying exigency & against the wish of the nation appropriately uttered by the President, is human weakness & wickedness displayed – We want a real God fearing leader at the head of each Corps & Division & Brigade. A Major General truly regarding the injunctions from Sinai could easily carry rest to his men, & make the influences commonly adverse to religion as commonly favorable to the highest interests of all – A Brigadier might celebrate the services appropriate to worship of Deity in such a manner that every man under him would feel the restrain imposed by a character understood in

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that light – But when instead of rest we have reviews - & the hours, by Almighty command given to the solemn assembly & its most significant exercises, are impiously handed over to marches & fatigues – When the exalted of the land ride (**Pg. 4**) over all the sacred statutes we must expect subordinates will be brazen & the whole moral atmosphere poisoned – I wish the Christian sentiment of our land was more decided all through – Seems to me it is weak & hesitating – or else it is partial & one sided – But on this one point, if on any, there might be harmony & consolidated action – The nation, the army wants a Sunday – a day not to be desecrated by secular labor –

What a responsibility rests upon these leaders! Surely they are blind. God grant they may not lead us all into the ditch.

It is noon; the Capt. has returned from his labor - the Col. has warned the men that no one must be found working after twelve –

That is a strange notice – Perhaps our Chaplain will preach – Would it might be his farewell – I don't know but that is wrong – I wish him no ill, but only a more suitable man in his place – Can't realize that those New England Sundays still come round to you all – Blessed - ten thousand times blessed are the hills echoing to Sabbath bells – Will these wooded plains ever catch up the solemn call, wafted on from church spire to church spire, (**written up the side margin on this page**) until the whole land listen to the sacred chime & a reverent people come forth to bow devoutly (**written upside down on this page top margin**) before a heart searching God? I think yes is the ordained answer & who knows but our eyes may behold the scene complete –

Yours
A.U.