

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

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Chapter 1

The Lord is coming with power and great glory

The Lord is coming. He is coming with power and great glory. And "our God is a consuming fire." Of the times and seasons, you have no need that I should speak; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape. And though it is true that of the times and seasons you need not that I should speak, there is that connected with his coming, of which it is altogether essential to speak, and to think upon, all the time; and that is, the effect of his coming; for he comes "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And all these will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thessalonians

1:8,9.

Again, it is written: "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." 2 Thessalonians 2:8. So when he comes in his glory, it is a consuming glory, burning up all the wicked, and all that have any wickedness about them.

Yet again it is written: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, today the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. . . . And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity." Isaiah. 13:9, 11. And "who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" Malachi 3:2. That is the question. As he is a consuming fire: and as, when he comes, we shall see him as he is, we shall have to meet him as that consuming fire that he is, and there is no escaping it.

When he comes, he is no more of a respecter of

persons than before he comes. "There is no respect of persons with God." Just as certainly as he is as he is; as certainly as he comes as he will; and as certainly as we shall see him as he is, so certainly will we all—each one of us—be dealt with as we are. There is no change of character, there is no room for change in us in that day.

Chapter 2

It is not upon men themselves that God's wrath is visited

However, in that day, as in all other days, it is not upon men themselves that God's wrath is visited; but upon the sins of men, and upon men only as they are identified with their sins. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven," not against all ungodly men, not against all unrighteous men, but "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Romans 1:18. And only as the man clings to his ungodliness, only as he holds down the truth in unrighteousness, shall it be that the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against him: and even then not against him primarily, but against the sin to which he clings, and will not leave. And as he has thus made his choice, clinging fast to his choice, he must take the consequences of his choice, when his choice shall have reached its ultimate. So it is written, and I read it again, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all

ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth [who hold down, who press back the truth] in unrighteousness."

Continuing from where we read a moment ago, "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: even him, whose coming is a after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." "Believed not the truth." They knew of it; it was presented to them; their hearts told them, the Spirit of God told them, that it was the truth; their own consciences approved of it all: but they would not believe the truth; they "had pleasure in unrighteousness," and held down, and pressed back, the truth in unrighteousness; and "for this cause" it is that the

wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and strikes them.

Yet, as already stated, the wrath of God is not primarily against them, but against the thing which they love; against the thing which they cling to, and will not be separated from. And at last, in that great day when the judgement is set, and on the right and on the left are all the people who have ever lived, those on the left will depart "into everlasting fire, prepared"—not for them, but "for the devil and his angels." The Lord has done his utmost that they might never see it. He gave his Son to save them, that they might never know it. It was not prepared for them. He does not desire that they should be lost; but they have to go there because there is the company which they have chosen; that is the place with which they have connected themselves, and from which they would not be separated. Therefore, he says, "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Chapter 3

Everlasting fire is not prepared for you

Not prepared for you. God in that day,—the Lord Jesus Christ in that hour,—when that word shall be spoken, will be just as sorrowful as he was in the hour of the cross. He will be just as sorry that these have to go into that place, which was not prepared for them, as he was in the hour of the cross. It is not his pleasure that any should be there. They are there because of that sin to which they have inseparably joined themselves. And that being their irrevocable choice, they simply have the opportunity now of receiving indeed, and to the full, that which they have chosen. They always had their choice; they made their choice; they stuck to their choice: and when they receive the consequences of their choice, indeed there is no room for complaint. God has done all that he could do, but they would not have it.

So, though it is a fact that the Lord does not desire any of this to come upon any man, yet, as "God is a consuming fire," that is the way that he must come. Being a consuming fire, and coming as he is, he comes in flaming fire to visit upon wickedness that which is due; and whoever is joined with the wickedness has to go the same way.

"Taking vengeance on them that know not God." They had an opportunity to know God. Multitudes professed that they did know God, but in their works they denied him. They had the form of godliness,—the profession,—but they denied the power thereof. You know the words: "In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead

captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts . . . reprobate concerning the faith." And destruction comes to them, not because they had no chance, but because they despised all the chances they had: not because they had no opportunity to know God, but because they rejected every opportunity that God ever gave them to find him out, and know him when he revealed himself.

God is altogether clear; for Jesus said: "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him." John 12:47, 48.

Chapter 4

Choose life—not death

Now let us find out that "one." It is not Jesus Christ: he says it is not. It is not God; for the Lord Jesus said, "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not." That is not the "one." But there is "one" that judges him, and I think we can find him out. Look again: "if any man hear my words." That word is the word of God. It is the word of life of God, because it is the word of God. The word of life of God is eternal life, because eternal is the life of God. Then there is the word of eternal life. That word is spoken. All men hear it. "If any an hear my words, and believe not;" and "he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words,"—that word being the word of life, when it comes to you, or to me, or to that other man, eternal life comes to you, or to me, or to that other man. In the "words of eternal life," eternal life comes to him to whom the word comes. And when he rejects the word, he rejects eternal life. And in choosing to reject eternal life, he chooses eternal

death. It is his own choice to reject eternal life; and in rejecting that, he chooses death.

Then when that death comes to him which he has chosen—who brought him to it? Who counted him worthy of death? Who judged him? Who sentenced him to death?—Only himself. Nobody else is concerned in it at all. God did all that he could: he set eternal life before him; he surrounded him with every possible inducement, and every persuasion, to receive it; he made it attractive to him; it was adorned, decorated, made as beautiful as God's truth itself could be made, and his own heart approved of it; the Spirit of God said to him, "That is the right thing, that is the truth:" but he "had pleasure in unrighteousness." He rejected the word, and in rejecting the word of eternal life, he rejected eternal life; and in that he chose eternal death. And when he receives eternal death, it is only what he chose. He himself is the only one who counted himself worthy of it.

When Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, and the Jews contradicted and blasphemed against

those things which were spoken by Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles, these men of God waxed bold, and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46. Mark; it was not said, We judge you unworthy of eternal life. No; you "judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." Every man who meets destruction passes upon himself the judgment of that destruction.

All the Scripture is founded upon this thought,—that it is not against the person, but against the thing to which the person has fastened himself, that the wrath of God comes. Then as the Lord executes vengeance primarily only against sin, as his wrath is only against ungodliness and unrighteousness, and he has done everything he could to get the people to separate from sin, then in that burning day when he comes, and reveals himself to the world, and the world sees him as he is, it will still be only sin against which he will execute vengeance.

Chapter 5

Choose Christ and you will not perish—God has promised

What more could God do than he did do to take away sin? He gave his only begotten Son; Christ gave himself, that whosoever would believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He pledges himself to every soul who will believe, that he shall not perish. The word does not read, as too often it is misread, God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. No such thing. The next verse has the "might" in it: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." It may be, too. When God gave his Son, in that gift he established the eternal possibility that every soul in this world might be saved. But there is where the "might" is. There is where the "maybe" is. Because, whether

any one is saved, depends upon what he chooses. The Lord will not save us in spite of ourselves. He has made it possible, in the gift of Christ, for every one of us to be saved. It depends upon us whether we choose the salvation that he has given; whether we will take the cross, and adopt the means, that will make it certain to us.

But when one has chosen Christ, and believes in him, there is no "maybe" about it any more. It shall be, then. Then the verse comes in where the shall is, and reads: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not [not, "might not"] perish, but have everlasting life." Believing in Jesus Christ takes away all the "maybe" that there ever was in it, and makes it an eternal shall be. So, then, to every soul who believes in Jesus, God says, I pledge myself that you "shall not perish." To every soul in this world, wicked as he may be, God's message is that he has made the provision, he has established the thing, and so firmly fixed it that just as certainly as a soul believes in Jesus Christ, that soul "shall not perish." That is a good

offer. It is infinitely fair, and infinitely generous.
It's as fair and generous as is God.

Chapter 6

The cross of Christ gives freedom from sin

Destruction of sin is the only way of salvation. His name shall be called "Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." So when I accept his offer, as certainly as I believe in Jesus I shall not perish. And in that, I accept the provision that I will let sin go. I agree that I am willing to be separated from the sin, and that I will separate from sin. Listen: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed." Then the object of the cross of Christ is the destruction of sin. Never miss that thought. Hold fast to it forever: the cross of Jesus Christ—the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the object of it—is the destruction of sin. Thank the Lord, that object will be accomplished. Now let us read the whole verse: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6.

Not only is there destruction of sin, but freedom from the service of sin. "For sin shall not have dominion over you." Verse 14. Let us follow that thought briefly right through the chapter. There is in it a whole world of Christian victory and joy.

"For he that is dead is freed from sin." He who is crucified, he who has accepted the death of Jesus Christ, and is crucified with him, he it is that is freed from sin.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." But where does he live? Does he live in sin?—He never did. Then as certainly as we live with him, we live with him free from sin.

"Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." It could not hold the dominion which it had. It had the dominion, because he gave himself up in surrender to the dominion of death; but death could not hold him, because he was separated from sin. Neither can death hold anybody else; even

though it has dominion, it can not hold the man who is free from sin.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you."

There the apostle says that sin shall not have dominion over you. Let not sin therefore reign in your flesh, in your members. Then coming down a little farther: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" The next verse reads: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

The cross of Christ gives not only freedom from sin, but makes men servants of righteousness. The next verse tells us that the service of righteousness is "unto holiness;" the end of holiness is everlasting life; and without holiness "no man shall see the Lord."

Then it is perfectly plain, as plain as ABC, that the only true preparation for the coming of the Lord is separation from sin. It makes no difference how much we talk about the coming of the Lord; nor how much we preach the signs of the times; nor how much we prepare for it otherwise, though we sell all we have, and give to the poor,—if we are not separating from sin, making it our constant consideration to be absolutely separated from sin, and to be servants of righteousness unto holiness, we are not making preparation for the coming of the Lord at all: our profession is all a fraud. We may not be working it as a fraud; but we are inflicting upon ourselves a fraud. It may be that we

are deceiving ourselves by it; but that makes no difference: if our constant consideration is not entire separation from sin, our profession is a fraud.

The profession of being an Adventist, of being a Seventh-day Adventist, looking for the coming of the Lord, telling people that the coming of the Lord is near, watching the signs of the times,—all this is right, absolutely and forever right. But, though I have all this, and have not that one thing,—the sole ambition to be completely separated from sin, and from the service of sin,—my profession of the Adventist faith is a fraud; for if I am not separated from sin, I cannot meet the Lord at all in peace. Therefore if my sole ambition is not separation from sin, and from the service of it, I am not preparing at all to meet the Lord.

Then the question for every one of us here today, and for Seventh-day Adventists of all people, is, Are you preparing to meet the Lord, whom, without holiness, no man shall see? I am going to ask you more than that: Are you ready to

meet the Lord? Of the times and seasons, you have no need that I speak to you. It is not necessary for me to stand here, and talk about how near the coming of the Lord is. The signs are multiplying upon the earth. You are Adventists. You know all that; but it is proper for me, now and forever, to stand here and ask, Are you separated from sin? And being separated from sin, are you ready to meet the Lord? Because our God is a consuming fire, and there is no use trying to get away from that. He is nothing else. You need not coddle yourself with the notion that God is anything else than a consuming fire. Just make up your mind to that. He says that that is just what he is; and the sooner you and I make up our minds that God is a consuming fire, the better.

Chapter 7

Christ is coming; He is coming for us

Christ is coming; we are talking about it; it will be for us. He is coming in flaming fire, he comes as a consuming fire; but I want to know what is the use of talking about his coming unless we are ready to meet him in this consuming fire? It is all deception for any man to pass along carelessly when that is the eternal truth.

Do you not remember that the Word not only says that we shall see him, but see him as he is ? that is, we shall see him as a consuming fire,—and I am glad of it. Thank the Lord! Here is a description of him when John saw him as he is,—saw him as we shall see him,—and what of it? Just a few points: "His eyes were as a flame of fire." "His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." His-raiment was "white as

snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them," "as white as the light"— the whiteness of piercing, consuming brightness. That is he. And that is he as he is when he comes; and without holiness no man shall see him. Without separation from sin, no man shall stand.

Then the question with you and with me today, and all the time is, How shall we be so separated from sin that we may meet him in flaming fire! How, how, how!

Look at yourself and your record, and I will look at myself and my record. We will look at the evil traits that are in us, at the struggles we have made, and the longing we have had to overcome these besetments, and to separate ourselves from all the evil, that we might indeed be ready. Where is there time to get ourselves ready? In the short time that intervenes between now and that day,—is there time? and if so, when shall be that time when you and I shall have that thing so accomplished, shall have so separated ourselves from sin that we shall be ready to meet him in flaming fire? The

answer is, Never. That time will never, never come.

Chapter 8

Will we be separated from our sin, or from Christ?

What, then, shall we do? Do not misunderstand. I did not say that the time will never come when we could be separated from sin. I said, Look at yourself, and I will look at my self, and we will see what we are, how full of evil traits, and what little progress we have made in this work of overcoming, and ask the question, When will the time ever come when you and I shall have so separated ourselves from sin that we can meet him in flaming fire? It is that time which I say will never, never come.

But, bless the Lord! there is time to be separated from sin. No time will ever come when we can do this work ourselves; but the time is now, **JUST NOW**, to be separated from sin. The time to be separated from sin is right now, and that now is all the time; for "now is the accepted time; now is

the day of salvation." Only God can separate us from sin; he will do it, and he will do it just now. Bless his name!

Yet, what every one must understand is this: the only way that God does, or can, separate anybody from sin is by that very consuming fire of his presence. The only way, therefore, in which you and I can ever be so separated from sin as to meet God as he is, in the flaming fire that he is, in that great day, is to meet him TODAY as he is, in the consuming fire that he is. The only way that we can be prepared to meet him at his coming in that great day is to meet him in his coming today. For there is a coming to men now, as really as to the world in that great day. "I will not leave you comfortless: I will COME TO YOU." John 14:18. But do not forget that whether he comes to you or to me now, or whether he comes to other people in that great day, he comes only as a consuming fire.

Listen: "If any man hear my voice, and open the door,"—what does he say?—"I will come in to him." Good. Thank the Lord! And "he is a

consuming fire" and when he comes in to you, that coming will consume all the sin in you, so that when he comes in the clouds of heaven in flaming fire, you can meet him in joy in the consuming fire that he is.

Then do you hear his voice? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I WILL COME INTO HIM." Do you hear his voice? Then swing open wide the door, and keep it everlastingly open. Bid him welcome, in the consuming fire that he is: and that flaming fire of his presence will consume sin in all your being, and so will thoroughly cleanse and prepare you to meet him in flaming fire in that great day.

Chapter 9

Is meeting God face-to-face to be a fearful proposition?

When I meet him today "in a flaming fire, "when I welcome him today "a consuming fire" in me, shall I be afraid to meet him in flaming fire in that day—No; I shall be accustomed to it; and knowing what a blessed thing it is to become familiar with meeting him as "a consuming fire," knowing what a blessing that has brought to me today, I shall be delighted to meet him on that other day, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire. "Our God is a consuming fire." Bless the Lord!

"Who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's FIRE." Good. Then when I meet him now, in the consuming fire that he is, I meet him in a fire that is refining, that purifies. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall

purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." That is separation from sin; that is purification from sin. And that sets us where we offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness: we become the servants of righteousness unto holiness, that we may meet the Lord. So, then, bless the Lord that he is a consuming fire,—that he is as a refiner's fire.

Look again at that expression in Revelation: "His eyes were as a flame of fire." In that day his eyes will rest upon each one of us, and he will look clear through us. When his eyes are as a flame of fire, and those eyes in that great day rest upon every one of us, and look clear through us, what will that look do for every one who is wrapped up, body and soul, in sin?—It will consume the sin and the sinner with it; because he would not be separated from the sin. And today, just now, those eyes are the same that they will be in that day. Today his eyes are as a flame of fire; and "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Very good, then. As all

things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, whether we will have to do with him or not, why not accept the fact, choose to have it so, and on our part open up everything to the eyes of him with whom we have to do? And having opened up the life thus to him, to the flaming fire of the glory of his shining eyes, what will that do?—Those eyes of living flame will look clear through us, and will consume away all the sin, and all the dross; and will refine us so that he shall see in us the image of himself.

It is written that we are to serve the Lord "as of sincerity." Sincere is genuine; it is true; it is as strained honey. Originally, it is honey strained, and strained again, over and over, until, holding up the honey to the light, it is found to be sine-cera,— "without wax," no trace of cera to be seen floating in it. That is what he says you and I are to be as certainly as we are Christians. God cleanses us in the blood of Christ, and holds us up in the light of the Lord, and the world can see only the light. And so, "ye are the light of the world."

Chapter 10

"Search me, O God, and know my heart"

Here, again, is the word of the Lord: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me." Psalm 139:23, 24. That is the word given to us for today and for all time. Another word goes right along with it: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising...and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." Another translation has it: "Thou has compassed me all around; and holdest thine hand over me." Verses 1-5. That is a fact. He has compassed us all around, and his hand is over us. Whether we accept it or not, is another matter; but that is the fact with every man in all this wide world. That is how it is that all things are naked and

opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Then when it is a fact that he has searched us, and known us, and does search out and know us all the time, why not accept it as a fact, and have the benefit of it? Why not present to him the word, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts"? What for?— "And see if there be any wicked way in me." O, that sets me before his face; for his glorious eyes of light to look upon me, and to shine through me, as the fire, searching out if there be any wicked way in me! And having searched it out, and being a consuming fire, he consumes it all away, and leads me in the way everlasting.

So, then, the sure way to escape the flaming fire of that great day is to welcome that flaming fire this day. Therefore, I say again, Let it never escape from your thought that "our God is a consuming fire;" and that the sure way to escape from that consuming fire in that great day when there will be no chance to change, and no time to

choose, is to choose today the blessed change that is wrought, by welcoming freely, gladly, into the life, our God, who is a consuming fire.

I remember the word that was spoken to Moses. As Moses had come nearer and nearer to God, he said at last: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." That is exactly what appears in the coming great day that is at hand: he comes "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." His glory covers the heavens in that day, and the earth is filled with his praise. In that day he is "wrapped in a blaze of boundless glory," "and every eye shall see him." But who shall endure it? That is the question; and the answer is: Only those who have prayed, and now pray, that Christian prayer, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

Chapter 11

Moses prayed a Christian prayer

When Moses prayed that blessed Christian prayer, the Lord said: "There is a place by me,... and I will put thee in a cleft of the rock," "and I will make all my goodness pass before thee." "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by," I "will cover thee with my hand. And I will take away my hand," and you shall see me. Exodus 33:21-23. So, though every man should dread the terror of the consuming glory of the Lord in that great day, there is today a place by him. So we are to bid all souls; and from him I bid you, today, Come, and stand in this place by him, in the very presence of the flaming glory. Do not be afraid. Moses was not able to bear the fulness of that consuming glory that day; but the Lord, in his love, covered him with his hand, and protected him from the effects of that glory, which he was unable to bear.

The great trouble in that great day is that the people are not able to bear the glory. The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, the chief men and the captains, and every bondman, and every freeman flee to the rocks and mountains to hide themselves, and say to the rocks and mountains, "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?" The blazing glory of God will shine upon the earth, and these people can not bear it.

But today do not be afraid. He says: "There is a place by me" there is a place "in a cleft of the rock," and "I will put thee in a cleft of the rock," and I "will cover thee with my hand," so that you can bear the blaze, and the purifying power, of my glory. And that consuming fire of my presence shall consume away all the sin. I "will cover thee with my hand,"—I will protect you even from that weakness which, in you, makes you unable to bear the fulness of my glory. And when he takes away

his hand in that great day, those who have dwelt by his side, and been purified by living in this consuming fire until they are made white and tried, can look upon his unveiled face. In the full brightness of his glory, we shall look upon him, and see him as he is.

And that is where we are now, to look. With open face we can look, even now, into his face. For, in the flesh of Jesus Christ, God has veiled the annihilating power of the glory of his face; for, having shined into our hearts, he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. In looking into the face of Jesus Christ, we see the face of God, and "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory, to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Then let every soul welcome the glorious message that God sends to the world, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" welcome that blessed Spirit that works this change by which we are changed from glory to glory, and made ready to meet him in that

great day of glory; and welcome not only the Holy Spirit, but covet earnestly the best gifts, which the Holy Spirit brings when he comes. Desire spiritual gifts; for these are to bring us to perfection in Christ Jesus. Only in this way shall we be made perfect in Christ Jesus; and in Christ be made ready to meet him as he is.

Chapter 12

God is a consuming fire; and I am glad of it

God is a consuming fire; and I am glad of it. Our God is coming; and I am glad of it. He is coming in flaming fire; and I am glad of it. He is coming in all his glory; and I am glad of it. I am sorry that there will be anybody upon whom he will have to take vengeance; but I am glad that the day is coming when all sin will be swept away by our God, who is a consuming fire.

Come, brethren. Are you ready? Are you ready to meet him in that day? If not, he says to you today, "There is a place by me." Come today, and stand in this place by me. I will reveal to you all my glory; "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." And where there is any defect in you that cannot just now bear the deeply consuming fire of this glory, I "will cover thee with my hand" until it is all over: so that I may separate you from all sin,

and save you in that day of glory.

O, then, welcome him who is a consuming fire! Dwell in his presence. Open up the life. Recognize the fact that he is a consuming fire—that he is never anything else. Then rejoice in that today. Dwell in that consuming fire today. And when that great day breaks upon the earth, in all his glory, we shall also rejoice in that day. Then we shall stand and say, "Lo, this is our God." But what! with the mountains hurling through the air; every island fleeing out of its place; the earth coming up from beneath; the heavens departing as a scroll, with a noise that is more than deafening; and flaming fire all around, his face as the sun, his eyes as a flame of fire,—in all this shall we rejoice?—Yes, bless the Lord! We shall rejoice, because "this is our God." We have seen him before; we have lived with him; we have welcomed his consuming presence; we have welcomed the living flame of which his eyes are as a flaming fire, that they should pierce us through, and search out any wicked way in us. We know what blessing and joy were brought into our lives when his consuming

glory purified us from sin and from sinning, and made us the servants of righteousness unto holiness. And knowing what blessedness that was, we exclaim, in the fulness of perfect joy, "Lo, this is our God" indeed. We see him now, more fully than before. That means more blessing still. "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Isaiah 25:9.