

THE WORLD'S LAST CHANCE.

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THE position of this world is a very awful one. It has rejected the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in all their manifestations of righteousness and love.

The Son and the Spirit have both visited this scene in person. One is here, and One is not here. The Son came to reveal the Father, to display divine love as it had never been displayed. In the life of that lowly, gracious Man was a perfect representation of the Father. His was no hidden life; it was lived before the gaze of men. In word and deed such deep grace, accompanied by omnipotent power, shone forth as the world had never seen; and at the close of His ministry

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He says, "*They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*" (John xv. 24.) The world had rejected the Son, and with Him the Father also.

But the ways of divine love are very wonderful; for immediately after speaking thus He announces that the Holy Ghost shall come to earth, that He may "*testify of Me.*" But this was the world's last opportunity. The Spirit was to come because the Son was rejected. If the Spirit should be rejected too, what is left for the world? Nothing but the pure, righteous wrath of an insulted God. Jesus, in announcing the advent of the Spirit, foreshadowed the setting in of *a day of grace*; but a day, mark you, reader, that would assuredly be followed by *a night of judgment.*

Great and awful as was its sin in rejecting the Father and the Son, grace lingered over the world, loth to leave

it to itself and to its doom; hence, when Jesus ascended to heaven the Spirit came to earth. (Acts i., ii.)

But both blessing and woe are connected with His coming. His testimony *received* brings salvation; *rejected*, it carries with it eternal judgment. The world has been given its last chance; but it is a wonderful chance; for while He is here there is salvation for the vilest. To-day the destiny of numberless souls is being decided by the rejection or reception of the Spirit's witness.

"*He shall testify of Me,*" says the Son; and this witness of the Spirit is found in the Bible, which is His work. There all the glories of Christ are unfolded. Prophecy, symbol, type, and figure, interwoven throughout Old Testament history, is the Spirit's way of testifying of Jesus there; and in the New Testament the incarnation, life,

and ministry of the Son are brought before us in a four-fold view; and the light of the Spirit then illumines Calvary's dark scene, and we see Jesus there as the true and only sacrifice for sin, the Saviour of the world.

But while it is true that the Holy Ghost has, in the Word, given a powerful testimony to the work of Christ in its blessed efficacy for the salvation of the lost, it is also true that He has taken up an attitude towards this world which must never be forgotten. In John xvi. Christ says, "When He is come, He will reprove" (bring demonstration to), "the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

men to view and speak of Christ's death, there, unchanged and awful, is the Spirit's witness that His crucifixion was the result of the world's unbelief in Him, and the sin of that crucifixion is fixed upon it. (Acts ii. 22-24.) The world got rid of one divine Person by crucifying Him; but it is a solemn and significant fact that another divine Person came straightway to it to convict it of this dreadful crime. It may suit the world to forget or smooth over that shameful act at Calvary, when Incarnate Love was taken by guilty hands, and for no offence whatever put to death; but it will never be able to clear itself of the sin.

The world cannot get rid of the Holy Ghost as it got rid of Jesus. *He* is beyond its power; and, whether men know it or not, the terrible fact remains, that His presence here is a perpetual witness of the sin which is

upon it, in crucifying Him whose only crime was to make known the glories of divine love.

Where is Jesus now? The Spirit points us to the Father's throne, and tells us He is there. The world displayed its utter sinfulness in crucifying the Son; the Father's righteousness was displayed in seating Him at His own right hand. And this act of the Father's righteousness sheds an eternal light upon the world's guilt. That blessed Person, whom men spat upon, and put into the most ignominious place on earth, has been exalted to the highest place in heaven. Thus has the Father declared the worthiness of the Son; and the Spirit's testimony as to the Son's present position reveals the magnitude of the world's sin in rejecting Him.

And this is not all. Satan, who led man on to commit this crime—Satan,

the world's prince, he who holds empire here over the hearts and minds of the unconverted, he who has them in his power, and leads them in his chains, has been judged. His wickedness rose to its greatest height when he planned and carried out the great drama of Calvary; and the witness of the Spirit as to him is that he is judged, and the moment fixed when he shall be cast into the everlasting fire prepared for him and his angels. (Rev. xx. 10; Matthew xxv. 41.)

And if the prince is judged, what of the people? Why, the judgment of God is brooding over *them*. But though this is true, yet the position of Satan and that of the world differs; for while there is no hope for Satan, there is hope for sinners *while the Holy Ghost is here*. There is salvation for them on one condition; viz., that they receive His testimony.

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He is here to declare to mankind the sin that was committed in murdering Jesus of Nazareth; and the testimony which He bears to this renders every human being on earth responsible to clear themselves of all participation in the crime BY ACCEPTING WITHOUT DELAY JESUS AS THEIR SAVIOUR, to avail themselves of the work which He accomplished on that cross, where man's sin placed Him, for the salvation of their souls; for apart from the Spirit's indictment of the world for the slaying of Christ, He points fallen humanity to this very same crucified Christ, and tells them that their only hope is in Him; that there at that awful hour the whole question of human guilt was gone into, and a full and complete satisfaction for sin made in the Son's death and bloodshedding; that out of evil good has come; that God's love has tri-

triumphed over man's sin; that the very act whereby humanity consummated their guilt has been used by God to provide a full and everlasting salvation for their souls. From the judgment of that Holy One, pardon flows forth to the guilty; from His smiting, healing comes to sin-sick humanity; from His death, eternal life springs for every child of Adam that believes in Him. (Acts ii. 12-36; xiii. 38, 39.)

It is the complete and glorious triumph of divine wisdom and love over man's sin and folly, and Satan's craft and malignity. At the cross Satan was defeated and his condemnation sealed. On the one hand was manifested, in a light that will never grow dim, man's hatred of God and all good; and on the other Jesus' perfect obedience, and God's magnificent love and holy abhorrence of sin.

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Yet, though the Spirit can and does announce to man a present and eternal salvation through that wondrous work, He never ceases to warn the world of another work that Jesus has to accomplish. The Son has been appointed to judge. (Acts xvii. 31; 2 Thess. i. 6-10.)

Hidden from man's gaze for centuries, He will again be manifested; but this time not in grace, not in weakness, not to endure reproach, but to pour upon it, in the power of omnipotent might, the wrath of the offended Deity.

Salvation or judgment, bliss or woe, heaven or hell, Jesus as Saviour or Jesus as Judge, this is the Spirit's never-changing story, His never-varying witness to a lost world.

And how have mankind treated the witness of the Spirit? It is now nearly nineteen centuries since He

came to earth. And what is the world's condition? Has it accepted His witness?

Reader, out of this earth's population of thirteen hundred millions of human souls, *ten hundred millions know neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost.* Their religious creeds, where any exist, are adopted from other sources than the Bible; and their knees are bent, not to the Triune God of inspiration, but to gods of their own creating.

And of the so-called Christian world, composed of the remaining three hundred millions, what is *its* state? The answer is found in the increasing and barefaced infidelity in religious and irreligious quarters; in the substitution of empty religious rites and human goodness(?) for Jesus' precious work; in the indifference of the masses to the gospel message; in the rise and rapid spread of anti-

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Christian systems, such as Mormonism, Spiritualism, and Christadelphianism; in the wide-spread surrender and denial of vital Scripture truths, and the acknowledged decline of spiritual life in the churches.

And what does all this mean? Simply this, reader, *that just as in the days of Christ the world rejected the Father and the Son, it has now rejected the Spirit*, for in rejecting His testimony they have rejected *Him*.

God's means for blessing this present world are thus exhausted. He can do nothing more. In rejecting the Spirit men close the door of salvation against themselves. Angels were not sent as revealers of God's mercy, but the Son and the Spirit came; and in these the whole Trinity has been refused by mankind, in all their wondrous manifestations.

of compassion for and interest in the fallen creature.

The world has sealed its own doom, and that doom is fixed. It has thrown away its last opportunity. No power now can arrest the threatened judgment. And time is hurrying it toward the awful crisis. The last moments of the dispensation are here. Christ is at hand. The Spirit and the saints will soon be gone; and the world, now careless of its danger, will wake up to reap the fearful consequences of rejecting the Father's love, the Son's cross, and the Spirit's strivings.

"Depart from us," said the world of Noah's time to God, and He took them at their word. (Job xxii. 17.) "Depart from us," said men to the Son eighteen hundred years ago, and He left them. (Luke viii. 37.) "Depart from us," this present world

is saying to the Spirit, and dovelike
He is pluming His wings for flight.

Reader, if *you* have not listened to the Spirit's solemn witness concerning Jesus, if *you* have not yielded to the authority of the Son, if *you* have not left the rebel ranks and placed yourself beneath the banner of Christ, if *you* have not received Him as the Saviour of your lost soul, YOU are yet in fellowship with this unhappy world—part of it—and charged in the mind of God with the sin of rejecting the blessed Trinity in all their wondrous ways of grace; *and I would not be in your place for the wealth of ten million worlds.*

W. H. S.
