

Review.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Some weeks ago a friend gave me a copy of this work, requesting me to peruse it, and to give an opinion respecting it.

C. TOPPER.

Mr. Shimeall remarks, in his Preface, pp. xxvi, xxvii, with reference to the question, "Whether the coming of the Lord is pre or post millennial."

Our author professes to give an account of a variety of widely different views that have been entertained respecting the Millennium, regarding the time, the nature of it, &c., with refutations of those views.

When a writer attempts to establish a theory from Scripture, we may be satisfied that it does not rest on a solid basis if he builds principally on obscure passages, and is obliged to put a forced construction on plain texts.

Undoubtedly some men have erred by attributing a figurative sense to what ought to be understood literally. But it is worthy of notice, that in a number of instances the disciples and others misunderstood our Lord by putting a literal construction on what was to be understood figuratively.

*THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: OR, THE IMPENDING APPROACH OF THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, (Acts iii. 21) by the Power and Coming of the GOD-MAN, the Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter i. 26).

With such inconsistency as might be expected from one who is laboring to establish an unscriptural system, Mr. S. insists on a rigid adherence to the literal sense, endeavors to sustain his scheme by attributing an extravagantly figurative and mystical sense to texts that evidently ought to be understood literally.

Mr. S. quotes Zech. xiv. 5., thus, "The Lord my God shall come, and all His [resurrected and glorified] saints with Him;" and subsequently affirms, "This work of the conversion of the nations, commenced by Christ PERSONALLY, will be continued in exact analogy to the first propagation of the gospel among the Gentile nations."

To obviate an objection of "scoffers," who would, in effect, deny that Christ would ever come, because His coming seemed to be delayed, the apostle Peter referring to the fact that time, as contrasted with eternity, and in reference to JEROME, is as nothing, remarks, "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Determined to apply almost all the predictions to the second Coming of Christ, Mr. S. alleges, (p. 178) that "the great tribulation" [of the Jews] Matth. xxiv. 21, 22, commences . . . at the close of the Gentile age in 1868. Is this verified? Unwilling to admit that these predictions could in any sense refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, he insists, (p. 178) that ver. 34th, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," relates to the generation that will be living when Christ comes. At this rate

one may make any text mean just what he pleases. Mr. S. . . . The great tribulation of evangelical Christians of this day (the Baptists excepted,) profess to believe in, and pray for, the ingathering and conversion of both Jews and Gentiles to Christ, and of their introduction to a state of happiness during a period of a thousand years.

Mr. S. is so much engrossed with his scheme respecting the second coming of Christ, that he evidently applies to it prophecies which relate to His first coming. For instance, Dan. ii. 44, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." &c. To make this, which plainly refers to gospel times, suit his view, he adds the word "last," and so quotes the text, "In the last days of these kings," &c. and adds, "during the last stage of their existence," thus applying it to the second advent.

To establish his theory, that a thousand years will elapse between the literal resurrection of the pious and that of the wicked from the detached clause—"the dead in Christ shall rise first"—Mr. S. thus defines, or rather perverts, the statement, "We which are alive, &c. shall not prevent them which are asleep i. e. from being raised, p. 246, an unlettered man might honestly, though very erroneously, construe the word present in this text as meaning to hinder;

Mr. S. states, in the first sentence of his advertisement, "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments speak of two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of two only"; but besides the first personal coming, which is past, he evidently represents two as future. p. 228. In his comment on the passage cited above, he says, "This coming of Christ in the first instance will be not openly, or visibly . . . but as it were secretly, like a thief in the night, to steal away his waiting and watching saints."

The specimens of gross inconsistency, and perversion of Scripture, now adduced, to which many more might be easily added, may surely suffice to show the character of the Work; but a few closing remarks may be added. Mr. S. thinks that Ministers greatly err

in especially urging the necessity and importance of a preparation for death. He, however, professes to believe that the soul is "in a state of perfect consciousness . . . of happiness or misery" between death and the resurrection. p. 263, 266

He seems to imagine that those who maintain the near approach of the Saviour's Advent will be peculiarly self-denying and holy. But surely this effect does not always follow. The Mormons, who insist that all scripture is to be understood in its literal sense, assert that Christ is coming very soon. I heard one of their preachers affirm, in a sermon nearly forty years ago, "I will not say at what exact time, but this I will say, there are some in this room who will be living when Christ comes darting down the parted skies."

The learned Dr. Adam Clarke, in his comment on Rev. xx. 3, written in 1817, remarks, "It has long been the idle expectation of many persons, that the millennium in their sense, was at hand; and its commencement has been expected in every century since the Christian era. It has been fixed for several different years during the period of my own short life. I believed these predictions to be vain, and I have lived to see them such."

These speculations, though they may excite transient sensations, are adapted, by their non-fulfilment, to increase and strengthen infidelity, and tend to turn the minds of people from attention to the all-important matter of their own salvation, and that of their perishing fellow men.

But Mr. S. after affirming that the coming of Christ "is now at our doors," has, by his scheme, placed it at such a distance that no person now living can reasonably expect to live till its arrival. According to his views, prior to this event, (p. 305) "The last Antichrist—a false Messiah—will restore their [the Jewish] nation to Palestine;" and he says, (p. 180), "the jealousies of the crowned heads of Gentile rulers against the house of Judah, now dwelling nationally, but in their unconverted state, in the holy city, shall incite them to arms; when once more, but for the last time, an unprecedented storm of persecution shall be brought down upon the heads of Daniel's people."

Is it not, then, the part of wisdom for us, instead of entering into such wild speculations, ever to bear in mind that, in comparison with eternity, it may always be truly said of Christ's second coming, "the time is at hand." (Rev. xxii. 10-12, 20) and we know not how soon it may come; and to make it our care to be in readiness?

Surely it is much more consistent to regard certain expressions in the Apocalypse, which in many parts abounds with strong figures, as figurative, rather than to repeat or to evade the express and plain declarations of Christ,—adapted to alarm the impenitent—that the literal resurrection "of the just and of the unjust" will take place when He comes, at one and the same time. See Matth. xxv. 31-46, where He is said to "separate them one from another," and to pronounce the final destinies of both classes, which will be simultaneously carried into effect. So in John v. 28, 29, he says, "the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation"

In fine, another serious fault of this Work, like that of most of its kind, is, that it is adapted to discountenance and paralyze efforts for the conversion of both Jews and heathens. The author denies (p. 194.) that "through the ordinary agencies of the Church"—the means divinely appointed—"all nations are to be subjected to the obedience of Christ."

On the whole, it is my deliberate opinion, that money and time can be much better employed than in purchasing and perusing such a book.

For the Christian Messenger.

TREASURER'S REPORT, 1873.

W. M. A. SOCIETIES.

HALIFAX, Dec. 31, 1873.

General Account of the Treasurer of the Nova Scotia Central Board of the Women's Missionary Aid Societies.

By Subscriptions from Societies \$1676 66
By Donations do. 114 84
By Interest on Deposits in Savings Bank. 9 95

\$1801 45

To amounts remitted to Z. G. Gabel, Esq., Treasurer of Foreign Missionary Board:
Quarter ending March 31st. \$ 735 74
" " June 30th. 349 29
" " Sept. 31st. 361 54
" " Dec. 31st. 344 98

To Discount on N.B. & P.E.I. notes. 0 97
Postage, Stationery & Printing. 4 54
Balance in hand. 4 44

\$1801 45

M. R. SELDEN,

Secretary & Treasurer.

The above account has been carefully examined and found to be correct.

L. M. SMITH, Auditor.

List of Societies and amounts received from them respectively during the year, 1873.

Table with 2 columns: Society Name and Amount. Includes entries like Aylesford \$65 00, Amherst 55 00, Bridgetown 16 00, etc.

\$1676 66

DONATIONS, 1873.

Table with 2 columns: Donor Name and Amount. Includes entries like Mrs. Joseph Hunt, Mabou, C. B. \$1 00, Rev. A. Colson, Paradise 1 00, etc.

\$114 84

For the Christian Messenger.

Mr. Editor,—

Have you room for the following extract from the Pall Mall Gazette? If so please publish it in the interests of the cause so ably advocated in your columns by "Modern Culture." I make the request not so much for the sake of adding Prof. Blackie, as another instance of thick-headed prejudice in favour of the moribund Greek Classics, as in the hope that "Modern Culture" may be encouraged to labour for the substitution of "Christianity" with its practical and awful "Chemistian lore" for the crudities and absurdities of the Homeric myth, now happily on the high road to obsolescence:

"Professor Blackie, in his introductory lecture to the Greek classes of the University of Edinburgh, the other day, said that 'it had been his fortune to dip into various languages, and that the Greek language and the Greek literature are worth them all put together;' and further added that every person who despises Greek literature and language 'proves himself to be a conceited puppy and an