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Sermon Tenth: Messina aboard the "Guerriere"

Philander Chase

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K. Ch. 180404

Sermon Sunday
P. Ch. 2

My Christian Friends, - If I could persuade
you to listen to me for a few moments with-
out counting it a hardship to do so, I should be
very happy - But I should be more so, if I ^{say to} thought
that any thing I could ~~do~~ ^{say to} you had even
a remote prospect of doing you any good - It
is a hard task that, that I have - of unlearn-
ing to lead those who not only acknowledge
themselves blind but willing to be blind -
Of endeavouring to persuade those not to commit
sin, who are so enamoured with it that they
acknowledge they are willing to follow it where-
ever it may lead them -

How to address you now I hardly know because
I do not know what motive I can set
before you which will stand any chance
of being useful to you who upon principle
act so inconsistently - For instance how
should I persuade a man to live a sober life

who although he acknowledges that drink
^{Destroys}
ing undermines his health, his reason
and is every way pernicious to him - yet
still professes himself willing to do any
thing for the man who ^{will} give him ^{the means of getting} ^{intemperate} ~~him~~
who will give him what he him self ac-
knowledges to be the worst poison he
could take - There would be but little
hope of persuading such a man that
such means are very far from affording
him the happiness he anticipates. That very
nature on which sailors pride themselves
so much - that careless & thoughtless lev-
ity, that fearless profanity, induces you to
question the validity or truth of any thing
which may be said in order to do you good, in
order to induce you to become wiser or better.
If any thing comes across you which you per-
ceive would lead you to alter your course of
life you immediately forget it by repeating

Some cant saying, or swearing a ^{big} sailors
oath. You think, in addition to the low
pleasures which sin may afford, that it will
be a very singular thing for the crew
of a man of war to have any respect
for the laws of God - to endeavour to become
more religious and better men - so in-
deed it would but then that is no folly
but that it would be the best thing
that could happen to you - What would you
think of a ship in which the sailors joined
to all the bravery and hardihood which
which now distinguishes them a sense of their
duty to God and a sincere desire of serv-
ing. In a word sailors who should take
more pride in being thought good men both
in their duty towards God and their coun-
try, than they would in being thought a
gross drinking crew, incapable of being kept
sober but by constant fear of punishment.

If you can tell me how you would be
in any worse situation in such a ship
than you are now I will acknowledge
that I am wrong. It surely would not
be any worse for yourselves: for in that
situation you would observe every one
of your companions bearing his part of the
daily labor and lightening one another's
burdens by being kind and consider-
ate to one another. Instead of cursing
one another and quarrelling enough
one another there would be much
satisfaction in thinking that all of you
whose lots and situations are so nearly
similar were all wishing well to one another
and every man assisting instead of quar-
relling with his companion. There is no ship's
crew who are so happy as those whose conduct
is such that their officers can trust them
who ~~by~~ ^{are} constant ^{in their} attention to their duty

and ^{have} unwearyed perseverance ^{in doing} in what is
required of them. Such men can be trusted
to do thereby much unnecessary trouble
to both to themselves and their officers.
is spared: and when the usual routine
of duty is over such men can have
more indulgence for this very reason
that their conduct is generally such
that there is no fear of their abusing
it. Now precisely as this case is with
respect to what is your duty on board,
such it is ~~with~~ as it regards your duty
to God. No man was ever more unhappy
for leaving him - on the contrary you have
no idea how much easier it is for them
to do their duty who have a religious
sense of it before them than for those
who are obliged to be driven to it or be-
cause they will be punished for it unless
they do. And more than all this, he who

does his duty with a religious sense of
what he owes
~~his duty~~ to God. Has this one grand i-
dea, that he will most surely receive
a reward in the world to come. He has a sure
confidence, that in all his voyages, let the
wind blow as it will, or dangers be ever
so near and so appalling - yet his happiness
is sure and certain beyond the power of
man to ~~work~~ ^{take} it from him -

And as for you my Christian Brethren
the case is thus with you - You all
know very well - that before you sail
upon the bosom of the wide ocean, if
you be not well prepared for the voyage
before you set out, if the ship be not in
a fit condition, or your stores and supplies
insufficient - that the voyage will be
dangerous to you and probably fatal - Why
then can you not reflect that such

is at all as it respects your souls welfare,
Death will soon ^{launch} ~~launch~~ you forth upon
that eternity of which this sea is but
a figure and emblem - and you may
depend that the work of your soul will
most certainly follow if you have not taken
care now while you are upon earth, to
do your duty in laying out a proper store
for this interminable voyage - in provid-
ing yourself with those things which
constitute your safety when the winds
and waves become tempestuous & violent
- or in laying up such things as will
be your support in a voyage which is
the longest and most interesting of your
lives. - Now my Christian Brethren
why can I not expect you to lay up
for yourselves a proper store for this
voyage before hand - It was but a week
or two since, when one of your number
whom I buried this week ~~was~~ ^{was} among

you, with as good a prospect of living a long
and a useful life as any of you here have
and yet he now is gone and numbered
with the dead. He has gone upon that
voyage where we are all sooner or later
bound - and where the only security we have
or can have for safety is our having se-
riously endeavoured while we were in this
world to do our duty. And my Christian
Brethren, as the hour of death cannot
be very far distant with any of us, even
those of us who are to live the longest,
let me seriously entreat you to live so as
you will certainly in the hour of death
wish you had done: live so that when the
curtain of your life comes to be drawn
out you may receive the assurance that
having been always well prepared in
the way of your duty and always avoided as
much as possible the commission of sin, you
are therefore entitled to an everlasting reward -

My Fellow Officers

A simple rule by which
to govern our actions, so that ^{they} may conform
to the wise laws of Divine Providence
is never to commit a deed which you
would be ashamed to tell to your Maker
in your daily communion with him.
It is too to remember the condition
upon which you were received in the
congregation of the flock of Christians
or that condition upon the faithful
performance of which, whatever your do-
mestic may be you have ^{only} a right to be
called a Christian - It is to press the
faith of Christ crucified: and to fight
unceasingly under his banner against
sin the world and the devil and un-
true Christ's faithful soldier & ser-
vant to your life's end —

How many of you have deserted or
become which never failed to carry
its votaries to victory & honor I do not know
But if you should acquire a habit of
accounting all those actions sinful which
you could not reconcile to the camp of
Christ, and of accounting that a treason
now which did not coincide with his
service, you may depend it would do
you no harm - No man has more
to hope for or less to lose than he who
fights against a sinful world in or-
der to rescue his own soul from its
devouring grasp - And you may
may depend that ~~the~~ no man is more
a coward than he who for fear of the
world deserts its service and leaves
^{that} ~~the service~~ of a crucified Saviour, a merciful
God, and a holy religion for its sake -

There to be sure are but figurative ex-
pressions - but they are not the less
true - & they are not less applicable to
you than to any other - If you can
reconcile now your daily actions in the
world to that hour when you will be
summoned from it, in a word if you
can think of your present course of life
with pleasure when you are dying
you have good assurance that they will
also be pleasant to you throughout e-
ternity - The ancient warriors had
a custom, ~~that~~ ^{they saw} whenever the approach
of death certain, of composing their garments
that they might fall with decency -
you cannot imitate their example
better, than by arranging in such a
manner, the furniture of your mind
and ~~and~~ composing your conscience,

so that when you fall you may not
be subject to ~~the~~ vertebrae shunt

P. Chase
Chaplain

April 4. 1818

Messrs