

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.
Jan. 10, '60.

My Dear Marvin:

I am now enjoying a time of leisure; my year was out with 1859. And as your illness gives you also comparative leisure, I write much sooner than I should otherwise have done. The past week was one of hard labor; the death of my 55. superintendent bro't upon ^{me} the preparation of two discourses, both during the latter part of the week; the chh was very full on the Sabbath. He was an educated young man; his attachment to me very strong; his character lovely; his family connexions important; there was every reason for exerting myself to please them, & to improve the occasion to all. The anxiety over, now I can breathe. — It is a time of great wrath here; the mass of the Society is indignant & menacing toward three or four men; the particulars wd be only a bore to you; but the consultations of cliques in private places; the flashing eyes, the fierce speeches, are truly terrible. I am thank-

ful for two things: One, that I am not much mixed up with it; the other, for the knowledge of human nature I have derived from it. The people know little of my thoughts: I sh'd not dare to speak it out loud, here; but I perceive the remote & true cause of these difficulties to be the sort of preaching they have had for some twenty years past. Says Prof. Atg'd. "Dying men do not talk of Christianity; they talk of Christ." Christianity has been preached here, till individual sin, & individual heart-searching, have long been lost sight of.

Being chosen delegate of Rochester Presbytery, this year, to Gen. Assembly, I hope in May to have a good jaunt to Pittsburg via Cleveland. But I am learning not to reckon on any thing in the future; the views of Prof. Upham & Mad. Guyon on the subject of "living by the moment," if I mistake not, I begin to understand, in something of their experimental sweetness. My disappointment in this field which I loved so well, & labored so hard to improve; the resurrection of old evils which I had no suspicion of when I came — this teaches me that God is absolute Lord of the future, & we must not thrust our meddling

fingers into it a single inch. —

Concerning Boardman's bk, I have several more things to say: 1. It needs polish very much. 2. I regard it as a temporary means to a temporary end. The true idea of the Chr. life is not very different from the idea of Bushnell in his Christian Nurture; there wd then be no need of a second conversion. But in the present state of the chh, surely it wd be a great thing to set multitudes a-searching for a second conversion condensed into a shorter time in later life, which sh'd have been spread over the whole first half. 3. A great deficiency is, it does not state the relation between the higher experience & affliction. Cecil says he never knew an eminent Christian who had not been greatly afflicted. I am planning a letter to Mr. Boardman on some of these things; his bk is a lump of gold ore, which needs a great deal of working over & cleansing.

As to Taylor, I have no objection to his arranging his more rational views in a system as perfect as possible; nor to its being taught as removing the causes of skepticism concerning God's govt, so far as it can go; it rather gives a glimpse of what is possibly or perhaps probably true, in that dim region. It is useful

in checking the skeptic: "Hold! not so fast; instead of the old Calvinism you scorn, the truth is rather thus & thus"; & when such views are wrought into the general mind of Christendom, skepticism can not be so common. But how feeble a help, after all, in our actual circumstances! E.g. a dear little daughter dies at the age of 9, 10, 12, or thereabouts; she is not a Christian; can we suppose her case will be judged by the application of all this ponderous system of motive, penalty, clear cognition, moral govt, &c. &c. especially if bred up in ignorance? How plain that there is large room here for abating this theological confidence! Try it a little younger, say 6, 7, 8; are you equally confident? And yet, she is capable of repenting & loving God; the fog is all the thicker. Rather than, let theology stand back, & be more modest. — So the logic concerning the everlasting penalty of the law, (Martin, p. 925, lines 11—15) can not be confident; the reviewer himself feels it. How much more firm the ground we feel ourselves standing on, when we contemplate the declarations of Christ on this subject! — If such a system as Taylor's could be studied as a kind of esoteric, or at least a reserved part of the theol. course, or somehow held in strong check, as giving probable glimpses, it might be well. Enthusiastic confidence in the student, I do think, is a positive mischief; it is a mischief in his preaching too. I once before the class at Auburn ventured to put to Dr. Hickok the question: "Do you at all times feel full & unwavering confidence in these logical deductions; is there not sometimes a deep misgiving?" He was unwilling to

answer!! It was a bold question; Campbell told me he was glad I put it. (Hickok is a Taylorite.)—

Far, far, very exceeding far more attractive is such a character as Prof. Huntington. His profound convictions, his fresh statements, the marked individuality of his whole character—all together is one of the most beautiful things that can be. Compared with the old fashioned metaphysical & logical confidence of New England, even his theological doubts, all along, have been beautiful. Such kind of doubting must generate a deep & holy belief in the end.

You say: "Why not classify all we do know of God?" You may, if you won't forget what Bacon says: "Method [i.e. prematurely adopted] carrying a show of total & perfect knowledge, has a tendency to generate acquiescence". [I.e. in the partial as complete]

As to writing for the press, I shall perhaps try it now I have leisure. I suspect, from appearances, tho' I dare not inquire, that my friends are laying a deep plan so to silence & confound my unreasonableness, as to do up the whole thing handsomely, & present it to me in a promising form, hoping to in-

duce me to stay. But my secret conviction is, that I had better leave, even then. I shall stay, Providence permitting, till spring. This will give me, I hope, three or four months of leisure for writing a lot of new sermons & something else. I desire very much to be a recluse for a time. Some hope I have, that I may go & see you a few days; but my fear is, if I have to lie still too long, I can not afford it. If things shape themselves right, I shall not fail to go. —

Mansel I have not; can't afford it in these days of darkness & doubt. — If you have never read Upham's Mad. Guyon, hope you will; tho' I have read it before, it seems to me a new bk. My desire to attain to something of this higher experience, is inexpressibly great.

Do not consider it an impropriety to delay writing for many weeks even. I write now, fearing I may not have time when I wish.

Very affectionately yours,

A. North.

Pittsford, Monroe Co.
June 9, 1860.

My Dear Marvin:

I have just got back from Pitts-
burgh; Gen. Assembly sat twelve days. I am glad I
went; it makes me understand better the working of
eccl. matters; also saw many friends. There was very
much talent; heard some good preaching. In the de-
bates there was a great deal of concise, earnest, appro-
priate, forcible speaking. Seely of Albany, Gerrit Smith
excepted, is the grandest speaker my ears ever heard.
On the whole, I feel proud of my chh N. School.

Pittsburgh is a heap of wonders; the scenery round
about is fine; saw rolling mills, nail factories, I-
talian monks, & grand chhs. Buffalo & Rochester
together are not so great, bigotted Scotchmen & oceans
of smut notwithstanding.

After Assembly, hurried down the river to see my
boys. Edwin, of 22, is in Marietta College, a good stu-
dent, but pale & sickly; supports himself by school
keeping, & so falls behind; actually crowded a clas-
sic which occupies a whole term, into a fortnight,
reading twelve hours a day without exercise. Af-

ter my talk with him, he will not do so again. Tommy, in his 17th year, is in a printing-house; is a pet in the editor's family; the vicinity of the College & ~~possee~~ will have its effect. — Pres. Andrews is a dignified & able man, & very popular; invited me to dine, & explained to me some of his principles in training boys. The citizens give much; the library is respectable; the buildings good. The Congr. minister I had a letter of introduc. to, from his brother near me; found him a tolerable man; Edw. tells me he is not popular with the students, on acct of his rather old-fashioned reading sort of dull delivery. He has published a bk on the Apocalypse; found his mind so far from what I regard as the true theory, that I tho't I had better be wise & prudent, & raise no objections. He asked me to stay & preach next Sabbath; could not spend time. Gave me an interesting acct of Gage, the Unitarian preacher ^{of Novietta}, who, like Atydon has renounced his errors. — Novietta is a neat little city, spread over a large space, with ample door-yards & shrubbery; pop. some 6,000. Settled very early by N. Eng. people, who are very anti-slavery. Gov.

Wise planted a couple of cannon on the opposite shore; the students planted, on the Ohio side, a couple of chieus. — Prof. Andrews, brother of the President, accompanied me from Assembly down the river; carried with him in triumph a huge aerolite of over 100 lbs. one of those lately fallen in that region with a tremendous report heard 60 or 70 miles; gave \$200 for it.

Stopped a day or two at Sewickley, 12 or 15 miles out of Pittsburgh, to see Travelli, who was with me some years at Singapore; he has a large boarding-school, with pleasant grounds, & bushels of big strawberries. The O. School minister of the place, Alison, is a decent man; but thro' all that region there is an indefinable something savouring of thirty or forty years back; you see it, & feel it, & smell it; yet you can't tell what it is. New England is the land.

Dr. Bramer of Philadelphia treated me well, & talked of the days when we were boys together in a school-house debating society; wishes to introduce me to a chh in Delaware, where slaves are few, & the abolition spirit well advanced. Another minister wd have me go to Michigan, where is a good chh. Feel just now uneasy; it is wrong, I know; Providence

may have in store for me a career of usefulness, or may
turn my course downward toward deep affliction, des-
titution, & poverty. There is something of a re-acti-
on here against my enemies; the better class don't like my suc-
cessor; many see with pain the general mistake made
in succumbing to a few wicked men; it is too late; a
few rich unprincipled men can always beat the ma-
jority, the opinion of the many to the contrary notwith-
standing. When I first entered the ministry, I c'd not
have believed that men even openly & confessedly
immoral & vile can be tolerated in a chh just for fear
the salary c'd not be paid without them. But the
whole trouble has done me great good.

Have been lately studying still further, Gauseism,
Council of Trent, pilgrimage of the middle ages, the Scho-
lastic Philosophy, & the Cartesian which overthrew it.
The interest is great. Have also begun Godwin's Com-
monwealth. But I must abate a little, of these lux-
uries, & write me some sermons against I am called,
if called I shall be; then I can visit more frequently.
There will be ^{to me} a fearful solemnity in entering a new
field with a painful & heaven-appointed discipline.

— I wish I could see you now in this charming
season, & with leisure, & wife up & doing. The hope is,
that she will live some years; her consumption is of
a very slow sort. Still she suffers much.

Wish I had room to tell you of many fine men
in the Assembly. — Love to Mr. Morrin & daughter.

Yours very affectionately
A. North.

Pittsford, Monroe Co.

My Dear Morvin: July 23, 1860.

I was intending to put off answering yours of the 13th, for a few weeks; but partly because it is a dark rainy day without, & I want to do some pleasant thing within, I attend to it to-day.

Yesterday I went to hear city preaching; lit on the 1st Bap. Ch; heard young Nott the pastor. He preached, or seemed to preach, without notes; gave a judicious mixture of theology & experience, to very good effect. Preaching theology is rather dangerous. There is a certain Baptist savor in his manner; on the whole, he is respectable. A young preacher has one great advantage over an older one, the people hear him not only for what he is, but for what they suppose he will be. "He is going to be a smart man", they say.

I see in the last No. of the Bibliotheca a review of Boardman. Though I dislike the Abbotts, I tried to examine the piece coolly. I think it a poor

production; after a second careful reading, I still think so. If I remember right, I remarked in a former letter to you, that the bk is very faulty in language; yet rhetoricians are apt to be triplers, & I am suspicious of their opinions. If the Higher Life does lack the smaller accuracies, still it is very attractive, not only in its matter, but in its manner too; such a writer may be forgiven much. What Abbott says of the heterodoxy is sheer theological tripling; it is too much like Old School folks. To understand Boardman as teaching, of set purpose & theory, that means are to be slighted, is grossly unfair; it shows that ^{old} bitterness of heresy hunting, which belongs rather to Pennsylvania back woods, than to N. England. I know there are faults in the work; I felt, while reading it, that there is a degree of what Abbott calls "flippancy", i.e. arriving at the grand result too smoothly & easily. The principal defect, which he does not notice at all, is, the want of a chapter on affliction: says Cecil: "Never was there a man of deep piety who has not been in extremities." The great attractiveness of the bk shows that it has considerable merit (of some sort;

it will not do to put it over to the acct of puffing
& advertising; for I find it quite as fascinating to
those who have never seen the puffs. I felt, too,
the want of care in defining the states he speaks
of; there is plainly confusion; surely he is no great
metaphysician. His merit is very like that of
Covey & Morrison in missions; their translations
are worthless; they did not know what is now an
a, b, c, lesson among missionaries, viz. that every
language has its own idiom; their designed re-
sults were failures; still their lives were well
spent, in presenting a great subject to the at-
tention of Christendom in an impressive manner.
So Boardman; he is unpolished & undisciplined;
still his mind has long been engaged with a great
subject; his crude efforts will stir up many.
No finical rhetorician, or railing theologian, can
drive his bk into obscurity. — By the way, the
polished & logical works of Prof. Upham were roughly
received; & any future ones will be, on the same
subject. Any man who does not foresee this, had
better study his mental philosophy over again.

As to visiting Boston, I fear I shall not be able
(to find the \$25.

It wd give me great pleasure; possibly, I may venture upon it; but the necessity of strict economy, & an invalid wife, make the prospect dark. To tell you the truth, my heart is at times very heavy, on acct of the extremely crowded state of our Presbyterian pulpit; such a thing as a vacant chh is rarely heard of, even of the undesirable class, & when heard of, "instantly filled by" ^a rush toward it, from all quarters. I have been recommended, by kind friends, to five or six pulpits, within the last six months; their quick movements have been defeated by quicker. A young minister settled near me, lately preaching in Massachusetts, says that in N. Eng. it is worse; they will do mean things, he says, & crawl on their bellies, reptile-like, to get into a vacant place. Poverty begins to stare me in the face. When the hundreds who are preparing for the ministry from the revival of '58, are ready, it is frightful to think where they will go to; go to the West, they will not. Why continue the Education Societies? & especially why drum up all the young men in the chhs to study? The suspect must be felt by & by. Give me another pulpit, & I will shut out of it at least one class of agents, & give the money to a better thing. — I should love dearly to preach the Gospel; but if any ^{other} opening appears by which I can keep soul & body together, I shall consider it shrewdly. — I feel that I am passing through the Valley of Humiliation; it is full of hobgoblins & evil spirits whispering over the shoulder; but it is God's path, & I try to walk it cheerfully.

My poor wife suffers much, & can not think of a journey; she is about the house a part of the day. Rawlinson I have not seen; I am in Neander just now. — A letter to Travelli's school near Pittsburgh, which I promised, must be written. Much love.

A. North.