**“Manner of Christ’s Coming” The Present Truth 3, 14.**

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It is most unfortunate that the tendency nowadays is almost entirely against a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. It seems difficult for people to understand that Christ and the apostles ever spoke in plain, simple language, such as one person would use in speaking to another. Whenever a passage is read, the first thought with many is, What hidden meaning is there in it? What lesson is conveyed? Any one who reads the popular Sunday-school comments will see this tendency conspicuously displayed. Now it is proper to search the Scriptures; and if there be a difficult text, it is right to find out its meaning by comparing it with other texts; but there are some things that are so plain that any attempt at explanation only obscures the meaning. And this is the case with by far the greater part of the Bible. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.1}

It is true that there are parables, but these are readily distinguished from the direct, simple statements, and are usually either explained, or in such common use as to need no explanation. When Christ was on earth, one of the proofs of his divine mission was that the poor had the gospel preached unto them; consequently we should expect his teaching to be such as could be understood by poor people who have not had the advantages of an education. And this is the case. The Bible is a model of simplicity; it uses the language of the common people. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.2}

We have seen how very plain and direct the statements are in the Bible concerning the second coming of Christ. No believer in the Bible pretends to deny these statements, for to do so would be to deny the Bible. But there are very many who evade these statements, and virtually deny them, by claiming that Christ’s second coming is spiritual. Some claim that Christ comes when a good man dies; and others claim that his coming is at conversion; while others still, carrying the latter idea out still further, claim that there will sometime in the future be a temporal millennium, when all men shall have been converted, and that Christ will then come and reign over his people spiritually, and that this is what is meant by the second coming of Christ. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.3}

Now the Bible is just as definite in regard to the manner of Christ’s coming, as it is in regard to the fact of his coming. It plainly says that Christ will come personally and visibly. The texts which prove this will of course furnish additional evidence that Christ will certainly come. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.4}

And first it may be well to notice Hebrews 9:28: “And unto them that look for him shall he appear the *second time* without sin unto salvation.” Christ is to come the *second* time; but if the theory that he comes at death or conversion be correct, he would already have come many thousands of times. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.5}

Again: the time of Christ’s ministry here on earth, of which we have a record in the New Testament is conceded by all to be his first advent. But men had been converted previously to that time, and for thousands of years good men had been dying. If Christ comes at conversion or at death, he must have come millions of times before his first advent. Any one can see the absurdity of those theories. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.6}

It is not denied that Christ has at different times in the world’s history met and conversed with certain of his devoted followers, nor that he is ever present with his people by his Spirit; but nothing of this kind can be referred to in the texts under consideration. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.7}

It would, however, be manifestly inconsistent to refer to any one of these times as the second coming of Christ. One of them has no precedence over another. But there was one time when he was here in person, when he talked with thousands; and was seen by thousands more. At that time there was probably no nation on earth that did not know of him and his mighty works; and there has been no nation since then that has not heard of that wonderful event. Now at that time he said he was coming “*again*,” and Paul, speaking of that first advent and its object, said that he would come the “*second time*.” Consistency, therefore, would demand that his second coming be also personal and visible, and no less conspicuous, nor less widely known than his first. And this we are positively told shall be the case: “Behold he cometh with clouds; and *every eye shall see him*, and they also which pierced him.” Revelation 1:7. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 211.8}

Again we read: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27. Those who place the second coming of Christ at death, or at conversion, must have a very faint conception of the glory of the Father. When the Lord came down on Sinai, “the whole mount quaked greatly” (Exodus 19:18); and when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, even Moses was not able to enter. See Exodus 40:34, 35. The glory of a single angel, at the resurrection of Jesus, caused the Roman guard to fall as dead men. Matthew 28:4. What then will be the manifestation when he comes in his own glory, and that of the Father, and all the holy angels? This glory which will attend Christ’s coming is thus described: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” Psalm 50:3. Paul says that when Christ comes he will be “revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8. That this glory will be seen by all is proved by Revelation 1:7, already quoted, and by the words of our Saviour in Matthew 24:27: “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Any one who has seen the lightning flash across the sky in sheets so intensely bright that even the closed eyelid could not wholly shut out the impression, can appreciate to a faint degree the terror of that day. Of the effects of that glory, we learn in 2 Thessalonians 2:8: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The fire that David says shall “devour before him,” is the glory of his presence. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 212.1}

Nothing further is needed to prove that the coming of the Lord will be nothing like the quiet of a death-bed scene, or the hour when an individual gives his heart to God. There are, however, a host of other texts on this point, no less strong than these already quoted. Two only will be given to show how literal and personal that coming is. The first is Acts 1:9-11: “And when he had spoken these things, *while they beheld*, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *this same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” The second is 1 Thessalonians 4:16: “For *the Lord himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trump of God*: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 212.2}

These texts speak for themselves. The language is clear and plain, and any one can understand them. And yet, who can realise the terrible scene which they foretell? The human mind cannot conceive of the awful grandeur of that hour when the Lord of heaven and earth shall be revealed. Let each one, with the poet, ask himself the question:- {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 212.3}

*“How will my heart endure  
The terrors of that day,  
When earth and heaven, before the Judge,  
Astonished, shrink away?”  
E. J. WAGGONER. {PTUK July 21, 1887, p. 212.4}*