

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.

Apr. 11, '59.

My Dear Morvin:

I have been designing to write for some weeks; but we have ^{been} busy a-moving & getting settled in our new parsonage in the village; began some time before the 1st of April, so as not to have it come all in heaps. My new study not being finished, & having no place to prepare a discourse except a noisy room or a cold chamber, I had to take an old one. It went so poorly, that I feel profoundly mortified; don't know where to hide myself, except in the pleasant place of friendship. — Have finished my Schimmelpenninck's Port Royal, 2 thick vols. 8vo. It is not a comprehensive & scientific digest of the whole of Jansenism, like Ranke's agreeable chapter on that subject; but a collection of separate papers, giving minute & pleasant information of the life & character of those devoted recluses. Chh history opens to me more & more as a profitable study, tending, if rightly used, toward spiritual mindedness. N. Eng. hist. is continually becoming to me more interesting; have tho't

of your discourse at least a hundred times since you were here; I am heartily obliged for it. Feel rather pleased at Talfrey's view of Roger Wans. as I have seen it in the paper; the bk itself have not yet bo't. Don't fail to tell me yr opinion of it, as soon as you have read it. — A few weeks ago read some articles of Dickinson's on the East, in the Examiner; at his request, hunted them up in Rochester, & gave him my opinion; have not room here to tell you about it. While looking for his articles, found others, especially one on "Sacrifice," which filled me with indignation; it is a piece of ignorance & presumption in a fine literary dress. It is truly disgusting to hear the eternal bray of those Unitarians about their "liberal culture"; this is their religion; surely life has a higher import. The wants of mankind can never be answered by a conceited literary coterie cooped up in Boston & vicinity. I hear there is a pamphlet by Coolidge, giving the workings of his mind while a Unitarian; if you ever get hold of it, don't fail to send it to me; my booksellers don't get track of it. — I look with inexpressible interest on New England; Western N. York is a region of outward activity,

but of old ideas. — My mind is much disturbed by the dreadful waste of money & time on the piano; our American girls are kept shallow & silly by it; it is morcellous that a great civilized nation sh'd con-
tinue to teach its daughters what they are sure to drop very early, while the same labor wd have secured them something which wd mix itself with the duties of life. Soon as I get time, mean to write something of a sort which will call out wrath if nothing else. Any thing to get it before the public. Dr. Schuff's severe remark concerning our women is certainly true of the mass of them. —

Can hardly afford to go down to N. York to universities; want the money for books; wd rather go & see you, if I go any where. — Presbytery of Rochester meets here in a few weeks; this will encroach on the early time of summer. My plan for summer is, to finish sermon early in the week, & visit what the agricultural habits of the people will permit, especially in the neighborhood of two or three large school-houses, in preparation for weekly meetings another winter; it will be laborious. The winter here has been soft mud, no snow at all; this

has broken up my plans for mission labor. —

— The funniest joke I have heard for a good while, is Rufus Choate's compliment to N. Adams, that "his preaching had never carried him once back to the world he had left."

Love to wife & daughters. Mrs. North's cough is bad; but she is about.

Yours very affectionately

A. North

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.
June 6, '59.

My Dear Marvin :

I had resolved, as I supposed, with a most John Foster-like sort of decision, that I wd, the first thing, ^{to-day} begin my next Sabbath's discourse, finish early, & then for the rest of the week, friend Campbell-like, visit & be happy. But finding yr letter in the post-office this morning, my decision melted away. This morning, don't feel well; on Saturday, my subject not shaping itself to suit me, sat up most of the night, which, with a large audience in the morning, the supper in the afternoon, & mon. con. at 5 o'clock, makes me nervous to-day. I must'nt do so again. —

Subject: Intercession of Christ, from the words: "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask & receive, that yr joy may be full."

The weather here is shuddering cold; I am actually sitting by a considerable fire; but the village shrubbery, & the fields round about, are as beautiful as can be.

Since my last letter to you, yr article arrived in the Bibliotheca; I have read it twice with close attention. It is, without the possibility of doubt, truly excellent. But it will have this obstacle to contend with: The American mind is averse to history. It is only a few that love it; the mass even of those whom we call educated men, are unwilling to turn back & read that old dead letter. A part of the readers of the Sacra will prize it; & it will mingle itself, long hence, with the thoughts of the few who will study our religious history with enthusiasm.

As to style, I have long been thinking what I should say; the more I think of it, the more unwilling I feel, to say any thing. My reasons are: 1. It is already a good & agreeable style; to attempt any fundamental change wd hardly pay. 2. I find it difficult to express what I mean; the points in question are exceedingly subtil & abstruse; I might indeed present an analysis of a few of yr more characteristic sort of sentences; but the principles thus brought out are so variously appli-

Since my last letter to you, yr article arrived in the Bibliotheca; I have read it twice with close attention. It is, without the possibility of doubt, truly excellent. But it will have this obstacle to contend with: The American mind is averse to history. It is only a few that love it; the mass even of those whom we call educated men, are unwilling to turn back & read that old dead letter. A part of the readers of the Saera will prize it; & it will mingle itself, long hence, with the thoughts of the few who will study our religious history with enthusiasm.

As to style, I have long been thinking what I should say; the more I think of it, the more unwilling I feel, to say any thing. My reasons are: 1. It is already a good & agreeable style; to attempt any fundamental change wd hardly pay. 2. I find it difficult to express what I mean; the points in question are exceedingly subtil & abstruse; I might indeed present an analysis of a few of yr more characteristic sort of sentences; but the principles thus brought out are so variously appli-

cable over a large space, & ramify so minutely & tenuously, that it after all resolves itself, almost, into a matter of mere personal taste, & hence might not command assent. The process of stating such things both accurately & comprehensively is vexatious. This leads me to: 3. "The style is the man", i.e. so interwoven with all yr habits of tho't for many years, that even if you sh'd assent, a change wd be hard; the most that c'd be expected wd be a general ^{slight} coloring from the newly adopted principles, perhaps hardly worth while.

It may perhaps be questioned, withal, whether style is now so very important as it used to be; such is the vast increase of general knowledge, & so tolerable the accuracy of most public men, that manner has in part disappeared as a great power. Much that is called style by the undiscerning, is really matter. Take the thousands of common place sermons in our country pulpits forty years ago; they are in good style; let a good writer of the present time re-write one of them, in order to improve the style, what does he do? He introduces a great deal of new knowledge. The style indeed is more lively; but the main addition is new matter, at least implied & suggested.

The acct of the Campbellites I read, & liked it; (the \$6, though, rather starts up a less literary sort of feeling in me; I may take it into my head to write;) the appearance of all yr articles is rather that of a cautious, considerate man, whether you have studied the subject as in the Sacra, or write off hand, as in Ohio.

Masson's Milton I have not bought; but in all my Reviews & papers I find nothing but hearty praise. It & Polzey I mean to have; but my expenses are too great just now.

My enemies last fall were silenced for the moment, but ^{they} are not dead; it is astonishing what malice will do; our people generally do not talk of it; I do not. The real trouble is, a predecessor was here 16 years, who was a perfect non-committal on all subjects; he sustained himself by the force of pleasant chat in private; the Democrats were hand-&-glove with him; he rarely disturbed them with the serious aspects of the Gospel; my immediate predecessor six years was also a man who preached a good deal about "Christianity," & voted the Democrat ticket. You are not to suppose my preaching has been rash, or personal, or impudent; it is cautiously expressed, & ~~pleasing to~~ ^{approved by} devout people. But so different is it from what they are accustomed to hear, that this class of wicked men is much displeased; nothing but a revival will set us right. Well bred, honorable men of the world find no fault. I visit & work diligently this summer; next winter will come, probably, another contest. Our chh, too, is terribly corrupt; discipline has been dead for 20 years. Yet I may be mistaken; no contest may come on. I feel happy, because blameless; & God may pour out his Spirit. — It is hard, very hard, to get money here, even for the rich. If I can, I will come & see you. Yours with much love,
They have built me a beautiful study. A. North.

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.
Aug. 25, '59.

My Dear Morvin:

My time has been so much taken up of late, that it is not easy to write a note. Went last week to Onanda Co. to see my relatives; had to hurry back the same week, having nobody to occupy my pulpit. When I made my agreement last Dec. with my Trustees, they were unwilling to allow me, like other ministers, three or four weeks for an airing, because they wished to take away from the enemy every possible reason for fault-finding. I yielded, but will never do it again. It is hard to fulfill so barbarous an agreement. The people here are fifteen or twenty years behind the world, in their treatment of a minister. This cause, among others, I fear will keep me from coming to see you this year.

Was present, while in Boonville, at the laying of the corner-stone of a new Episc. Chh. In the address, the Puseyite declared that his Chh has never varied in doctrine. He concealed, or was ignorant of, the fact, that for a long time, in the Chh of Eng. high Chh-ism was not

known; Bp Hall & other dignitaries went as delegates to the Presb. Synod of Dort. He also declared that the Episc. Chh is blessed with unity at the present time. If so, it is hard to tell the object of Whately's "Kgd of Christ," a learned & vigorous rebuke of Episc. exclusiveness in England; so of McIlvaine's writings in this country. — My cousins in Boonville have gone in, strong, for the Episc. Chh; their minds are embittered by reason of discreditable irregularities & corruptions arising from former protracted meetings. My own sister wd have gone over too; but I "took her unto me, & expounded unto her the way of God more perfectly," showing her the drivelling nature of the American high chh, & its small history; also the importance of distinguishing between high & low. How sure the common mind is, to be influenced by the nearest object in space or time, & to think the whole universe like it! It never occurred to them, that the Presb. Chh might be different elsewhere.

The article on Sir Wm Hamilton you speak of, I have; have no room to remark on it here. — As to Dr. Taylor, I should probably agree with you, i.e. as to his greatness & soundness, but not as to the use to be made of him in our ministry. A remark

of Isaac Taylor (Sp. Desp. 260) is not entirely out of place here: "Our Christianity of to-day is laboring under the inert residues, or lees, of three grand corruptions: 1. Of the Martyr Chh. 2. Of the metaphysic & dialectic corruptions of the schoolmen. 3. Of the metaphysic & logical corrup. of the system-making theologians of the 17th & 18th centuries." — When Dr. Taylor's character was formed, the American Chh had not begun to feel the effect of the labors of Stuart & other Biblical scholars; all relig. science was conceived of under the form of systematic theology — a remote but real result of Taylor's 2 & 3. His driving intellect had no balance, or check, or versatility; it was all theology; & that theology under a N. Eng. bias. Hence his great confidence in such systematizing; & hence the propriety of Dr. Woods' rebuke, ~~in~~ in his Letters to him, (Woods' Works Vol. 4. 343) A remark of Bibl. Sacra, Vol. I, p. 749, is in point: "Our Amer. theolgy. is disposed to know too much". The Taylor ^{in details} certainly is rather repulsive to me; there seems hardly room for faith. The sort of preaching which talks of "moral agency", "moral responsibility", "moral govt.", "moral inability", "moral influence", &c. is, I think very unprofitable, & very disagreeable. How much more excellent & impressive such as N. Adams'! drawn from a close contemplation of the four Gospels. The metaphysical preach-

ers seem to be of one type, monotonous, & cold, & confined; the Scriptural beautifully varied: N. Adams, Prof. Atgdon, Tholuck, & numerous others, differing widely from each other; the Scriptures are so rich, that any one who studies them deeply, will have a marked individuality. I care not how much imbued with syst. theol. a man may be, if he will keep it out of sight, i.e. in its scientific terms & propositions. But I fear the tendency of Dr. T.'s training was to keep up a perpetual obtusion of it into popular instruction. Says Tholuck: "The highest literary effort demanded of a theologian is, to form a clear conception of the Redeemer's life on earth." Wd not Dr. T. have said: The highest effort is, to conceive clearly of moral govt. Those Taylor considerations can not, it seems to me, reach the heart; whenever they have seemed to do so, it has been from surrounding circumstances. In the revivals of '25 & '31, the impression came from Scripture authority driving out a metaphysical dogma; Finney's metaphysical reasonings were only so much abatement of the effect. But on a subject of so extensive bearings, I can not give you my ideas clearly in so small a space.

I am unspeakably delighted with the discourse of Coolidge, giving his experience; what grand composition. — I find in the Sept. Eclectic a review of Mansell, finding fault. — A disciple of mine took a couple of Nos. of the N. Englander to Clifton Springs; the gentry there were delighted; I have no doubt, with painstaking, the circulation might be much increased.

It is finally settled that I leave Pittsford at the end of this year, four months more. The cause is mainly Democrat hatred; the Chh is under pro-slavery influence; they must succumb, or think they must, to a few wicked men. The details you wd not care to hear; it is sufficient for you to know that it is not my fault. I can not live in a noise; I want quiet, where I can study & visit, without interruption. And then must come can-didating, that miserable, degrading process. But I am comforted; never felt happier. — This also will probably keep me from coming to see you, at least this year.

Yours very affectionately,

A. North

Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.
Sep. 28, 1859.

My Dear Marvin:

I have just got back from Synod of Genesee, which has been sitting at Buffalo, & to which this chh belongs. It is a very respectable body; 130 ministers belong to it. We met in the new Westminster Chh, a grand building; the dedication sermon, by Dr. Wisner of Lockport, was good; but the other three sermons I heard were of a very small sort. They were attempts to show the philosophy of Presbyterianism; cold, destitute ofunction, & contrary to historical facts, instead of something refreshing, drawn from the riches of the everlasting Gospel.

Visited, for the first time, Niagara Falls; the minister of Lewiston, in return for my preaching for him, was my guide. Was amazed at the Suspension Bridge; the Falls too, & especially the banks below, are grand; but compared with the stupendous scenery of the Ghauts Mts. in Southern India, hardly worthy of notice; tho' I did not like to say

so, to the good folks of the vicinity. All around Lewiston are places of historical interest; saw the old road made by the French as a part of the grand chain from the St. Lawrence to the ^{mouth of the} Mississippi, by which they were going to crowd the English heretics into the Atlantic.

Other ministers, I find, as well as myself, are troubled with Democrats in their congregations trying to drive them away because they pray for the slave. It is so at Lewiston, & at Suspension Bridge; only they are not strong enough; if they had the control, as they have here, they wd do it right quick. The minister at the Bridge lately had a frank talk with the chief Democrat of the place, & succeeded in reducing him to some reason. I should like to see some of those wicked men put for a while in the atmosphere of Massachusetts, & see how they wd act under the hail-stones of that general indignation. The time is coming when the chhs of Western N. York will have to become out-~~it~~-out abolition chhs, & take a stand against this iniquity.

When I have time, it wd please me to give you some of my ideas of Dr. Taylor; meanwhile please look at Bib. Sac. 1855, page 418, top half of the page. Finney may be regarded as the extreme of that N. Eng. tendency, fancying himself to be original, while unconsciously the slave of a local idea. I know of no bk more tedious than his theology; it makes distinctions difficult to apprehend, & useless in practice. Its real use will be in warning future students to study two things, viz. Dogmatic history, & the Bible, to protect them from such a distorted development. I do think we have given an Old School people some reason to find fault; tho' I don't like to receive a rebuke coming from a theology so distorted in another way.

We shall try to go to County Fair to-morrow; our communion is next Sab. So I have little time this week; must hurry & block out a sermon. Do not think it necessary to answer soon, or answer at all; only write when convenient; & in all respects take for granted, & do, as you wd to a person whose love is deep & firm.

A. North.

A. N. North

My Dear Marvin:
Pittsford, Monroe Co. N.Y.
Dec. 20, '54.

My Dear Marvin:

I have been reading, in the last N. Englander, Prof. Martin's article on Dr. Taylor. It is an article of great interest; yet, to use a phrase I have heard from Englishmen, "my mind is not to it." I feel my soul heave within me to tell you what I mean; but to try, in a small bit of a note, I fear will only make you misunderstand.

My reasons for not feeling the same confidence toward Taylor that you seem to do, are: 1. I cannot rid myself of the historical objection: The metaphysical periods of Christianity have been the periods of its inferior & more indirect influence upon the human mind. It was so in the primitive age; the Reformation, again, was a new love of the Bible & a rejection of the scholastic reasonings. You will say those reasonings were popish. But the same is true in Protestantism; in the 17th & 18th centuries, in my country, wherever there has been an eager theologizing spirit, true religion has declined; revivals have set it

aside. If I had room, I think I'd illustrate largely & clearly. Puritanism was not strengthened, but weakened, by its high speculations. No one will venture to assert, that with its Saxon blood, stimulated by oppression & the desire to establish a Christian commonwealth, it wd not have been equally great & energetic with a different theology.

2. Taylor's circumstances were unfavorable to a healthy & symmetrical action of his mind. The true study of the Bible had not begun in this country, when the outline of his system was formed. We see this in the ridiculous quotations from Scripture, of Edwards & the later N. Eng. fathers (E.g. Ps. 110:3) Even Hickok quotes it for a metaphys. purpose; I was helped by his system; but I regretted he had not first been taught in the Bible. Calvinistic speculation was a comet shot across the track of the chh; Taylor was in its tail (as the earth is sometimes said to be) without knowing it. Park, in his sermon on Stuart, expresses my mind: "He ^[Stuart] found theology under the dominion of an iron-handed metaphysics. For ages had the old scholastic philosophy pressed down the free meaning of inspiration. His first & last aim was, to disenthral the word of life from its slavery to an artificial logic."

& so on, page 37, very instructive. It is pleasant to find a passage of this kind, after I had formed my opinion independently. I do not affirm that Taylor's system is not nearer the truth than the older ones; but all such trying to reduce the unknowable to a system must be unsatisfactory; Prof. Martin feels it here & there. I do think Hodge is partly right, N. Eng. p. 912, yet I abhor the bigotry of his party, & a part of his theology; he ^{too} is in the tail of the comet, in the Scotch part of it.

3. Superior piety is jealous of metaphysical theology. See Payson, p. 69. Edwards, it appears to me, was an exception, from peculiar circumstances. I have always noticed, in theol. sem. ^{that} all students eager in that department, were of inferior piety, & less blessed, afterward, in their ministry; and when blessed, had learned to slight their theology. — And in such a revival as that of last year, how do such speculations go to the moles & the bats! —

I do not say no theology sh'd be taught to students; but the true system I believe is yet to come; surely it can not be formed till a new enthusiasm has arisen for the Bible; there must be a character about such as wd be made by a fusion of Archbp. Lightfoot with Hengstenberg. — It

is only some 30 or 40 years since the Stuart ideas have been grafted into N. England; surely too short a time for displacing the accumulated impression of centuries.

I am growing more & more interested in this idea, that the higher forms of spiritual mindedness, or "the higher experience", of different ages, sh'd be carefully separated from their local speculations. Baxter thought well of his ponderous scholastic volumes; ^{only} his Saint's Rest lives. Olewin will stand high in history for its experience, when its perplexed theology shall be laughed at. ^{The Scotch} Halyburton & McCheyne's faith I admire; their High Calvinism is worthless; even the lovely McCheyne talks nonsense when he leaves his heavenly experience, & meddles with "sinning in Adam". The various phases of perfectionism have been only ~~the~~ absurd local prejudices operating mischievously on the passion for a higher experience. — Such thoughts as these were haunting me, when I fell in with Boardman's Higher Christian Life; do get it. It needs polish; but it contains a very large cargo of crude gold; you will confess that your 90 cts. or your dollar, is well laid out. Two or three sh'd be kept circulating in a chh, till all have read it. It is near you, a Boston bk.

I do not certainly know, till the end of my year, Dec. 31, what I shall do; our Society is in a bad state. It is not discreditab^{le} to me. Rather think I shall stop preaching here, tho' not move till spring; have no place in view. Can not live among hostile parties. The main trouble arose before I came; the chh is so weak & corrupt, that the discipline of an offending