

# Northern Messenger

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## Will You Decide To-Day?

(‘Christian Safeguard.’)

When Antiochus Epiphanes, the godless king of Syria, made war upon the Egyptian king Ptolemy Philometor, and penetrated as far as Memphis and besieged Alexandria, B. C. 169, the Roman ambassador Popilius Laenas brought him orders from Rome to raise the siege at once. Antiochus hesitated, temporized, and wished time to consult his friends in the matter; but Popilius took his staff and drew a circle around Antiochus in the sand, and bade him decide the matter before he went out of that circle. The Syrian king did not dare to disobey the

has never asked him to repent to-morrow, but he ‘now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.’ Just here and just now is the time and the only time that the Lord commands, invites and requires us to repent and obey him. If we refuse to repent to-day we distinctly and definitely disobey God. If we offer to repent to-morrow we simply insult him who commands us to repent to-day.

Around the very spot where we stand, around the present moment, the Lord strikes the circle that bounds our opportunity and summons us to instant, unconditional, unqualified surrender. Just here—this very moment—God ‘now commandeth all men

is also making a decision, and one which will stand on record in the presence of God. Now, in this present, precious, fleeting hour, you must make the decision which may perhaps settle your destiny for all eternity.

If you are to be saved at all you must be saved by the Lord. If you are to be saved by the Lord you must be saved in the Lord’s way and in the Lord’s time. You are not to expect the King of Glory to wait your convenience. You are not the central being of the universe. When Queen Victoria ‘commands’ the attendance of any artist, singer, or personage, her majesty’s commands cancel every previous engagement. Earthly monarchs demand obedience. You would not think of asking a king or an emperor to await your time, and conform to your convenience. You would expect to be ready when he calls you, and make everything wait upon his convenience. And now while God invites you, while heaven bends in mercy above you, while all blessings are offered in your behalf and for your acceptance, why will you halt, and linger, and hesitate, till the opportunity is gone, till the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved? To-day if you will hear his voice—if you ever intend to listen to his call—to-day harden not your hearts. Let the voice of God sound through your souls, and let your answer come prompt, and glad, and free, ‘I delight to do thy will, O my God.’

‘To-day the Saviour calls: ye wand’rers, come;

O ye benighted souls, why longer roam?

‘To-day the Saviour calls: oh, hear him now;

Within these sacred walls, to Jesus bow.

‘To-day the Saviour calls: for refuge fly;

The storm of justice falls, and death is nigh.

‘The Spirit calls to-day: yield to his power;

Oh, grieve him not away, ‘tis mercy’s hour.’

## Our Work at Home.

FROM THE SUNNY SIDE.

(By Mrs. Alice G. S. Derby.)

‘Five rows of grapes from the sunny side of my vineyard.’ Very persistently did the words keep sounding in my ears late one snowy winter afternoon as I sat in our cozy library before a cheery wood fire. I puzzled for some time over the connection in which I had first found them; then I remembered it was in a mission paper where I had read a little story of a native Christian in Asia Minor who, when asked how much he would give toward the building of a new church, had answered, ‘Five rows of grapes from the sunny side of my vineyard.’

Just why I thought of the words that afternoon I cannot say, but still they kept repeating themselves in my brain, and singing in time and tune with the sizzling of the sap from the logs on the hearth, over and over again, until by degrees the library, with its familiar nooks and the gleam of golden bindings on its shelves, became a dim and dreamy place—the warmth of the fire changed to the warmer glow from a southern sun



voice of Rome. He raised the siege and went his way to other fields.

There are times when men need to be brought to an instant decision concerning the things which concern our peace. In fact, we are deciding every day whether we know it or not. God calls man to repent, and he calls him to repent ‘to-day.’ If man defers, he refuses. If he says to-morrow, or next month, or next year, he is making promises which he is not certain of fulfilling; he is undertaking to do what is entirely out of his power; he is not merely offering to do what the Lord has never asked him to do, but he is simply refusing to do what God requires of him. The Lord asks no man to repent to-morrow, or next week, or next year. His only call to man to repent is to-day. ‘To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ For a man to say he will repent to-morrow is to say that he will not repent to-day. The Lord

everywhere to repent.’ And the decision must be made this very hour. If we decide to obey the call it is well. If we decide to disobey it we do it at our peril. But one of the two things we must do. ‘Hesitation is disobedience. Postponement is disobedience. Neglect is disobedience. Making excuses is disobedience. There is just one of two things to do—obey the command, or else refuse God’s call and take the consequences. We have nothing to do with future opportunities. We have nothing to do with making promises for time to come. Just here we must meet the divine demands, or else we must take the risks and consequences of neglect.

What is your decision concerning this matter? Time is passing; the moments are flying. The circle of opportunity is drawn around your feet, and you must make your decision, willingly or unwillingly. You must decide what to do. Yielding is deciding; refusing is deciding; but neglecting