

VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."

BY ORSON S. MURRAY.

BRANDON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1838.

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TERMS.

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Vermont Telegraph.

BRANDON, SATURDAY, FEB. 17, 1838.

For the Vermont Telegraph.

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Answer to brother Angier's second letter, published December 27, 1837.

Dear Brother:—It is always painful to correct the faults of others, especially when they appear to be done through design, or wilfulness. In your first argument, you present my rule. "In the prophecy of Daniel," says he, "invariably to be reckoned years." You lay great stress on the word "invariably," pointing your finger of scorn, or derision, in every place where you can bring the word into use. For the purpose of ridicule, and to deceive your hearers or readers, you bring up the case of Daniel and his three friends feeding on pulse three days, &c. Now, my brother, did you not know that this was a historical fact, not a "prophecy." If you did, then it was a wilful misrepresentation to deceive your readers, for you well knew, (or if you did not, your writer, Mr. Brown, did,) that I had met and confuted that argument in almost every place, and there could be no expectation in your own mind to deceive me. Or did you suppose, prophecy meant a book, and therefore you thought I meant in the book of Daniel days meant years? In this too you are mistaken. And now, my dear brother, let me advise you, when you undertake the dirty task of reviewing others' works, you first cast the beam out of your own eye, and learn to distinguish between history and prophecy.

Your next position is as far from the

thing, as, Nahum, i, 7: "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble." What is a period or time of trouble? Let us apply this rule to Daniel's 2300 days, and it would not be a proper answer to the question, nor yet natural: (2300 periods, or instances.) We should rather suppose four periods, because it were the existence of four kingdoms. Again, we find day used in the second place to denote a year. As in Numbers and Ezekiel. We will now apply Daniel's number, 2300 years. You see my brother, there is nothing unnatural, or contrary to good sound reason, in supposing all these things might happen in this period of time, which Daniel has told us would come to pass. One more way day is used in a figurative sense. That is, thirdly, a day with the Lord is as a thousand years with us. Now let us apply this to Daniel's 2300 days, and you will see it will be unnatural, or contradict some other scripture; 2,300,000 years. You see, for four kingdoms to exist so long would be very unnatural, and more than all that, it would contradict other scriptures. See Heb. i, 1-2. It would not be called last days compared with times past, if only 4000 had passed, and nearly 2,300,000 years to come. It would only be beginning of days.

This, my dear brother, is my manner of understanding and applying figures, and if I am right, I do pray, that God will open your eyes to see the light. I might try other figures by my rule, and bring you many more samples; but a word to the wise is sufficient; and if you are not wise, you will not understand, although I might multiply words without number. Prejudice, and prepossessed opinions, will shut our eyes against the true light; but I hope better things of you, my brother. As it respects your arguments, concerning Jacob serving for Rachel, I must confess yours looks as "ludicrous" to me as mine does to you. Jacob had nothing to do in making the feast. Laban made the feast; Gen. xxix, 22. In the 21st verse, Jacob says: "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled." In this place, the word, "fulfilled," means, his services of seven years were completed. Then in the 27th verse, Laban says: "Fulfil her work, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

world, and in all ages. Again, it is used in prophecy to mean a year of days, which when so used, partakes of the same nature, and is governed by the same rules as days. This is the case with "time, times, and a half," as used by Daniel and John. And explained by John, Rev. xii, 6 and 14: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days." And in the 14th verse the same events are thus described: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." It is plain that the 1260 days are the same as time, times and half a time, by the reading of these two verses. And the 42 months, spoken of in Rev. xi, 2; and xiii, 5, are evidently the same 1260 days,—for 30 times 42 is 1260—and of course are definite, and are governed by the same rules of interpretation as days. You can reject this evidence if you please; but in so doing you will make the word of God, (or some part at least) of no effect. Infidels and unbelievers are already claiming you, while the dear children of God are darkened, "by words without knowledge."

Your next argument which I shall notice is the one concerning the "ten days." Rev. ii, 10. It is true, that in my explanation of the Smyrna church, I supposed that the "ten days" had an allusion to "ten periods" of persecution, according to my first rule of interpreting days, when used figuratively. And that these were used as figures, is to me evident,—for the things they were to suffer, if only ten literal days, would hardly be called a trial. Yet, sir, I confess and acknowledge, there were doubts in my mind, whether the interpretation of these days did not more properly belong to the second rule of interpretation, "a day far a year." If so, then they were fulfilled in the last part of the Smyrna church, under the emperor Dioclesian, between the year 302 and 312, when Constantine put a stop to their persecutions. (See Marsh's Ecclesiastical History, page 176 to 178.) At any rate, I have broken no rule, either way.

The next blunder of yours, I shall notice,

than four years. I have shown no such thing, and this is not a prophecy, but a matter of history.

7. You say, I "make the word day in prophecy, to mean only 24 hours," and then quote the case of Christ informing his disciples, that the day and hour of his coming is known only to God, as proof that a day in prophecy means 24 hours. To make your proof, you ought to show that telling a matter of fact, which already exists is prophecy.

And let me say, once for all, that a day, in the word of God, when it can be so understood, means 24 hours, or between sunrise and setting. But that it is used figuratively, is evident.

1. Indefinitely, as "a day of trouble," a day of grace, &c.

2. Definitely—as one day, two days, 40 days, &c., meaning years.

3. Day of the Lord, and days connected with it. 1000 years.

In all cases when we can put on the natural meaning without a manifest impropriety, or contradiction of some other scripture, we should do it, whether in prophecy or not. Where this cannot be done, I then apply the first figurative rule, if this will not make good sense, and harmonize with every word in its connection. I then apply my second rule, and so on the third. And just so, dear sir, I apply all figures, though all may not have as many meanings as days. In these things the Bible is our rule.

Let me now say to you, my brother, what you have called my rule "invariably," was not given as a rule, but only an assertion concerning Daniel's prophecy, or so much as I was giving my views on, in my lectures. I had thoroughly examined, as I thought, and still think the days mentioned in the prophecy, and found them as I stated, all to come under my second rule, above named. I think I can see where and how you have been led to satirize, ridicule, and misstate things in this letter. Perhaps the fault was in my communications to the public, not being more clear and distinct. I frankly and from my heart forgive you, and may God forgive me my trespasses, as I forgive you yours. WM. MILLER.

PARENTS' DEPARTMENT.

From the Annals of Education.

Influence of Pictitious Writings.

When it was reported, some time ago,

shall escape the general anarchy and carnage, can better tell us what have been the sad consequences of the novel-reading of the present day.

We have some facts, however, daily exhibited, which have a bearing on this subject. You see the seducer—you see the ruin in which he involves society. You behold instances, quite too numerous, of matrimonial unhappiness and discord. You see, not unfrequently, the husband or the wife, and especially the newly married, rush into eternity through the aid of the knife and the halter. Nay, you see, or you may have seen, not long ago, two persons of intelligence and comparative respectability, in the city of Boston, whose hearts had been recently united, rush madly into the grave together. Inquire what was the character of these persons? Will you not find they were novel readers? Will you not find they were accustomed, from infancy, to dreams of happiness which it was not possible they could ever realize, and to principles of action as remote from the best—from the principles of the Bible—as heaven is remote from hell? Is there no meaning in all this?

One of the late numbers of Parley's Magazine contains a story which seems not inapplicable to our present purpose. We will venture to insert it; and do it with the more cheerfulness, because we know it to be strictly true. It is in the form of a letter to the editor.

'Mr. Editor,—I lately heard the following singular anecdote of some boys in Dorchester, near this city. There were four of them, all living in the same neighborhood, and two of them were brothers.

'They had been reading the story of Robinson Crusoe, and were very much delighted with his way of living. So they put their heads together, and formed the very wise plan of living in the same manner.

'Having accordingly provided themselves with guns, powder, and some money and provisions, they started off privately, intending to go to the island of Nantucket; and there, separated from all the world, live as independently and as happy as they supposed Crusoe did.

'They left home on Friday, and it was not known, for sometime, what had become of them. Their parents and friends sought with much anxiety to find them; but all in vain; and they were almost ready to despair of ever hearing any news from their lost sons. It was not till Sunday afternoon that they were found.

'At the close of the first day of their absence, one of them seemed to feel the

cause we have not the power to do every thing we would.

We protest against the fashionable course of deluging the world with all sorts of books, without due regard to their character and tendency. We plead with those authors who have consciences, to weigh well what they write; with publishers, to consider beforehand what they publish; and with booksellers, to remember that readers, even female readers, have souls—Mohammedanism is the contrary notwithstanding.

We complain especially of a certain class of booksellers. They manifest a squeamishness in regard to books which, in order to prevent vice, hold it forth as wicked and odious, just as it is; while they will not hesitate to sell, by hundreds and thousands, apparently without any degree of conscience, those works which, under the pretence—perhaps with the intention—of removing vice, trick themselves up to that degree of finery which attracts weak minds, and defeats the object. Such, we humbly conceive, are many of the fictitious writings of the day, and of former days. Such, at least, we believe to be the fact in relation to most of the writings of Byron, Bulwer and Marryat.

A capital mistake is often made, by the superficial, both in medicine and morals. Things and books which contain little poison, are supposed to be comparatively harmless; while those, whose effects are more immediate and obvious, are regarded as proportionally dangerous to the constitution. Thus many who would not for the world suffer their children to take a dose of calomel or emetic tartar, will yet encourage them to swallow the same substances disguised in the form of pills, powders, lozenges, &c.; and will even venture upon their use uncombined, when in very small quantities. Multitudes, in like manner, may be found, who will shrink back with horror from the administration of the most needful moral correctives, while they will not hesitate to admit of an almost perpetual dosing with such remedies as are found in the fiction of the day. Now there is no point better established, than that it is the poison of small quantities, in both instances, which most effectually, if not most rapidly, undermines the constitution, physical and moral.

But our patience has been most severely tried with the editors of our papers and periodicals. These men have at their power to render our busy community a most essential service, by a careful and judicious examination of every new work, as soon as it is issued from the press, and by candidly pronouncing on its tendency.

others' works, you first cast the beam out of your own eye, and learn to distinguish between history and prophecy.

Your next position is as far from the truth as the first. Concerning the forty days spoken of by Moses.—Numbers xiv, 34: Moses, in the 33d verse, prophesies that the children of the Jews should wander in the wilderness forty years. He then brings in the history of their searching the land as a figure or type, showing that each day in that transaction, was a figure of a year in their wanderings in the wilderness. My brother, if a day is used as a figure in this place, I see no good reason why it may not be so used in other places. That it is used as a figure is evident, from the fact that it speaks plain, "each day for a year," that is, each day stands for a year. This, sir, is simple and plain, that a little child might understand.

Again, you use the text in Ezekiel in the same manner, and quote David as laying on the ground seven days, bearing the sins of Israel seven years, when "David lay on the ground and mourned seven days." Was this a prophecy, and a figure? I should call it seven years. But if a historical fact, lieh so many days. I am truly astonished, to see so many of our teachers, ignorant of the first principles of revelation. (Call this wholesale slander if you please.)

That the inspired writers have used words in a great many cases in a figurative sense, especially in the prophecies; and that years, months, weeks, days, times, hours, and beasts, birds, mountains, islands, waters, and even names of men and women are used as figures, and explained somewhere in the word of God, so that the Bible student need not be deceived. But you say the same word is used sometimes as figures in different senses. I answer they are. As the word "day" has three different figurative meanings, besides its natural meaning, twenty-four hours, or the time the sun is above the horizon. This is the general and natural sense in which it is used in relating all historical facts, and sometimes in prophecy it is used in the same sense. As, in the case of Joseph's prophecy concerning the Butler and Baker, three days. But, say you, how can we distinguish between literal and figurative? I answer, the connection will determine; if it is used in an unnatural sense then we are to look for a figurative sense. As in the case of Daniel's vision, of the four great kingdoms. The question was, "how long shall be the vision?" &c. The answer was, unto 2300 days. At the first look every man would say at once, unnatural, for four great kingdoms to rise up, conquer each other, rule over a great share of the world, and then be conquered in their turn, in less than seven years. Then we look for a figurative meaning. And first we find day used, denoting a period of time, the existence of a

service of seven years were completed. Then in the 27th verse, Laban says: "Fulfil her work, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so." Did how? As Laban had said, served with him seven other years, "and fulfilled her week." The very same word used in the 28th verse as in the 21st, and precisely the same meaning. Again the feast was only kept one day, before Jacob went in unto his wife. See 22d and 23d verses: And Laban gathered a feast. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to him; and he went in unto her." Now would it be even probable, that Laban would have changed his mode of giving his daughters, so soon, too, when he was so tenacious of the customs of his country? No sir, the "ludicrous" is on the other side, my brother.

Next your argument on time. You say, first, "There is no evidence that it is ever so used elsewhere. Meaning a year, or 3 1-2 times, meaning 1260 days. Is it possible, my dear sir, that you are so ignorant as to make this assertion? In the case of Nebuchadnezzar: Daniel iv, 23-25: "And let his portion be with the beasts of the field, until seven times pass over him." If times are always used in an indefinite sense, why did David twice in the same passage, use the word seven to qualify the word times? The very word seven definitely express limitation, or duration; and times according to your definition means any time, from a single moment to any number of years, definite or indefinite. If so, why use a numerical adjective to qualify time? For the express purpose, sir, to make it definite. And if you can bring Josephus as testimony against me, surely I may use your own witness against yourself. He tells us that Nebuchadnezzar was insane seven years, and that Daniel's seven times were then so understood. But I have proof in the same passage, that Josephus is right. See 34th verse: "And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar," &c. If seven times were indefinite, how could he know when the days would end. Yet he did know when they ended, and therefore seven times, in this historical account of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, means seven years.

"Time" has its own proper meaning, measure of motion, or duration of any thing. It has also its figurative meaning, as in Lev. xxvi, 18, 21, 24 and 28,—also Dan. iv, 16; vii, 25; and xii, 7,—and Rev. xii, 14. These are all distinguished as such, by having a numerical connected with "time or times," and are explained in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, to mean years. And this would be natural, as we often use it. For we say a year is a regular time in all parts of the

stop to their persecutions. (See Marsh's Ecclesiastical History, page 176 to 178.) At any rate, I have broken no rule, either way.

The next blunder of yours, I shall notice, is the one concerning the "twenty-one days." See Daniel x, 12, 13. I ask you my brother, is this a prophecy? Is the angel relating a thing to come, or is he speaking of past events? I do wish you had a little more of the bump of discriminativeness. It would have saved you much time. You have never said, argued, nor intimated, that "a day means about one fifth of a year." And what must every candid mind think of a writer who will thus misrepresent others' views. Those of this class, who have read the work, you cannot deceive; but hundreds, good, honest, and discerning men, who have not had an opportunity of reading for themselves, you may possibly deceive.

Again: Your remarks on a day meaning a thousand years, I have already noticed. Permit me to bring one plain, positive proof: 2 Peter iii, 8: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And now, sir, you say you are somewhat severe. (Plain.) And I thank you for it, so far as it is done in truth and righteousness; but in all of your misrepresentations of my words, arguments, or views, I pity, and pray for you. But, dear brother, permit me to be as plain as you, and sum up the cases of misrepresentations in this one letter which I have noticed.

1. The argument which you call mine, concerning the spies searching the land is not mine; but your own.

2. The "ten days," Daniel and his three friends fed on pulse, you represent as coming under my "invariable" rule. It does not come under that rule; for it was a history, not a prophecy.

3. The Jews sinning 40 days, and therefore must have 40 years sorrow, is misrepresenting the Bible at least.

4. The "seven times," that passed over Nebuchadnezzar you well knew was a matter of fact, which Daniel relates as having all passed: See Daniel iv, 28, when he wrote the chapter, if not the whole book, "And therefore could not be called a prophecy, but a history."

5. On the word day, you say, "that I contend it invariably means a year," implying that I so understand it in all cases, when you well knew that my rule, as you call it, only stated "in the prophecy of Daniel," which I say, is proved by the 70 weeks. Here is manifestly an effort to mislead those who had not read the work.

6. The one and twenty days, which Gabriel mentions, you say, according to my own showing, could not have been more

PARENTS' DEPARTMENT.

From the Annals of Education.

Influence of Fictitious Writings.

When it was reported, some time ago, that the packet ship Susquehanna was taken by pirates, a friend of correct education observed to me: "I hope the pirates will be overtaken, and captured and executed; but if they should be hung, I hope Bulwer and Marryat will be hung up with them." At first, such a sentiment seemed to border on the more than half way to their favorite island of Nantucket. When found by their friends, they all appeared very much ashamed of their enterprise; and have not yet manifested any great desire to repeat it.

The moral of this story seems to be the following: If a book as unexceptionable as Robinson Crusoe has usually been considered, produces such unhappy results on the young mind, what may not be the consequences of reading the thousand & one volumes, yearly issued from the press, whose character and tendency are, to say the least, far more questionable?

The truth is, that this whole subject demands consideration—the consideration of those whom it most nearly and deeply concerns. We mean the consideration of Christian parents and teachers. Let them watch, with the utmost care and fidelity, the character of the mental food which is daily forming, as it were, the life blood of their children's souls. Let them not say, we have not time for this. They have time to earn the means of furnishing them with every luxury for the body, and every gratification of the mind. They have time to pamper them, and render them delicate, and fit them to be the slaves of appetite and the votaries of indulgence. At least, they too often find time for this, in one way or another. They find time to fit the body for lodging a mind that cannot be satisfied with plain food; but can they not find time to apply the needful corrective? It were surely enough to prepare the soil for a poisonous growth, and to sow the seeds; will they not at least try to eradicate the noxious plants, as they begin to show themselves? Or will they let all go at haphazard, and risk the consequences?

It does seem to us that parents in general—Christian parents especially—are most criminally negligent on this whole subject. It does seem that, in the scramble for wealth, they have forgotten all else, even the immortal minds and hearts of the children whom God has given them. We call on them—we entreat them—to consider this subject; to take time for it. If they shall, after due reflection, determine to suffer their children and pupils to read any book which appears, without discrimination, be it so. We can only warn and protest; we cannot control. But we do not mean that they shall do it with their eyes shut; we mean to utter a cry of remonstrance, which if not heard through the whole extent of our American community, only falls short of it being

sought with much anxiety to find them; but all in vain; and they were almost ready to despair of ever hearing any news from their lost sons. It was not till Sunday afternoon that they were found. At the close of the first day of their absence, one of them seemed to feel the reproaches of conscience; and said that his mother would cry if she could not find him. Another said, if his mother did cry, he did not care. Two of them were determined to go on, and said they meant to turn robbers. The others were sick of the expedition, and had set their faces towards home before they were found. been more than half way to their favorite island of Nantucket. When found by their friends, they all appeared very much ashamed of their enterprise; and have not yet manifested any great desire to repeat it.

Do not men know,—they who are as intelligent as Bulwer, and as deeply read in human nature as Marryat—that while they describe, in such glowing terms, the character of the ruffian or the desperado, there are hundreds and thousands of their young readers who sympathize with him, and—such is human nature—are gradually, in spite of their better judgment, and in view of the final results, "transformed into the same image?" We could not—we repeat it—avoid thinking there was something of truth in the views of our friend, on this subject. What he says, at least deserves consideration. The works of the authors alluded to, and others of the same general class, have an amazing influence, at the present time, in this country, as is evinced by their rapid sale. Whether they do or do not educate to vice and crime is, therefore, a question of deep and paramount importance.

So far as we have observed for ourselves, the majority of those who are most fond of writings of this description, are very far from being most likely to receive the right sort of impressions. They are persons who are living on excitement. Their very blood is in a feverish state—to say nothing of the state of their brain and nerves. They have been nursed in hot rooms, and cradled in feathers, and dandled on couches, and fed on stimulating food, and medicated drinks and doses, till they are ready, almost, to take fire on the application of the least spark. And does any one suppose that the mind can be cool in such a habitation? Does any one suppose, that while the 'house' in which it lives is in a condition to be ignited at any moment, the soul can be neither pure or safe?

But we have not seen the full effects of these writings. The generation that has been reared most exclusively on the miserable nutriment they afford, has not yet come upon the stage of action. Its education is yet going on. Those who live thirty or fifty years hence, if any such

But our patience has been most severely tried with the editors of our papers and periodicals. These men have in their power to render our busy community a most essential service, by a careful and judicious examination of every new work, as soon as it is issued from the press, and by candidly pronouncing on its tendency. Some, indeed, appear to do this, but their number is few. The greater part, so far as we are acquainted, pursue quite a different course. They cannot afford the time or the patience to examine books for themselves; so like true herding animals, they follow some leader. We might here

not a war on persons; we would only discuss principles.

We have said that our books are, in general, but poorly calculated to promote the well-being of the rising generation; and have, on a former occasion, more than intimated the importance of a judicious revision and supervision in this department. Such a service seems to be proposed by the American Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Among the measures which this society proposes is, as we have already assured our readers, the publication of a series of books of good tendency, to form the basis of libraries for district schools and families.

We are free to confess, that while we like their plan, and especially the object they propose—that of supplying the community with books not less attractive, but at the same time more useful than those which now fill our bookstores and the shelves of our libraries—we could wish for a series still better, and, at the same time, more attractive, than those of which a catalogue is given in the prospectus. However, we are willing to insert a part of their prospectus, and to give encouragement to their measures, though they seem quite inadequate to the wants of the public mind, starving and dying as it is in the midst of an over-excited, half-famished literature.

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

AN INTERESTING COMMUNICATION.

One of the gentlemen addressed in the following letter has sent it to us for publication, and expresses a warm and grateful interest in its contents.—N. Y. Evan.

RENSSELAERVILLE, Jan. 23, 1838.

RESPECTED AND MUCH ESTEEMED FRIENDS—The contents of this letter from your friends will no doubt surprise you; yet, if you in reality consider us as friends, you will at least so far comply with our wishes as to give the subject of which this letter treats, a serious consideration which we ask of you as friends, who feel a deep interest in your present and future welfare.

You are perhaps ere this aware, that there has been of late an unusual excitement in this place on the subject of religion, but you can form no idea of the extent of this great and glorious work, which scarcely any one can deny to be the work of God.

We, your friends and companions, by the grace of God have been brought to see our sinful condition and need of a Saviour. We have been brought to see that