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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.  
The Promise of Spring.

The clouds are silently weeping,  
Weeping the shadows away;  
I gaze through the gathering raindrops  
And wait for the brightening day.

And soon will the freshening breezes,  
Sweep o'er the wakening world;  
Soon afar on the mountains,  
Will the banners of Spring be unfurled.

Soon over hillside and valley,  
Will the rich green carpet be spread,  
Beautiful, fragrant and yielding,  
So softly and light to our tread.

Soon in the groves and the forests,  
The songs of the birds we will hear,  
As back from their southern asylum,  
They hasten to gladden our year.

Soon will the many sweet flowers,  
Jewel the emerald plain,  
Answering promptly the summons  
That calls back their beauty again.

Over the blossoming landscape  
Smiling will bend the blue sky;  
Brightly the sun will be shining,  
On the beautiful earth by-and-by.

So, while the raindrops are falling,  
Know we that Spring is a near;  
If dark be the days that precede her,  
More gladly we welcome her here.

Thus ever, though life's dreary shadows  
Surround us, and hide all that's fair,  
May we still look from earth up to Heaven,  
And think of the Spring "over there."

March 23rd, 1877. N.

## Religious.

The Great Command.

BY REV. W. N. CLARKE.

We commonly call it the Great Commission; as though it were merely a kind of charter, under which the church was authorized to organize itself, if it would, for aggressive work. But we should be nearer the truth if we called it the Great Command, or the Supreme Law of Christian Life; "Go ye, make disciples of all nations." Both in directness and in dignity, this ranks above all other words in the Bible that tell of our duty and Christ's kingdom. Notice a few of its high qualities.

1. It is a personal command; not a result of human reasoning, or an abstract statement of duty; it is a personal command from Him who had just died and risen again for us. It is the expression of His will, and all that makes Him precious and important in our esteem makes this word weighty.

2. It is the personal command that lies nearest to the Saviour's heart; for the work which it assigns to His people is the continuance and completion of His own saving work. First, He must become a perfect Saviour, and then He must provide for making Himself known to all the world. At the moment when this command was given, the first part of His chosen work had just been finished. His whole heart had been given to it, and He had been successful; repentance and remission of sins could now be preached in His name among all nations. The time had come, therefore, for the era of preaching to begin. And now the same desire for human salvation which led the Lord to the Cross, demanded that the news of salvation should go forth to all men. We are accustomed to say that the work of giving the Gospel to the world is a work dear to Christ; but how dear, we too rarely think. He must desire this work to be done, with the same intensity with which He desired to become a perfect Saviour for men. His love for a lost world once led Him to die for us; and the same love now impels Him to send the saving message forth upon the lips of His people. We often speak of our Lord's devotion to the work of saving the world; but we do well to remember that that devotion now requires the preaching of the Gospel as urgently as it once required the death upon the Cross.

3. It is a command for the entire Christian age. As soon as we see how the work of proclaiming salvation stands related to the work of providing it, we shall perceive that the Lord, when He uttered this command, was looking forward to all the future. When He had made salvation ready, He simply said to His friends, "Go, tell of it." Evidently this was not work for one generation, or for two. It was work that must continue until it was no longer needed. As long as there were men who had not heard, so long would the preaching of the Gospel be, for the time, the work of salvation. If we look about us, in the present age, we cannot fail to see that there is precisely the same reason for the command now as then. When the Lord ascended, the Roman Empire was great and strong, and populous, and its millions of human beings were entirely ignorant of the possibility of eternal life. We think we live in very different times, but it is only a little while since the Chinese Empire, three times as populous as the Roman ever was, was in precisely the same condition; it is but a little while since the work had to be taken up in India, and, indeed, in the whole continent of Asia, exactly where it had to be taken up on the Day of Pentecost, as a work entirely new. There are still great realms in which absolutely nothing has been done, and which lie as the whole world lay when the Lord ascended, in utter ignorance of the true God and eternal life. Indeed, it may be questioned whether there are not more human beings ignorant of the true Gospel alive to-day than there were on the day when the Saviour left the earth. If there was then reason why the Lord should appoint preaching to the world as the work of His church, there is the same reason now. The lapse of eighteen hundred years has made no difference, and the command still holds.

4. It is a command which, for any individual Christian it is loyalty to obey, and disloyalty to disobey. All that has been said before stands as evidence in proof of this statement: That it is a personal command given by our Saviour; that it was uttered at a solemn moment, when He was about to leave the earth; that it had reference to all the future; that such a command was certain to be given, if once He had become a Saviour for the world; that His work of saving the world can be carried forward only by obedience to this command; that this is the command above all others, in which His heart is interested; all these facts conspire to make this command, above all others, the test of loyalty. Such a command, whoever will be loyal must obey, and whoever is content to disobey is disloyal. No one can be true to Christ, and consider himself exempt from obedience to this supreme law. If any one says, "I have no duty under this command," he thereby disowns the authority of Christ. If any one thinks this too broad a statement, he has only to inquire by what kind of reasoning any subject of the Lord Jesus can be exempted from obedience to this command. If the reasons are carefully weighed, it will appear that a Christian cannot be released, except by reasons that subvert Christ's sovereignty altogether, and make of Christianity itself only an unmeaning name. Before a Christian can account himself free from this law, he must say that a man may live in obedience to Christ without obeying His chief command; that a man may live in love to Christ without loving what Christ loves most; that a man may be loyal to Christ, and yet be free to frame his life without regard to Christ's aims and purposes. With such reasoning, all meaning goes out of obedience, loyalty and love, and the name of Christ is robbed of all authority. There is no way to frame a Christian life aright, or even to conceive of a loyal Christian life, without freely confessing our personal obligation to obey the great command.—*Watchman.*

A stout heart breaks ill-luck.

For the Christian Messenger.

## The Unsaved.

The condition of the unsaved is most lamentable. Their present experience is unsatisfactory, to say the least. Being out of harmony with God they cannot have peace. The love of sin is paramount in their hearts, and sin in itself is a punishment; for it disarranges the body, or the soul, or both. Gross sins corrupt the body, and all kinds of sin corrupt the mind. A soul in such a case is not satisfied. Creature comforts may abound. Luxury may lend her soothing presence. But still the soul is restless. It is hungry and thirsty. It is not content with husks and longs for something better. Within there is a sound of weeping; the soul mourns and refuses to be comforted.

And besides this restlessness of the soul there is a sting which accompanies sin. If a wasp sting my hand I feel the pain. And, not less surely, if sin touches my soul I feel the sting. I may misunderstand it. I may mistake the cause. But I feel it. I cannot help it. It is according to the nature of things.

But if a hundred wasps sting my hand the poison will produce numbness. So the soul may become so poisoned with sin as to be numb. But because the pain ceases to be acutely felt, we are not to suppose that the poison is gone, or the evil less, any more than we are to suppose that my hand is in a healthy condition because numb from the effects of poison.

It is true there are some who sin and feel little if any twinge of conscience. But this only proves the presence of a prodigious quantity of poison, which, for the time, has deadened the sensibilities of the soul.

It is incontrovertible that the affections of the unregenerate are diseased; their desires are unhealthy; while the soul of each, like a caged bird, beats the prison bars and longs for liberty.

This is neither sentiment nor sophistry. It is calm reason and well authenticated truth. It is established by the mouth of more than two or three witnesses!

But to all the evil of the present experience must be added the imminent danger of being thrust into an experience inconceivably worse, and from which there is no possibility of escape.

The unsaved are liable to be plunged, at any moment, into the restless sea of eternal remorse. Here, the soul is ever hoping for something better; there, there is no hope. Souls have felt keen anguish in this experience; in that, anguish is keener. Hearts here have been torn with remorse; there, remorse is more terrible. I know not what will be the form of punishment in that Lower World, but this I do know, for the Bible hath taught me, that it will be sufficiently dreadful to justify the most awful description of its horrors.

The pain of sin which begins in this experience becomes prodigious then. The sting which is felt now is but the dashing of a brooklet which there is expanded into the ocean of ceaseless despair.

Surely, sin hath plunged us into a fearful condition! And, surely, they are in peril whose sins are unforgiven! Reader, are you unsaved?

SYMONDS.

March 20th, 1877.

For the Christian Messenger.

## To the Mediterranean and Back.

THE GRECIAN ARCHIPELAGO.

We pass the bold headland of Cape Martapan and gaze for the first time upon classic Greece. The three entrances from the South-west into the Grecian Archipelago are now in sight—the first between Greece and the island of Cerigo, the second between Cerigo and Cerigoth, and the third between Cerigoth and Candia.

Of these we select the first. This narrow passage, with its range of mountains on each side and light-house

on a sloping hill, reminds us forcibly of Digby Gut; but its sides instead of being covered with a forest of trees have merely a growth of thin shrubbery or are entirely bare.

To the East we sight the ancient Mons Coreyra, a lofty precipitous promontory on the North-west of Candia or ancient Crete. This island, on account of its position, fertility and population, is the most important in the Archipelago. It is under Turkish thralldom and has long been struggling for its liberty. The population is one-third Turk, and two-thirds Greek. Greek is the official language, but Mohammedanism is the prevailing religion. The mountain inhabitants are a high-spirited race of people, and are said to trace their descent from the days of Minos without admixture from Roman, Saracen, Italian or Turk, who have in turn conquered and ruled the island. Near the centre of Crete is the celebrated Mt. Ida. At its base is an immense cavern, supposed to have been the ancient labyrinth. To the South of this lofty mount a narrow neck of land projects into the Mediterranean. On the East side of this projection there is a small bay called Kalo-Limniones, the Fair Havens where Paul desired the vessel to winter when on his voyage to Rome; and on the West-side is Messara bay, and a little beyond Port Litro, for which the greater number advised to sail. Paul, after leaving Fair Havens had to double Cape Litinos and cross Messara bay, and here the fierce Euroclydon, sweeping down from Mt. Ida, caught the ship, drove her out upon the Mediterranean and cast her upon the island of Melita.

We are now fairly among the Isles of Greece, and one dream of our lives is about to be realized. Whether we look North, South, East, or West, it is a sea of islands. Islands, small and large, circular and square, triangular and irregular, sloping and precipitous, barren and fertile, inhabited and uninhabited. The larger part, however, have a general resemblance. They are all lofty, varying in height from 874 to 8060 feet. The mountains are of a reddish or sandy color, and look dry and sterile like land after a long drought in summer. No forests cover their slopes, nothing but scattering bushes. Rows of windmills for grinding grain are frequently seen upon the hills. Although the mountains are barren, the soil along the coast and in the valleys is luxuriously fertile. Olive, oil, vines, mastic-gum, locust-beans, oranges, and figs, the largest in the world, are among the principal productions. Upon the upland plains the fruits of Europe, as well as good grain, can be successfully grown. Silks and damasks are the chief manufactures. The towns of the islands present a lovely appearance as they rise in dazzling whiteness on the amphitheatre slope of the different hills, surrounded by groves, plantations and numerous villas. The climate is most delightful owing to their position between the hot and arid sky of Africa and the more temperate atmosphere of Europe.

On our right are the islands of Milo and Antimilo, Paros and Antiparos. Paros has from time immemorial been noted for Parian marble, and Antiparos for its grotto. Close by is Thermia, probably deriving its name from the hot springs, which has on its Western extremity the ruins of the Ancient Cynthus. On our left is the coast range of Sparta, now depressed into fertile valleys, now rising into barren peaks. In all save form alone, how changed!

Between us and Sparta is the island of Hydra. Its town, Hydra, is the largest in the Sporades. We now cross the Gulf of Athens. Directly ahead are the islands of St. George, also called from its shape the Cardinal's Hat, and Ægina, with its temple of Jupiter. The Bay of Salamis, the scene of the terrible defeat of the Persian fleet, is just beyond, and Athens itself is only thirty miles distant. The deep regret is that our way does not lead to this most renowned

city of antiquity. We pass close under Cape Colonna, the south-east extremity of Attica. Here are the ruins of the temple of Minerva. Sixteen marble columns still stand in silent grandeur, as in the days when the ancient Greeks raised them for the worship of their heathen gods. To temples like this the apostle Paul referred when he cried out to the Athenians, that "The God who made the world and all things therein, he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands."

Sailing North through Zea Channel we enter a sea almost entirely surrounded by the lofty islands of Zea, Syra, Andros and Eubœa, and the East coast of Attica. Whilst here we hear not the sweet melody of Sirens as did Ulysses of old, but instead Æolus opens his cave and lets out the North-east winds upon us in terrific force. The blasts from off Mt. Elias in Eubœa and the surrounding heights strike this enclosed sea with great violence, lashing the blue waves into a mass of foam and sometimes taking the masts out of passing vessels. Their approach is indicated by white clouds resting on the mountain tops, and their departure by the disappearance of the fleecy banks. The "Meltem gales" is the term applied to them by the modern Greek sailor, and are believed to be one and the same with the ancient tempestuous Euroclydon of Paul. In addition to head winds a current of from two to four knots always sets down from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean. British, Norwegian, Swedish, Italian, Austrian, French and American vessels, with small Greek feluccas, are beating backward and forward, unable to make any headway against wind and current.

Opposite Eubœa, the mountains of Attica are depressed into a valley, and then succeeds a range of eight mountain-peaks. Between these and the shore a large plain intervenes. Two small rivers wind across it and between them is the battle field of Marathon.

"The battle-field, where Persia's victim horde  
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hella's sword,  
As on the morn to distant glory dear  
When Marathon became a magic word;"

Should we cross the bay of Marathon and follow Euroipo Channel between Eubœa and Attica we would view the ever memorable pass of Thermopylae, where Leonidas and his 300 Spartans withstood the whole Persian army.

We pass out of this sea, however, through Doro Channel between the islands of Eubœa and Andros. This channel is like a great highway. It has been navigated by the generations of over three thousand years. Grecian triremes, Roman galleys, and Persian fleets, have crossed these waters. And to-day, merchantmen, steamers, and men-of-war, plough their way along the same trackless path.

North of Doro Channel, on our right, is the island of Chios famous for the excellence of its wines. Here is ancient Mt. Pelinæus, a mountain of red-colored granite. This is also one of the seven places that hold a claim—and this a weighty claim—as the birth-place of Homer. On its Western side is a cove called Homer's cove and a rock known as Homer's school. Just beyond is the island of Mitylene with its lofty range of mountains. Between Chios and Mitylene is the entrance to the Gulf of Smyrna, and through this strait we have our first view of a portion of Asia. On our left are the islands of Strati and Lemnos. Strati, 874 feet high, is the lowest in the Archipelago. Away to the North Mt. Athos can be seen in dark outline, its lofty summit capped with clouds. Here a Persian fleet was wrecked and Xerxes, to avoid a similar disaster, dug his great canal.

We next came close under the Asiatic coast, which presents a somewhat different appearance from the mountain slopes of the islands, as it is covered with forests of oaks. In the valleys and on the hill sides are the ruins of ancient forts together with many towns and villages of modern