Richard Baxter Foster Letters to his Wife

[All indentions are meant to reflect those found in the original letter.]

This letter is from Richard's brother Daniel.

Camp of the 33rd Miss. Vol. near Aquin Creek Va May 11, 1863

Dear Baxter Your long & [_] welcome letter came to hand late Friday the day after our return to camp from our late forward march. At daylight on Monday, April 27th we started for Kelly's fort 30 miles [] with 8 days ration in our [] crossed the Rappahannock at 12 o'clock on Tuesday night. Camped the next night on banks of the Rapidan & on Thursday night in the woods near Chancellorsville 10 miles from Fredericksburg. Hooker was her and had with him 75000 men. Friday was [] in [] the enemy & intrenching our position. Our line of battle was in the form of a triangle some ten miles long resting on LLL.S. ford at the river where three pontoon bridges were thrown across for our supplies which reached us on pack mules. The front was on the plank road between Fredericksburg & Gordonsville. The whole line of ten miles was strongly intrenched. The fighting commenced on Saturday by an attempt of Lee to break through our line on the plank road [] a junction with Jackson who was in our rear with 40000 men. Every charge made by Lee was repulsed. At 3 o'clock the 2^d Brigade of the 2^d Div 11th Corps i.e. our Brigade was ordered to leave [] & all clothing not worn [Page 2]

for a distance reconnoisance. While we were away Jackson with his 40000 men mussed in heavey column was suddenly hauled upon our corps. It is Dutch & except our Brigade. Howard has taken Siegel's place but did not do Sigel's work for he allowed himself to be surprised & [] buck in a most disgraceful manner. A thing which Frank Siegel would never have done. Hooker with much bravery & skill & presence of mind restored his broken lines during the night by a night attack. Still this surprise was a fearful []. We were recalled & at 11 o'clock [] night lay down half a mile from our old place. That night we were shelled for over an hour. During the night Hooker charged upon Jackson's corps & drove them back half a mile. At daylight Sunday morning we were marched on the run to a position on the left which we were to hold with three lines behind the men in the rifle [_]. The battle opened at daylight [& raged] without lull for 8 hours. After that it continued but not so fiercely till night. We were not attacked nor called up from our position so was not [under] [fire] at all. The Rebel loss was enormous, not less than 20000 in all. Ours was less than half as many. [] attacks

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was made on our line Monday & Tuesday but were all repulsed. In the mean time Lee had
received heavy reinforcements. [_] had [_] in a pouring rain the river was rising [_], our supplies
were precious & Hooker thot best to recross the river & make the army safer. This was effective
& we are back in our old camp for a few days. Soon [_] [_] the whole army is enthusiastic &

believes in Hooker. McClellan never began to have such a hold on the army as Hooker does
today. When he says forward again we shall follow him again full of heart.
I have just received a leter from Gen. Saxton of [_] promising me a Captain's
commission in the colored I. C. vol. if I will come to [B_] S.C. I have applied for leave of absence
for twenty days to go there. If it is granted I should go & shall use my utmost endeavors to get
you there too with a commission. I believe in the [_ing] of the sheaves that they may help crush
the rebellion & [_] [_] & with it the respect of the world. I am ready to give myself wholly
to that work & hope I may be allowed to do so.
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In regard to your religious experience you have my fullest sympathy & I can only say hold on to
the religion of [_] & discard all authority over conscience & reason. God is our only Lord & King.
The church has no jurisdiction over [_]. Every man must work out for himself the problems of
life. I thank God most devoutly for the help I reveived in this work from Jesus Christ who came
not to condemn the [_] but that the [_] might be saved through Him. I [_] [_] like all God's
[_], Death can make no [_] [_] & I [_] that ultimately God will secure the happiness of all his
children. Dorie differs with me & we agree to differ. She may go her way I can never go in the
Episcopalian faith! [_]I can [_] on the [_] of no creed or church [_] & never shall. Give my
warmest love to your wife & children & believe me always
Your loving brother,
Daniel Foster.
I mail the Liberator & Commenwealth to you regularly every week. Also the Atlantic &
Continental. Keep up great [_] dear Baxter your future is before you & me (crossed out and
replaced with us) & we shall win the Crown. D.F