

Milton, July 24. 48.

My dear Dav.

The world and all has kept me of late from writing; the lack of any ship, the press of duties, some desperate trouble and what not have made me half forget you. A ship sails however, at long last, in a day or two, and in the midst of my preparations for a journey, on Monday morning, I sit down to do in an hour what I ought to have five at least to do well. For I would gladly send you a dozen readable sheets, ~~about~~ ^{tell} you about everything "past, present and to come" as the fortune tellers on the Champs Elysees say on the sign boards over their tents, - and moralize edify upon a few lines about you in a certain crowded two days ago, from one Mrs. White, of Trenton for the money.

This said letter shrewdly & sceptically argues out your intended marriage, and quotes some speculations of yours on respecting mine. You may, for the latter, cease to speculate; as I have done, this while back; I have had enough for once; and if marriages were an anodyne might use it to get me a little sleep & forgetfulness, but am in no mood to tell any woman the insufferable falsehood, that I offer her a heart worth accepting. - As to yours, I am wholly in the dark. I have not rec^d. a line from you for six months, - since the end of Jan^y. That is. You "are either asleep or on a journey, or" - what else was it that hindered Baal from accommodating his friends? And it is in vain to cry aloud & cut myself with knives, for to say nothing of the opposite propriety of first cutting you, & the obvious danger of superinducing an attack of Bronchitis by the operation, & an application (with cast) to Dr Green, my voice artificially prepared in black & white would not be half away towards the land of the Achaeanians before your letters would begin to come like berries in July, with every ship. Amen. So let it be, - soon. So write, if not a few lines, by each ship. -

First and foremost, (for I know you are dying with impatience to hear any story) - my affairs here are not formally settled. I wonder if they ever will be. I wish almost that they wholly were settled, for I would then ship immediately for No. and let you come home. Much as I hate the sea, however pacific, and such reframing co-patriots as your Chileans must be, I desire ^{you} much to get you a furlough, that I would appreciate myself willing for a year to effect it. But Dr Baird could not now send me; since the presbytery & association have both sent me to Coventry, he would not dare to employ me. The fact is I am in a real fix; a bad fix, some call it; "going to destruction" ^{is} by the Whose other prefer; many desire to "settle with" me, and think they are doing it. Perhaps they are; "settling" me in one sense, while Doug Milton's friends are settling me in another. The dangerous & obstructed illness of our good old Deacon has prevented the meeting which is to enjoy me as a stated supply for a year. He is now recovering & says that three days shall not pass, from the time he can get about before, the affair is settled. So as all persons it may seem to be intent upon settlement, I trust quiet will soon reign. Meantime I am first accused of infidelity, & then of ^{hetero} orthodoxy in the newspapers, & have sworn to behold to know that I am not Goleridgean.

But it would be the death of my reputation in all respects to leave Milton now. I would never recover from it. I must go ahead and sustain myself whether or no. My personal piety, steadfast good nature and taking an Christian interest in good objects I can not of relieve my position from personal embarrassment, but do something for the cause of liberty and truth. I am glad to find my name treated with respect & largely often ^{of} with true affection.

From some expressions in Mrs. White's letter, as quoting yours I feared you felt aggrieved that I hesitated to ~~some~~ ^{go out}

to relieve you. But you have never distinctly stated your plans to me, or indeed whether you had formed them; whether you intended to commit your pulpit there to other hands altogether, or only meant to remain here a month or a year & then return; & whether you would come about here in that case & do nothing, or take for the time a pulpit. I shall write to Baird to know from him more than you tell me yourself.

One thing stands great in my way, in the ministry, & would be especially embarrassing, in a missionary pulpit; I refer to my style of thought & selection of subjects. In fact I said, I fear that I do not now believe the gospel with that simplicity and childlike naivete of faith which is so beautiful, whether it be desirable or not. In endeavouring to evolve great principles, I lose interest in facts & single duties; I preach to enlighten & I dread that coldness which too often accompanies mere light. Some possess transmitted only light; others both heat & light. I may be too calculating & reflective now to reform a village of a single vice, or lift a soul to a higher eternal atmosphere; much less could I preach to the heathen. And yet, I am doubtless wrong here; truth is the grand sanctifying element, among all kinds of people. This however I know certainly, that my youthful disinterested zeal is gone forever, & a desire to become comfortable & respectable has an hourly influence upon me which I cannot resist. In my most disinterested affation, I found such a core of selfishness as disgusted me. I shall now of course be respectable in my own eyes, whatever manner I may reap from abroad.

I spoke of taking a journey. I wrote you last from Phil^a since which time I have been here, preaching almost without help, & therefore writing but one sermon a week & extemporising the other. I applied to a Boston Ass^o for license, but they refused, on the ground that I was loose in my views of scripture; & the ground of refusal was published in a monthly & afterwards in the Reverend & Puritan; I answered it in few words, asserting my practical reception of the Bible, as a rule of faith & practise. I have too much to do, to get into controversy. They praise my Christian spirit! They may ^{be} thankful for my laziness. It needs but a spark to make a tremendous explosion in New England. But I am no born Guy Fawkes, & have no wish for it. Bushnell preached a grand sermon to the Cambridge Theo. school graduates last month, on Abolition, 1,50 min. long amazingly eloquent, thoroughly transcendental or German, unintelligible to half the audience & unsatisfactory to all the rest. The best abso. & unit. minds were present. I consider him transcendental & heterodox & false, but more Christianly true. I dined with him & a dozen Unitarian ministers shortly afterwards, at my friend Morrison's. When the sermon is published, (with two or three others) you shall it. He advised me to a steady, quiet course of independent thought & action, here.

Last week I went to Salem & Beverly & walked down the coast to Cape Ann, & returned recruited. Tomorrow I start for Bellows Falls, Northampton, Pittsfield, Amherst & Lunenburg & may return, end of next week. Most of my personal friends happen to be in Europe, so that I feel lonely.

I shall show this now, & trust to another's getting to Boston before the Albion sails. Ever yours, P.