

VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

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

BY ORSON S. MURRAY.

BRANDON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 1838.

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TERMS.

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Vermont Telegraph.

BRANDON, SATURDAY, JAN. 13, 1838.

For the Vermont Telegraph.

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

To Wm. Miller, Low-Hampton, N. Y.

[Objection 3d concluded.]

Brother Miller:—Unity is an important rule in composition; and where this is wanting, the writer may make many broad assertions, say a great many fine things, and make the superficial reader or hearer suppose he has established his point, and after all no real evidence be brought to sustain his position. When I read an author who can turn every circumstance into proof in his favor, I always doubt the truth of his position. And when I find a person who, when looking at an object at one time pronounces it black, and then at another time pronounces the same object white, I must conclude that either his optic nerve is a little strained by long looking, or that there is a radical defect in his sense of vision.—These remarks may seem a little severe when applied, but still with all due deference to your age and talents, I must say I never read an author to whom they will apply with more propriety than to yourself. Others however may judge very differently, and I may yet be convinced that the defect in vision is my own.

With these remarks, I proceed, as was proposed, to notice your proof from the seven Asiatic churches, and especially the Laodicean, that Christ will soon make his second appearance. I did design to remark somewhat extensively upon your exposition of the first six churches, but having already occupied more space on this objection than I at first designed, I shall only notice your proof that the churches represent different

com; and I am by no means certain, that, if he can be allowed the same latitude in interpretation, that in many instances you have taken, he may be as near the truth as you are. Still, I do not endorse his theory.

Another evidence which you bring to prove that the addresses to the churches are figurative, is found in the closing remarks to the Laodicean church. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. iii, 20, 21.—"In this passage," you say, "we are brought down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, another and a strong testimony that the churches are to be considered in a mystical sense and the language or subject prophetic." "To him that overcometh," &c.—Upon this you say, "here is another expression which proves that we are brought down to the end of time." All I have to say now concerning your proof that the Laodicean church is the age just before the Millennium, is, that if the proof here brought is valid, then I "pledge" myself to prove that either of the other churches represents the same time. For the phrase "him that overcometh" occurs in the address to every church, and something follows each expression which equally proves that "we are brought down to the end of time."

Permit me now to notice a number of instances where you have proved two things by the same event, or, as I might with more propriety have said, proved one thing by a number of contradictions. What you have attempted to prove is, that we are now living in the Laodicean age, and very near the Judgment, and this all is done by showing what you consider to have been the state of the church since 1798 when this age commenced. Let me contrast a few passages from your lectures on this point. Page 125: "Have not professors generally, for more than thirty years been seeking for the riches of this life, for the honors of the world, following the fashions of the times as greedily as men of the world? Yes. And can we distinguish a professor of religion in our public assemblies from a man of the world, except we are informed? No. Where then do Christians plaint-

pride, popularity, self-righteousness, de- pravily, will be the besetting sins of the members and great body of public professors, and few, very few, of the ministers of the churches will be valiant or bold enough to tell them the truth." Compare this with page 219, where you say, "No one can deny but that since the revolution in France a sealing time has passed: many have been born into the spiritual kingdom of Christ, more than have ever been known in the same period of time since the apostles' days."

Again, page 126, you say, "Is it not a general complaint with all of our churches of coldness, of want of spiritual life and a great failure in active spiritual duties? Yes. Has not a spirit of sloth and supineness seized upon people generally? Do not many think if they have a hired servant to talk religion, and visit the widow and fatherless, and keep themselves unspotted from the world for them, it is enough? Yes. And does not all this and much more that might with truth be said on this point, declare loudly that professors of Christianity generally are in a backward state? Yes, we must respond yes." Let us see how the church, with all its coldness, sloth, supineness, and lukewarmness has been blest. Page 173, you say "And it is very evident my dear friends, that the church is now out of the wilderness, that is, if she ever was, for there has never been a time since the days of the apostles, no nor even then, that the church in all her several branches has enjoyed greater privileges than for nearly forty years past. She has spread her wings over every land, and carried the news of salvation into every language in the known world. Her reapers have followed the sowers of seed, and there is, [are] handfull of corn in the tops of all the mountains."

Take another example, where you say, page 108, "During this age, [Pergamos age as you call it,] the church became very earthly, having her worldly policy, and like the church at the present day, attending more to outward concerns and the worldly part of religion, than to inward piety and graces of the spirit, looking more for forms and ceremonies than for life, power and spirit of the religion of Jesus, spending much of their time in building elegant chapels, gorgeous temples, high

sometimes allude to the minority, and address others to the majority,—for you have evidently meant to represent the majority of the church in all the above quotations—as such phrases as "church generally," and "ten to one," "great body," &c., abundantly prove. Besides, your book abounds in mere assertions, which are so interwoven in your discourses that the reader or hearer, unless very attentive, would take them as positive proof. For instance, in explaining Daniel xii, 6: "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" You say it "means to the end of the reign of the beast which the world wondered after," Rev. xiii, 3. Again, Rev. x, 6: "There shall be time no longer." This, you say, "means mediatorial time," or that "God will no longer delay his judgments, or wait to be gracious." page 86. Such assertions abound throughout your lectures.

I shall close this objection, in a few remarks upon explaining figurative language, which may not only apply to yourself but to others. On page 147, you attempt an explanation of Rev. vi, 12—17 inclusive.—"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Earthquake here, you say, means "the French revolution, and of course, this seal opened about A. D. 1790." Here is another assertion, and then an "of course" coming after it, apparently as positive proof. As I have just remarked, you have quite too much proof of this kind. But, to proceed, sun means "kings or rulers"—moon, "the queen"—stars, "inferior rulers"—heavens, "laws and government of France"—mountains and islands, "large and small gov-

ernment as an affair with persons regardless still as subjects; but, if it be a conflict between two governments claiming jurisdiction over the same territory, it is war in the strictest, most terrible sense, and lies within the range of our appropriate efforts.

"But do you not oppose duelling, and other kinds of violent contention, between individuals?" A right application of our principles would certainly sweep all these away; but it is not our specific aim to abolish such evils; just as the temperance reform, restricting itself to intemperance in the use of intoxicating drinks, does not meddle with any other form of intemperance, such as the use of opium and tobacco, of tea, and coffee, and stimulants, &c. Its principles are applicable to every department of temperance; but they are confined, by universal consent, to that of alcoholic liquors. So the principles of peace are applicable to every form of violent contention; but our cause contemplates only the conflicts of one nation with another.

If you ask whether we would not extend our principles to individuals, and families, and churches, and the whole circle of social relations, we frankly say, that consistency would require us to do all this as individuals, but not as promoters of international peace. The pacific precepts of the gospel apply to mankind in all their intercourse with each other; but our cause aims at the application of these principles only to the intercourse of nations; just as the temperance cause, while its principles are universally applicable, is concerned solely with the use of distilled or intoxicating liquors.

"But would you not deny the right of self defence by force against personal attacks, and insist on our bearing every kind and degree of injury without resistance?" This may, or may not, be one of our means; but no friend of peace deems it any part of our object. Not a few of us think the doctrine of non-resistance by force essential to the accomplishment of our object; but our grand, our sole aim is the uninterrupted prevalence of peace among all nations.—How such a result can be reached, is a point to be discussed in a future number.

Now, must not such an object commend itself strongly to every friend of peace? other respects, are not the friends of peace

no remedy, or such a one, so ill-timed, and in such a way, that any one, but a non-compos mentis would prefer to endure his sufferings alone, unaided and unpitied, than be indebted to the self-blinded, for a remedy worse than the disease. The adherents of a party will generally sustain one so long as he will co-operate with them and promote their interests. If he will follow them in all their aberrations, through thick and thin, up to his eyes in mud and mire, his sufferings will be published far and wide, and his insatiable will be applauded, as zeal most holy, to the skies. Not so with him who refuses to be a link of the party chain. Black odium, like the night mare, must hold him down. His wrongs must be known in the power of truth, of the day, and his misfortunes must be sneered at or marked as the consequences of a vicious and refractory spirit.

"Triumph not, though fortune sends
The riches of the mines,
If then thou countest many friends,
It is good luck of thine.
But triumph not, that gold may go;
And friends will fly in hour of wo."
DIOGENES.

MISSIONARY.

From the Bap. Missionary Magazine.

CIRCULAR.

To Missionary Associations, Churches and Individuals of the Baptist Denomination, in the United States:—

Dear Brethren,—The operations of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, limited at first to Burmah, have been gradually extended, under the gracious providence of God, and bear, at the present time, in various stages of advancement, on more than twenty nations and tribes, constituting at least one half the human family. The instrumentality employed, though vastly disproportionate to the ends in view, has also had considerable enlargement. The number of missionary laborers, including native preachers and assistants, now dependent on the funds of the Board for their support, and the means of prosecuting their work, is about two hundred. In charge of these are four printing establishments, with fifteen printing presses, and founts of type for printing in numerous languages. There are also fifty native schools.

To maintain, with efficiency, this system of operations, requires an annual expenditure of at least one hundred thousand proportionate to the demand, will consume one half centum. If the annual receipts

somewhat extensively upon your exposition of the first six churches, but having already occupied more space on this objection than I at first designed, I shall only notice your proof that the churches represent different periods of Christ's church, and not the churches.

You make much account of the book of Revelation being called a prophecy: page 100. You say it is "a revelation of things which must shortly come to pass. Not things that have been. Yet if Christ is only giving admonitory advice to those seven literal churches, then he is only relating their characters as they then were, and thus far as these churches were concerned, it would cease to be a prophecy and the very first verse in Revelation would be violated." Again, after quoting, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the word of this prophecy," you say, "but who will pretend that the three chapters in the beginning of Revelation are a prophecy, if we understand them as relating the character of seven literal churches in Asia only? None, none." Yes, brother Miller, altho' the character of these "literal" churches may be related, yet I am one who can exonerate the Revelator from inconsistency, tho' he call it a prophecy. I suppose you would call Malachi a prophet, and yet a great proportion of his writings is relating the character of the Jews as they then were.

So of most of the prophets. These prophets however tell of things to come—so does the Revelator to these churches. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10. Is here no prophecy? Again, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."—Rev. ii. 26, 27, and iii, 9, 10. Where is there anything in this book which ought to be called a "prophecy," if these expressions are not? The Revelator speaks in the present tense, or of things then passing before him, and there are whole chapters where not one word is said about things to come, and yet you say, "they are daily fulfilling and have been for 18 centuries." I do not say that this assertion is, or is not true, for I do not know. Wetstein, an early expounder of this book, has made nearly the whole of it refer to things which took place before, and at the destruction of Jerusa-

ports of the world, following the fashions of the times as greedily as men of the world? Yes. And can we distinguish a professor of religion in our public assemblies from a man of the world, except we are informed? No. Where then do Christians plainly show that they seek a better country? No-where." Compare the foregoing with another remark of yours concerning the same time and see how God has prospered this Laodicean, this cold hearted church. Page 127: "Witness the great and many reformations which for thirty years have progressed in our land, in Europe and the islands of the sea. See also the word of God published, in whole or in part, among all nations: See the missionaries of the gospel running to and fro through the whole earth. Do not these indicate that Christ stands at the door, and that his voice has gone out even to the ends of the world, and that Michael has stood up for the children of the people? Yes."

Again, page 126: You attempt to show by the doctrines taught that this is the Laodicean age. In speaking of salvation by grace, you say: "Your speaker believes that the depravity of the human heart, our dependence on God, and indebtedness to grace, are abundantly taught in the scriptures." "But," you continue, "how stands this doctrine with our public proclaimers at the present day? Some few may preach it, but there is, [are] more than two to one who do not preach it, or if they do they so cover it up by their plausible and specious reasoning that the force of the doctrine and the object of the inspired writer are lost," &c. This, brother Miller, is what I call wholesale slander. What, more than nine tenths of the ministers at the present day, and since 1798, preaching a lie? or covering up the truths by specious reasoning? And yet in speaking of the signs of the times, you quote Mat. xxiv, 14: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness, and then shall the end come," and say, "Is not this sign already accomplished? Bibles translated into more than 200 different languages; missionaries sent among all the nations known to us on the globe, and reformation succeeding reformation in every town, nook and corner in this land. The gospel has now spread over the four quarters of the globe. It began in Asia, * * from thence it went to Africa. * * Europe too has long had a visitation of gospel blessings; and now America * * is reaping a harvest of souls for the last day." And all this, it seems, while nine-tenths of the ministers have been denying the doctrine of grace, or covering up the truths by this "specious reasoning!" Page 213.

Again, page 122, in commenting upon this passage, "and knowest not that thou art wretched," you say, "this corruption of the church will be kept out of sight, the

piety and graces of the spirit, looking more for forms and ceremonies than for life, power and spirit of the religion of Jesus, spending much of their time in building elegant chapels, gorgeous temples, high spires, and filling them with pictures and pleasant things, and filling the hearts of their worshippers with high, popular and haughty notions." Now let us see how the "church at the present day" appears to you, when you look from another promontory of your theory: page 83, speaking of Michael standing up for the children of the people, you say, "blessed be his holy name—he has accomplished his purpose; for in the year 1816-17-18, more people were converted to the faith of Jesus, than had been for thirty years before. Almost, and I know not but every town in these States was visited with a shower of mercy, and hundreds and thousands, yea, tens of thousands were born into the invisible kingdom of the dear Redeemer, and their names recorded among the members of the church of the first born. This has lasted, in a great measure, for 20 years, and has spread over a large share of the christian world; even the islands of the sea have lifted up their voices to God, and the wilderness has bloomed like the rose, and the heathen have seen of his salvation. The grace of God has distilled upon us like the morning dew and like showers upon a thirsty soil."

I might go on and fill columns with such contradictions. But these are enough to show your want either of judgment or candor in selecting your proof; and that when your subject requires it, the church is black, and then again it needs to be white. Sometimes it makes better proof to have the church all asleep, cold, and lukewarm—then again, the same church, at the same time, is all in motion, sending the gospel to the ends of the earth. Sometimes the members of the church get their servants to talk religion for them, being too cold to do any thing themselves, then again they are all engaged in a revival. Sometimes the world and church are boarding up their money into monopolies, see pages 125 & 215, and then the same world and church are lavishing out their money to spread the gospel. And all as it seems to suit your theory best.

I know, brother Miller, this is plain language; and I would gladly have found no cause to use it. But there is cause, or the want of "judgment and candor" is on my part. If the quotations above do not bear me out in using this plainness, another column of the like contradictions from your book I think will. The passages above selected are all concerning the same period of time, viz: since 1798, when you think the Laodicean age began, so that you cannot say I have misrepresented you, by taking your explanation of the church at different ages. Nor can you accuse me of misrepresentation on the ground that you

much proof of this kind. But, to proceed, sun means "kings or rulers"—moon, "the queen"—stars, "inferior rulers"—heavens, "laws and government of France"—mountains and islands "large and small governments"—mountains, "the French revolution. Others make all these verses refer to the days of Constantine, and the fall of paganism. Almost every author has a fulfilment which best suits his theory, and every one must needs be right. And for aught I see all have about equal claims; and, as you say, page 155, "I dare not give preference to any," and hence, following your example concerning the many explanations of the two witnesses, I condemn the whole. If by so doing I must stand alone and be called "singular," yet I shall enter my solemn protest against all such explanations as yours and others mentioned above. If this passage may be explained away, and made to mean some earthly revolution, then any other in the Bible may. Even that most solemn description of the day of Judgment, (as I conceive,) in 2 Peter iii, 10, &c., may all be explained away—so may Math. xxiv, and xxv. If there is any such thing as "hurting" the Bible, such expositions are doing it, and doing more to make Universalists, than to save souls, or honor God. I shall now leave this objection, by quoting the words of Adam Clark, in his preface to Revelation. "Shall I have the reader's pardon, if I say that it is my firm opinion that the expositions of this book have done great disservice to religion; almost every commentator has become a prophet, for as soon as he began to explain he began also to prophecy. And what has been the issue? Disappointment laughed at hope's career; and superficial thinkers have been led to despise and reject prophecy itself."

AARON ANGLER.
Waterbury, Jan., 1838.

For the Vermont Telegraph.
PEACE.—No. XI.

The Single Object of Peace Societies.
The sole aim of our efforts in the cause of peace is the entire and perpetual abolition of war between nations. This would of course draw in its train a cluster of associated results; but such results like the influence of Christianity on the interests of commerce and freedom, of literature and science, would be incidental, rather than a part of the specific object at which we aim. The universal reign of peace would do much to banish from the earth piracy, and robbery, and theft, and intemperance, and slavery, a thousand vices and crimes; yet no person of common intelligence would take the removal of such evils to be the objects of peace-makers.

If you ask whether our cause does not include rebellion and civil war, we answer, that such domestic broils may, or may not, come within our province. If it be the insurrection of unorganized individuals, it clearly comes under the cognizance of

peace, but our sole aim is the uninterrupted prevalence of peace among all nations.—How such a result can be reached, is a point to be discussed in a future number.

Now, must not such an object commend itself strongly to the friends of peace? other respects, are not the friends of peace perfectly united in their ultimate aim, and bound by the strongest obligations to combine their utmost endeavors for the accomplishment of a common object confessedly so good and glorious? Here is certainly room enough for the consistent, unembarrassed co-operation of them all. And has not the crisis for action come? Is it not high time to do something?

A DIRECTOR OF THE AM. PEACE SOC.

For the Telegraph.
SELFISHNESS.

"Unless above himself he can erect himself, How mean a thing is man."

The selfishness of man is proverbial.—Some may query whether any person ever acts, without the expectation of being benefited himself, at some time, or in some way, by what he does. There are but few advocates of disinterested benevolence. It is to be feared many of those who make utility and expediency, in theory, the criterion of right, adopt, in practice, the doctrine, that "the end justifies the means." No matter what national name is applied to such a doctrine,—whether it be Roman, French, German or American,—it would justify a man in seriously injuring another, by words and deeds, provided he would take shelter under the watchword, the end justifies the means, which is the same thing translated, "I meant well," you must look at the motive. Ample remuneration to a man for loss of property, health and character! So long as self is the god that governs man, we may expect to have our eyes dimmed with the sight, and our ears stunned with reports of outrage and wrong. Query: Is not a great share of the benevolence of the present age circumscribed by my, and our interests? Is not your interest excluded, if it will not subserve mine, and ours? Your sect, or your party must succumb to ours. My family must enjoy all the advantages of education and a home, if yours is torn piece-meal, or thrown into a town pauper house, or shut up with Bedlamites!

The piety or honor that men of such feelings possess, would appear more comely on the denizens of hell, whence the doctrine came hissing, than on those who profess high-hopes of joys unspeakable and full of glory in the world of endless peace. A little god, made of brazen-browed selfishness, is posted up so near the eye of the mind, in the selfish man, that it casts a deep and wide shade over every object, except the image of his most dear—most partial and selfish self. The sufferings of an individual in private life, of another party, however acute and unjustly occasioned, will receive

prevalence of peace among all nations.—How such a result can be reached, is a point to be discussed in a future number.

founts of type for printing in numerous languages. There are also fifty native schools.

To maintain, with efficiency, this system of operations, requires an annual expenditure of at least one hundred thousand proportionate to the demand, will consume one half that sum. If the annual receipts fall short of this estimate, the proper force of the agency employed is just so far abated. Appropriations in every department of labor already at the lowest rates consistent with a safe economy. The question pressed on the attention of the Board, and of which we now solicit your wise consideration, is, Shall the Missions continued to the direction of the Board, but deriving their existence and efficiency, under Providence, from you, be sustained?

In proposing this question, the Board are actuated by no ungenerous distrust. Their pecuniary wants have, for many successive years, been liberally supplied, and their embarrassments, those of recent date excepted, have been owing chiefly to a dearth of laborers. That the appeal addressed to their brethren a year and a half ago, had only a partial effect, they ascribe to the general decrease of pecuniary means, together with an impression on some minds, that the Board were in no urgent need of relief. That impression needs to be corrected. The ordinary expenditures of the Board exceed their present rate of receipts, by many thousand dollars annually. The disbursements since the annual meeting in April last, have been more than double the amount received, during the same period, from all our churches and auxiliaries, and have been delayed, in part, from resources provided in former years. But those resources can be relied on no longer. Unless there can be immediate and general advance in contributions to the treasury, the MISSIONS WILL BE INVOLVED IN DEBT, or the ordinary SUPPLIES MUST BE WITHHELD. To the former of these alternatives we cannot consent. Shall we adopt the latter? Christian brethren and friends, we wait for your answer.

What gives to the present crisis additional urgency, is the bearing which it has on the policy to be pursued by the Board, in regard to future candidates for missionary appointments. Our gracious Lord is inclining an increased number of his young disciples to offer themselves for the foreign service. The question will shortly be, Can we receive the blessing? Shall the Board send forth these laborers? Will the churches sanction a further extension of their responsibilities, and a heavier demand on their resources?

Such inquiry we would gladly defer to a later period. While so many inviting fields are spread out before us, and the laborers are so few; while the cry of our brethren for help is so importunate, from every quarter, and helpers are pressing forward to share the toil;—to question whether we will accept their aid, seems almost like a betrayal of our trust. But the inquiry must be made. It is made now. The response which you give to our appeal for present relief, will be received as an expression of your will and purpose in reference to future operations,