

Camp Stonewall Brig
May 2nd [1864]

Dear Sister:

I have just finished reading your letter [brought] by Mr. Middleton. He was detained some days on the road but got to Orange this morning and I expect to get my box tomorrow.

I am surprised at you placing any credence in the rumors of the movements of the army, as I have so often told you not to believe these idle rumors. Why, the Richmond actually had us in line of battle and heavy skirmishes going on several days ago whereas there was not a hostile gun fired yet.

I have not yet seen Mr. Middleton but he is in camp. Some of his boxes were brought down this evening the rest will be down tomorrow.

My last box was just given out so this one comes in very acceptable time. But I fear that things are becoming almost as scarce at home as in camp though I know that you would willingly share the last morsel with me still I do not wish you to send me boxes if it costs any inconveniences at all.

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We always get enough to sustain life at any rate and it would not be a relish to me if I thought you were depriving yourselves of anything for me.

A soldiers life surely is rough but it is by no means as hard as generally represented to be.

We have a great many friendships of which homefolk are deprived, for instance you cannot get around one oven in a sociable way and eat your meals neither are your ears charmed with the rattle of the fife and drum &c., &c. A soldier is after all not so much to be pitied as you would suppose. Elihu is still with us, I do not know when he will leave, hope he may be induced to stay as I think it would be of immense good to him.

I have read the Richmond papers of today and see that Gen. Burnside has abandoned his idea of advancing on Richmond by the south side and has joined Gen. Grant on the Rapidan. If this be true we will in all probability have a fight here either this or next week as Grant will endeavor to fall upon Lee before he has time to consolidate his troops. But I think we are prepared.

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Our army is certainly in fine condition and we have a leader in which all have confidence. But more than this our cause we believe to be a just one and our God is certainly a just God, then why should we doubt. No, I think you may confidently expect a glorious issue in the impending campaign, a campaign between right and wrong, we are backed by an army of good and true men, the other by a bunch of lawless outcasts and mercenaries.

True the struggle will be a bloody one but it is noble to die in so just a cause. I would like to survive the conflict, I would like to see our land free from tyrants grasp and established as one of the stars in the galaxy of nations, but if I am to fall God help me to say "Thy will be done."

I must say that to me life is sweet and death has some terrors, but the love of Christ is able to remove all this, the grace of God is sufficient to dispel all clouds and I believe that I will be supported in the hour of death by His almighty arm whether I fall upon the bloody field or am permitted to die in peace at home. There is something awful

in stepping off this world even with the hope and faith in the gospel.
God increase our belief.

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I have just finished completing our company prayer meeting, for which purpose I laid aside my sheet. Oh, that I could conduct it in such a manner as to impress upon some of our numbers to leave the ranks of sin and fly to God. Some must certainly fall this summer. Oh, that all were prepared then we would have no doubt to fear the issue, their souls would be safe and it matters little what would become of this earthly tabernacle, for it is only the case which contains the immortal soul, that soul which is destined to spend an eternity of bliss or one of woe. May God impress it upon their minds, if we can do nothing more we can at least pray for them.

My own condition I believe is good. I believe that I have come to a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus. I hate sin though I commit it daily.

But as it is bed time I will close.

A.T.B.