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The Sea! The Sea! The Wide and Open Sea!

CH Spurgeon

“The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.”—Psalm 95:5

THIS Psalm exhorts us to sing joyfully unto God. Whether we contemplate the land or the sea, there will be found upon them both abundant reasons for adoring the great Creator. Some, I know, as they walk upon the land, can no more praise him than if it were one vast desert of Sahara; and yet the earth is full of his goodness; it is as a garden yielding, not only food for man and beast, but flowers lovely and fragrant. Forest and field, mountains and plain alike sing out the praises of the Lord. Nor is the sea less rich in excitements to worship the Lord our Maker. Ignorant persons regard the sea as a dreary waste of waters. In the olden times, our home-loving forefathers were desperately afraid of the sea, and looked upon it as a devouring monster. It was a “melancholy ocean” to them, a place of constant sorrow, and sudden death; they shuddered as they thought of it. But, indeed, to him who is rightly taught, the sea is full of beauty, its every wave is lit up with splendour: the sea is the Lord's, and he made it. You see, then, that both on the land and on the sea adoration is in its place. Praise is never out of season at any time, and worship is never foreign in any land. It matters not whether we travel over sand or snow, or how we are tossed about, on Arctic or tropical seas, we are still in the pastures of the great Shepherd, and within the palaces of the great King. Praise the Lord from the earth, and let dragons and all deeps join in the psalm. “Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”

At this time I shall ask you only to think of the sea. I could far more easily preach upon this text if I were standing in one of my delightful haunts by the Mediterranean, looking over its blue waters, hidden away in the cleft of a rock, with the spray at my feet; then, I think, I should not coldly read the words, but clap my hands, as I cried with my heart, “The sea is his, and he made it.” Here we are, however, stranded on this white-cliffed island, and banished from the fresh sea breeze to this huge Babylon of bricks, where men appear to forget God, since they see so little of his works and so much of their own. Let us try, if we can, to transport ourselves to the wide and open sea, and as we gaze all around, and see nothing but the rolling waves, let us sing,—

“He formed the deeps unknown, He gave the seas their bound; The watery worlds are all his own, And all the solid ground.”

There is no need for any laboured divisions in our sermon to-night: our first point will be that *God made the sea*; and the second will be that *therefore it is his*; and the third shall come out of the next verse, *he is therefore to be adored*: “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

I. Our first thought is that GOD MADE THE SEA.

Somebody made it, and *who else could have made it but God?* It is not often that you find a seafaring man who is an atheist. Addison tells us of a time when he was on board ship, and there was a passenger on deck who was an infidel. He was reported to the captain as an atheist, and neither he nor the sailors could make out what sort of a strange fish that might be, and asked him what he meant. They were told that he did not believe in a God. A storm coming on, the men proposed that they should pitch him overboard, seeing he did not believe in God Almighty; but he was soon cured of his unbelief, for, when things looked threatening, the first person who was down on his knees, crying for mercy in great terror, was the precious atheist, who soon got rid of his atheism when he felt in danger of his life. A little while ago, a Christian minister crossing to America was walking the deck with a gentlemen who called himself an atheist. It was a very bad night, and the vessel had to steam on in the teeth of a head wind. It would have been fatal to let her drift. The

captain said, "We cannot keep any watch, we must drive ahead, and if we do run into an iceberg, there's an end of us." Our friend, who believed in a God, hearing this, said that he should turn in, and go to sleep; his companion declared that he could not think of doing any such thing, he should not like to die in his sleep, and so he would walk the deck, rough as it was. All night long he who had no God was cold and wet with watching, and fretting, and worrying, because he was afraid he should die; while my friend slept sweetly, and rose in the morning fresh as a lark. Coming on deck, he accosted the philosopher, "What! have you not turned in?" "No, no." He was miserable, he was unhappy. "Why," said the believer, "I trusted in my heavenly Father, and I fell asleep, and I feel quite refreshed. What good have you got by staying here?" "I must confess," said the other, "you believers have the best of it when you get to sea." Yes, and assuredly we have the best of it on land, too. We have the best of it in health, in sickness, in death, and we shall have the best of it for ever.

God made the sea, and *the prints of his hands are still to be seen*. Skillful persons can tell that a picture is by a certain artist by its style. It is not everybody that can judge so well; but a man skilled in art knows the touch of each painter's brush. "That is Rembrandt," cries the artist, "he alone could produce such lights and shadows; and the other is a Salvator Rosa; I know the master's hand." He also who has sought out the works of the Lord, and hath pleasure therein, knows the great Father's style. The same sublime mind which gave us the Holy Scriptures also ordained the channels of the deep. I am absolutely sure that he who reveals the secrets of the soul is he in whose hands are the deep places of the sea. His commandment is exceeding broad, even as the main ocean: and of his grace we are compelled to cry, "O the depth!" even as when we sound the Atlantic.

I will not go into the question to-night, but there are wonderful points of likeness between the Word and the work of the Almighty. The sea is a mystery of waters, and Scripture is sometimes obscure; but yet the sea shineth like a mirror, and in Scripture we see the Lord as in a glass. The Bible has its storms most terrible, and its calms most restful; it is full of life, even as the sea nourisheth creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts; it is full of power, even as the sea moveth in the fullness of its strength; there is a certain peculiar light of its own within the Word, as if it were all sun and flame, even as at times the waters are a liquid light, and the waves shine as with ten thousand stars. The wisdom, goodness, power, and infinity of God are all to be seen in the ocean by those who have opened eyes. He who knows God can see his hand in the scales of every little fish. If he takes up a five-finger or a crab, he perceives a master hand in the fashioning of its smallest members. If you take a beautiful needle, however admirably polished, and put it under a microscope, you say to yourself, "A man made this," for it looks like a rough bar of iron, the microscope finds out its want of finish; but if you take a frill of seaweed, or the eye of a shrimp, and put these under the glass, you exclaim at once, "No man ever made this, no man could have made it. It is perfection." I shall not go into further details; but I am sure that he who is acquainted with the works of God sees at once that the sea is God's creature, and in its ever-changing sameness, in its awe-inspiring majesty, its waves and caverns, its calms and storms, it tells of a hand invisible, a mind unsearchable.

God made the sea: you can mark his wisdom there. Philosophers tell us there is just as much water in the sea as there ought to be, and no more. Perhaps, if there were twice as much sea as we now have, we should not be able to live; and if there were any less, the world would become too dry for human habitation; the land and water balance each other to an ounce and a drop; there can be neither more nor less. Permanent and fixed are the relations and proportions of matter; substances may change their combinations, but of the elements the same amount must abide till all things pass away. That the sea is salt, and therefore does not corrupt, that it is moved with tides, and therefore does not stagnate, that it evaporates, and therefore does not increase so as to drown the earth, are all instances of divine wisdom. If its waters were more or less salt than they are, many fishes would die, and the floating power of the ocean would change. There is a relation between the size of the ocean and the balancing of a dewdrop upon its blade of grass, a proportion between a hurricane and the dancing of a gnat in the summer's sun. The more we study the sea, the more shall we say, "Thy way, O Lord, is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters."

And certainly no man can deny the power which thunders across the billows. What tremendous force is there displayed! "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." When one has seen the damage the sea has wrought upon our coasts, the way in which the hardest rock has been worn away; when one has sadly watched a huge barque tossed to and fro like a plaything, and when one has heard how the hugest vessels are caught in a cyclone, and whirled away like feathers; one bows upon his face before the almighty Lord who rules the sea. And yet God's goodness is there as well. The sea is a great benefactor! Where were the clouds, and where the rains, and where our harvests, if it were not for the ocean? The sea feeds myriads with its fish, and enriches many more by its commerce. It was once thought to divide nations, but now it has become the highway by which they communicate, a silver belt by which all lands are bound to one another. England, above all nations, has reason to see the goodness of God in the sea. Perhaps we had not even remained a nation if the silver streak had not separated us from the continent. Most probably we had not been a free nation, or a Protestant nation, if the Lord had not bidden the waters encompass us.

"O Britain, praise thy mighty God, And make his honours known abroad; He bade the ocean round thee flow, Not bars of brass could guard thee so."

May God inspire British hearts with gratitude to him for setting old England like a queen in the midst of the sea, where she laughs at the tyrant's power.

Every attribute of God shines in the sea, although the more spiritual and precious are but dimly seen, these being reserved to be manifested in Christ Jesus the Lord, before whose feet the sea crouched in reverence. Perhaps e'en those attributes will be discovered to be there in some degree when our eyes shall be strengthened to see the glory of the Lord in all his works. Till then we will listen to the sea, and think of it as an—

"Impassioned orator with lips sublime,

Whose waves are arguments which prove a God."

God made the sea. I delight to reflect upon this fact, for *it brings us so very near to God*. Yonder at our feet are the blue waves which he has created. You have certain treasures which you value greatly because they were made by a dear friend, and you say, "Whenever I look at them I seem to feel him near." Thus do God's works make us feel that he is not far from us. Mungo Park, in the deserts of Africa, had his heart cheered by taking up a little bit of moss, and reflecting that God made it, and that the Creator had been there, and was there, watching over the tiny green thing. Come, then, my friend, and stand by the sea, and say to yourself, "The sea is his, and he made it. Here is something that my heavenly Father made. He has left his foot-print on these waves; he is here still, and his power worketh ever." The palpitating heart of the sea, with its perpetual tide, tells of God's present life. Its alternate advance and retreat at his bidding prove his present majesty, for he says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

I trust many of my seafaring friends have often felt near to God when alone upon the vasty deep. God is in Ratcliff Highway, but it is uncommonly hard to find him. We could find fifty devils there in five minutes sooner than find a trace of God; for there is the den of the drunkard, and there is the foul haunt in which men are robbed and ruined, the house of the strange woman, of which Solomon says, "the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell." Far out at sea the sailor is free from the danger of falling tiles and chimney-pots, when the wind is blowing, and he is free also from many a temptation which besets him on shore. Often, I have no doubt, when you have been alone, watching at night, pacing the deck to and fro, and looking up at the bright stars, you have thought, "God is very near me now." I remember, when going to Hamburg, I stood at night with the captain upon the quarter-deck, and suddenly a light seemed to rush down the mast, and light up the rigging and the whole ship in such a manner as I never saw before. For an instant the vessel seemed to be on fire, and then the light was gone. "What is that?" I said. "What is that?" said he, for neither of us knew; but we felt awe-struck. Seafaring men meet with them often—strange things that we

“land lubbers” never dream about. “They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.” God seems to come very near to those who are on the waters. When the wind howls, and the sea booms, the noise would suffice to drown a thousand volleys of artillery. “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.” When men mount up to heaven, and go down again to the deeps, then is God present to them, and they cry unto him in their troubles. The sea has often forced men to exclaim,—

“Great God, how infinite art thou! What worthless worms are we!”

The fact that God made the sea *should make us feel more confidence in venturing upon it*. We may trust ourselves upon the King’s highway: we may go where Jesus went, and where the Lord reigneth: “The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.” As “all things work together for good to them that love God,” there is nothing left to work for evil. The sea cannot destroy those whom God would preserve. Even if the sea in its tempestuous mood should take away our lives, what will it do but waft us to the gates of heaven? It is as well to go to glory by water as by land; perchance drowning is an easier death than expiring with broken bones or torturing pains. You who are about to emigrate to Australia or to America, and are feeling dreadfully troubled to-night at the thought of the terrible sea, should be of good courage. Your Master went to sea, and his disciples went with him: they, too, were tossed with tempest, and yet their vessel and the other little ships which sailed on the billows of dark Galilee were safe. Our Master, who is Lord High Admiral of the seas, brought all the fleet into harbour safe and sound. He has not given up his rank, or lost his power, and he will save all who sail under his convoy. No tempest or tornado shall wreck a soul that is in his charge.

This ought to make us feel at rest as to those who lie buried beneath the waves. I have heard it said by one or two whom I have known, “I would not have minded, sir, if they could have found the body.” I suppose there is something natural about that regret, but I do not greatly sympathize with it. The sea is God’s own, and blessed are they who lie in God’s most sacred sleeping-place, where no spade of sexton shall ever disturb their bones. Where can any of us lie better than where “pearls lie deep?” What myriads are there already! When the trump of the resurrection sounds, the sea must give up her dead, and myriads will stand upon the waves, as on a sea of glass, to be judged; and full many of them will rise to their eternal thrones from the caverns of the mighty main. God has but to speak it, and though the bodies may have been devoured by fish, or dissolved into their separate atoms by the perpetual beating of the surf, yet when he speaks it, frames shall be refashioned, life shall come back at his call, and our dead men shall live, and in their flesh shall they see God, who, ere they died, had learned to say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

Do not be distressed by the fear of dying at sea. You must die somewhere. Do you know the old story of the man who asked a captain if he was afraid to go to sea? “I am not,” said the mariner, “why should I be?” “Look at the danger,” said the landsman. “How did your father die?” “He died at sea.” “How did your grandfather die?” “He was lost at sea.” “And your great-grandfather?” “Yes,” he replied, “I have heard that he, too, was drowned at sea.” “Surely, then, you are afraid to go to sea?” “No,” said the captain, “I am not. Where did *your* father die?” “He died in his bed.” “And where did your grandfather die?” “He died in his bed.” “And where did your great-grandfather die?” “So far as I know, he also died in his bed.” “And yet you are not afraid to go to bed!” There is good, sound reason in such a view of the matter. We shall not die before our time. Our lives are in the divine hands. You may well smile at my tale, and I hope you will keep a gleam of that pleasant look for the next time death stares you in the face, and then say to yourself, “Be still, my heart. If my time has come, I will commit my spirit into the hands of a faithful Creator, and feel that, if I sink, I shall drop into my Father’s hand, for he holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand.” Thus much upon that first point, God made the sea.

II. Our second point is, GOD OWNS THE SEA: “The sea is his, and he made it”; *he owns it by right of creation*. It is not every-thing that a man makes that is his own. Many tradesmen are occupied in making divers articles which, when they have made them, belong to their masters; but that is because the materials are found for them. God made the sea out of nothing, there were no materials ready to his hand to make this

world of, but his own omnipotence spake it into existence. He filled the sea from his own treasury, the liquid stores were his own. There is not in the sea at this moment a single wave that anybody made but God, and all the constituent elements of it were created by him, and by him only. Therefore he claims the sea from shore to shore, and who shall question his title? Not only did he own it once, but he owns it now; he had never handed over the ocean to any people or nation. David said, "The sea is his," and it is God's still, and it always will be his sea.

But the sea is man's. God evidently meant us to go to sea, because, when he made man, almost the first thing he said was that he made him to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and I do not see how we can have dominion over the fish of the sea if we never go to sea at all. There are the fish, thousands of miles from the shore, and if no mariner shall ever cross the deep, what dominion can we be said to have over "the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas?" He made man to be fisherman as well as to be a farmer; he meant him to plough the waves as well as to plough the shore; in fact, our present race all sprang from one whose huge vessel was the cradle of the new race. Man owns the sea, but still the sea is God's. Man is God's viceroy, but God is the true King. Man is tenant under God, and should pay the quit-rent of reverential gratitude and adoration, for the freehold of the sea remaineth with the Lord. There may be a viceroy in India, or in Ireland, but India and Ireland are still the Queen's; and so man may have dominion over the fish of the sea, but it is a delegated sovereignty, the sea is still the Lord's.

Old ocean does not belong to Neptune, as the heathen used to say; Father Neptune is an idle dream. The idolaters parcelled out the various kingdoms among their deities: one should rule the heavens, another the clouds, another the earth, and another the sea; but we know that there is one God alone. The sea is Jehovah's, and not Neptune's.

Though we sometimes sing, "Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves," the words are not true; Jehovah rules the waves, and not Britannia. There is a sense in which the patriotic song expresses a great truth, and I have not a word to say against it; but we all know that we may be on board Britannia's biggest ship of war, but the Union Jack cannot save us in the time of tempest. Jehovah must then interpose, and bid the billows sleep. "The sea is his, and he made it."

I sometimes feel very glad when I look at the sea, and think that it belongs to the great and generous God, and not to greedy man. Here upon land every foot of earth is enclosed by somebody, and jealously guarded from trespass. The village had a breezy common, upon which a poor man might at least keep a goose; but the great folks could never rest till every inch was put within hedges, and made their own. You can scarcely walk anywhere without being met by, "*Trespassers, Beware.*" Mountains and hills, which everybody ought to be allowed to climb without leave, are fenced in and kept from all intruders. Men fight for years over a yard of ground. This is my lord's, and this is my lady's, and this is copyhold of the manor. "The heaven, even the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men," and they scramble for it, and divide it among themselves. No such greed can appropriate the sea. The free sea cannot be parcelled out, nor hedged, nor ditched, nor dyked, nor walled. It has no lords of the manor, but remains free and unappropriated for ever. "The sea is his, and he made it." According to the law, a few miles from the shore the sea belongs to the country which borders on it; but once reach the main ocean, and nationalities are forgotten. The sea is neither English nor French, Dutch nor American. No barque is a trespasser there. No one ever thought of impounding stray whales for going out of their owner's fields. The pastures of the deep are for all fish; they may feed where they will, from shore to shore.

"The sea is his," and *this begets in you a joyous sense of liberty*, as though for once you were beyond bounds, and, like a sea-bird, feared no cage or fowler's snare. Oh, for a bound from billow to billow of the unpolluted main, where sail of man has never been seen, or voice of blasphemy ever heard! Who can hinder our liberated spirit as it dances on the wave, or dives beneath it? May we always wear that free spirit about us, even in these huddled homes and narrow streets! Let us not be grasping, mean, narrow; let us not hedge in all things unto ourselves, but desire that others may share in our blessings. May we have largeness of heart as the sand which is on the seashore, and greatness of love comparable to the immeasurable sea!

“The sea is his,” then: *this sentence puts all other claimants out of court.* The sea is the Lord’s, and therefore he ought to be revered on it. Hush! hush! What are you at, man? Swearing at God on his own sea! Stop till you get on land, and when you reach the shore, stop till you can find a place where God is not near you, for to swear at him to his face is madness. Will you insult God on his own sea? No, surely. If the sea is his, you will mind what you are at. When a man is out in the street, when he wanders about as he pleases, he may often take many liberties; but if he is invited to a friend’s house, he does not like to be too boisterous and noisy, but minds his manners. If any of us were invited to dine with the Queen, I am sure we should feel quite nervous, and ask of our friends, “Jack, how do you behave when you go into a palace? What is the way of doing it?” You would all be anxious to be proper and well-behaved. On the sea, it seems to me that you should be particularly careful of what you say and do, for you are on God’s premises. Inasmuch as he can hear you think, mind what you think about. On the sea you are inside God’s house; be holy, then, “for holiness becometh his house for ever.” There is the throne of the great King, and around it is a pavement of crystal,—I mean the glassy sea,—and you sailors should think of yourselves as God’s courtiers, permitted to come very near him, and to behold more of his glory than any other men. Oh, that you may be led to think of your positions in this light!

I wish you would think highly of your honourable calling. When a man thinks that his calling necessitates his being wicked, he is sure to be wicked; but when he judges that he is under obligation to be holy, peradventure he will desire to be so, and God’s grace will help him to be so. Ho, you who do business on God’s own sea, fly away from his royal domain if you resolve to rebel against him. Do not dare to sin to his face. But where shall you go? If you take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, you are still within his courts.

There is yet another view of the matter; the sea is the Lord’s, and therefore *I may confess my sin to him when I am out on the ocean*, and he will hear me, for he is there; I may weep the tear of penitence, and he will see me, for God is there. Out at sea I may cry, “My Father,” and he will hear his child. Brother, you may find Jesus at sea, for he was at home on the wave, and a companion of seafaring men. The lake of Galilee was familiar with his voice, and saw his answer to the prayer, “Lord, save, or I perish.” The sea around you waits to hear you pray, and to see God’s wonders on the deep.

Something calls for a repetition of that “hush” which I gave just now, in the thought that “the sea is his,” for *God reveals himself through the sea*, therefore gaze with awe. I have not the slightest doubt that many a man has learned much of God on the ocean, although as yet he knows not the Redeemer and his salvation. I wish every sailor would daily read the Bible, which is our chart to heaven; but many, who have neglected that blessed Book, have found lessons of warning, ay, and lessons of hope, in the rolling wave. O hear the voice of God in the storm! Be warned as you escape from the jaws of death! Have hope as you cling to the rock! The sea is God’s; take care that, when you fly over its hallowed surface, you read Jehovah’s Book, bow before his throne, trust in his Son, and offer to him continual thanksgiving.

It seems to me that, as the sea is God’s, *then sailors should be his too*, or else they are trespassers. A man feeds his own sheep in his own pastures, and would not God have his own mariners on his own sea? Moreover, if God owns the sea because he made it, he owns *you*, because he made you too. You are his creatures, and by all the rights of creatorship you belong to him. He claims you; will you dispute the claim? I would not like to think of you as a blot upon the fair face of ocean. God is looking over all the waters, and seeing the white sails and the smoking funnels that even now are passing from shore to shore, and he is saying, “The sea is all mine, but those men who breast the storm are not mine. I preserve them, but they never think of me. I have sent salvation to them, but they will not hear it. The fish and the bird know their seasons, but man rebels against me.” I cannot bear to think that it should be so. I long for the day when every ship upon the sea shall be an ark, and every sailor a Noah.

What are some of you sailors at? Why, there are many of you whom I would trust with anything: I would not count my gold, but trust you with my purse, I am so sure that you would bring it back safely. You hate dishonesty, and would not tell a lie. You speak out bravely, and fear no man, and yet some of you rob

God. You pay your debts to everybody most freely, but not to your Maker. You owe him most, and yet think of him least. Is not this wrong? See that child! They say he is very good to the servants and to strangers, but he always puts on a scowl when he sees his father, for he cannot bear him. Would you like to be the father of such a child? Yet you are like him. You are capital fellows on board a ship, capital men on shore too when you get among your families, and yet toward God you act shamefully. May the Spirit of God lead you to feel that you are wrong, and when you feel it, may you have grace to tack about, and steer for another point!

A little while ago, a vessel picked up a man far out at sea in an open boat; he was unconscious; the oars were lying by his side, and he had evidently drifted from off the beach, carried by a current right away from help. I wonder whether any man here is drifting right away; out of sight of land, drifting on and on! Ah, Jack, when you were a boy, you went with your mother to the little chapel in the village. Do you recollect that you were in the Sunday-school? You loved to worship with your mother, who is now in heaven; but you went away from home, and you went away from God too! You have been pretty nearly round the world; do you remember the places where you have landed only to plunge into sin? Oh, you forget, do you? I must tell you, then, that God does not forget, and your own conscience does not forget, for the stain is on your soul to-day. You have drifted, drifted, drifted. How long is it since you read a chapter of the Bible? How long since you bowed your knee in prayer? You have drifted very far out. I wish this full-rigged ship of mine, which has just come within sight of you, might pick you up. At any rate, I hail you from this quarter-deck, and if you are not quite unconscious, I hope you will hear the call. Poor shipmate, we would like to get you up the ship's side! Some of my crew will be after you in boats directly, for there are true hearts here that love to rescue the perishing. If one of them comes alongside, just know that he is a friend, and that he comes in the name of Jesus, "mighty to save." May the Lord Jesus come himself, and put out his hand to some sinking Peter, and save him from a watery grave! Amen.

I wonder where the training ship "Atalanta" now is! Where are the other vessels which have been missed so long? We have reason to fear that they are lost! Fine vessels, and yet lost! Hundreds on board, and all lost! We cannot bear to think of it. If they are lost, it will be of no use to go after them; the swiftest vessel cannot overtake them, and the sharpest lookout will never see them. They are beyond hope; but what a mercy it is that *you* are not! If it had not been for the mighty hand of God last voyage, you would not only have been lost at sea, my friend, but lost for ever. To be lost at sea, if the soul is safe, is but a small calamity; but to lose the soul is to lose all. It were good for that man that he had never been born. Blessed be God, you are not in hell yet! You are not shut out from mercy yet; Jesus Christ still flies the mercy-signal, and his servant still cries to you, "Come, come, come to Jesus. Come and welcome, come and put your trust in the Saviour." May his gracious Spirit lead you to do so! Recollect, wherever you are, on whatever sea you may sail, the sea is his. His grace reaches the uttermost. The shipwrecked soul is still within the reach of mercy; if God do but lead it to cry to him out of the lowest depths, he will hear the voice of supplication.

III. I now invite you to the third and concluding point, "O COME, LET US WORSHIP AND BOW DOWN." You of the land, and you of the sea, let us together worship the Lord our God. It is no new work for some of us, for our life is spent in worship; but oh, if it be a new thing with any man here, I would gently take him by the hand and say, "Come, friend, let us worship and bow down, let us do it together. You are a sinner, so am I; you have no merits, and I have none; if ever you are saved, it will be by grace alone, and so it will be in my case. Jesus must be your only hope, and he is mine 'O come, let us worship.'"

Have you never worshipped God? Then, sit still in the pew, and do it. Say, "My God, thou hast made me, teach me how to worship thee." Shall I stop a minute while you ask pardon for Jesus' sake? (Pause.)

This is the last thing I have to say. I recollect a man, an old sailor, who had been a great blasphemer; he was a regular old salt; but there was no salt of grace in him, for he hated religion. He heard the gospel, the Lord brought him to his knees, broke his heart, gave him deep conviction of sin, and afterwards led him to look to Christ, and trust him, and find salvation. When this weather-beaten mariner came forward to join the church, he said, "I am come to get on the register, for I have got a new Owner; I used to carry the black flag at the masthead, and there was not a timber in me but what belonged to the devil. I carried many a cargo and

sailed over many a sea for him; but now I belong to Jesus from stern to stern, and I want to run up the blood-red flag of Christ, who has bought me for his own. I want you to register me under my new Owner, and let me sail with those who belong to him." We were glad enough to register him in the church-book. The first point is to get the Owner,—the Lord Jesus—and then to own him before all the world.

You Christian sailors, wherever you go, show your flag! A dear man of God, a captain, was baptized here last Thursday night, and he told me that twenty or more of his crew were converted on the last voyage out. He said, "We cannot make Christians of them, but we give them an opportunity every day of hearing the gospel, and blessed be God, many have found the Saviour." Captains, mind you look to your crews, and don't have their blood on your skirts through your neglect. If you are not captains, if you have any influence at all, carry the gospel wherever you go. I believe if you are nothing but cabin boys, you can speak a word for Jesus Christ, if you have Jesus Christ in your hearts; and then others will say, "Why that boy shames us, for he loves the Saviour." Though they may scoff at you, and pretend to despise you, it will make a hole in their consciences, depend upon it. If you drop a lighted match down anybody's neck, he may say it is a small bit of timber, and laugh at it, but he will know it is there before long. If you get on fire with the love of God, if you are placed in the company of others, you may be very small and despised, but they will soon discover the heavenly flame. Only you must mind that you are really alight, and that the true fire is in your spirit; for an empty profession will only make religion a mockery. God bless you and bless the Society! (A voice: "Amen.") You said, "Amen." Well, there is to be a collection, and so I hope you will carry out your *amen* in a practical way, and bless the Society by contributing to it as you are able.

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