

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

JUNE, 1882.

ART. I.—LAY WORK ON THE SEAS.

FOR thirty years, special prayer has ascended every Sunday morning, from a united band of naval officers, for the outpouring of God's Spirit on all belonging to, or connected with, the naval service. From every clime, and from every sea, on shore or afloat, between the hours of seven and eleven on Sundays, since 1851, have the spiritual wants of the navy been thus particularly brought before the Throne of Grace. This union in prayer for the promotion of religion in Her Majesty's fleet, originated with one of the greatest of Arctic navigators, that splendid seaman, the late Admiral Sir W. Edward Parry. So long as British enterprise finds a place in history, as scientific geography finds intelligent students, and as records of peril and adventure thrill the mind, will the discoveries and daring of the great Arctic pioneer of this century be a rich inheritance to all educated Englishmen. But from the beginning to the end of his naval career, Parry was before all things a courageous Christian. Thirty years since, when the great sea captain was nearing his flag, he wrote to the present writer, God has said, "them that honour Me I will honour," and this had been the experience of his own life.

Though there were but forty-four names of naval officers attached to the first edition of the Union in Prayer, many others, to whom it became known, gladly embraced the idea. It is interesting to note thence the more obvious of the replies received by seamen. In 1851, Sir Edward Parry, looking back at his own period afloat, was able to say:—

That a very decided change has taken place of late years, not only in the physical, but also in the moral aspect of the navy, none who are acquainted with our service will entertain a doubt. Recognizing

in this fact the gracious interposition of God in behalf of the long-degraded and spiritually destitute sailor, it appears to suggest the duty of uniting in a humble and prayerful effort to improve the religious character of our seamen. We desire, therefore, to engage the cordial co-operation of all (whether belonging to the navy or not) who know the value of united prayer; in order that the hands of our Christian friends afloat may be strengthened, and that an increasing number of those who "do business on the waters" may, by God's blessing, be brought to a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus."

After thirty years' intercessory prayer, it is very remarkable to note the great changes in the spiritual character of men at sea. Whatever of religious instruction and devout example seamen had received, came chiefly from their own officers, or from their comrades. Shoregoing clergymen rarely ministered on board ships in harbour. Indeed, sailors are not always, when in port, in such a fit frame of mind to receive religious instruction as they are when at sea. Few of H.M.'s ships carried chaplains, and the moral condition of the crews varied very much, according to the character and religious activities of their officers. There was much in the naval system of those days hostile to personal piety, and actively promotive, whether intentionally so or not, of vice and immorality.

On the one hand, the officers were commanded to conduct Sunday morning worship; libraries were supplied, but not always issued; schoolmasters were appointed, but not generally employed. But on the other, the system of payment in vogue, and the evil traditions of social life, almost necessitated degrading and unblushing profligacy.

At the outbreak of the Russian war, a large increase took place in the number of naval chaplains. Still, at least three-fourths of the Queen's ships were never visited by clergymen, and their crews remained dependent from boyhood for worship and teaching, on their officers, themselves brought up at sea away from ministerial instruction. Subsequently, very short daily morning prayers for the whole crew, occupying from five to ten minutes, were introduced by certain officers; and in some of the ships bearing chaplains. This ancient custom of the sea was thus gradually revived, till it became so general that, in 1860 we believe, an Admiralty order was issued to the whole fleet converting the custom into a commanded observance. About this period, Sunday afternoon or evening services sprang up, now in this ship, now in that. One of the sternest disciplinarians of our time, being then in command of the Mediterranean Fleet, forbade the then customary evolutions aloft on Sundays, and the inane practice of commencing the Lord's Day, from 4 A.M. till 10 A.M., by so-called washing decks, &c. Ships of war are usually made as clean as a new pin, from

the truck to the keelson, by Saturday night. The process of splashing the vessel all over with salt water on Sunday morning before daylight, and then repairing the mischief by polishing the vessel afresh, is an absurd, unnecessary and worrying habit, which we regret to say is not yet quite extinguished.

Nevertheless, the official worship did not touch the hearts of as many of the crews as might have been expected. Indeed, it is not too much to say that many of the officers who conducted it had no idea that it should do so. It was part of the pomp and circumstance of official state, a naval parade. Attendance was nowhere more rigidly enforced than by officers who could not admit that the will, the conscience, the heart, had any part in this, to them, piece of naval routine. Compulsory worship was regarded as a thing quite apart from spontaneously attended services. Still, it was something to have the wood laid in order, and the coals in place ready when the Holy Ghost applied the light. And whatever the intention of the officiating laymen, God's Word could not be daily read, however carelessly, in the ears of the crews, without the Spirit of God blessing it to individual souls. Known only to God were the hearts in which the holy words of united prayer, thoughtlessly uttered by the officers, were solemnly winged to heaven by devout members of their congregations.

In 1856, the year after the founder of the Naval Prayer Union was received into the Courts above, some of its original members were amongst the foremost in founding the Society for Missions to Seamen Afloat. It was intended to promote the spiritual welfare of the seafaring classes at home and abroad, by every means consistent with the principles and received practice of the Church of England, in contradistinction to the many non-conformist organizations then existing for the improvement of seamen. Most of the nonconformist, or, as some wish to be called, nonsectarian, agencies had confined their attention to the very greatly neglected merchant seamen; but the Missions to Seamen was designed to care also for the Royal Navy, for fishermen, and for emigrants. Nevertheless, the utter neglect of religious worship, public and private, and the entire absence of chaplains from the vast British merchant fleets, naturally taxed most of the energies of the Missions to Seamen at this period. Yet the example its chaplains set of itinerant ministrations from ship to ship, of mixing freely amongst the crews, and of being the personal friends of individual seamen, gave a wholly new idea to many even religious naval officers, as to the way hearts were to be won for Christ, and souls brought by the Holy Spirit to the foot of the cross.

Still, towards the end of the first decade of weekly intercessory prayer, the moral outlook was not cheering. The Royal

navy had been flooded with "bounty men," many of whom were the dregs of the mercantile marine. Drunkenness was sadly prevalent; leave breaking, which usually means vile profligacy, was common; hospitals were filled with the victims of immorality; petty crime had greatly increased; and a low moral condition generally obtained. The ninety crews then provided with naval chaplains were just as vicious as the three times more numerous ones dependent on lay ministrations; and the old complaint seemed justified, "that the former days were better than these." Such answers to intercessory prayer might well have been disheartening. But the promoters of the Weekly Prayer Union were not discouraged. They chose this dark period to invite their brother officers to join with them in their Sunday morning intercessions. In 1859, 145 naval and marine officers of all commissioned ranks gave in their names as intending to offer up weekly prayer for the navy. Many other officers and men took up this intercessory practice, and henceforth a very remarkable moral and spiritual change was wrought by various agencies in Her Majesty's sea service.

The men-of-war's men of to-day are a much more staid, thoughtful, and respectable body of men than in 1859; their social habits are far superior to landsmen of the same rank; and the hold which vital godliness has on their lives and their future hopes is far more general than amongst people on shore. The naval authorities no longer assume an attitude of hostility towards really spiritual agencies. The customs of the service are not now in league with vice. The office of the Holy Ghost in the daily worship is not so entirely forgotten. The object of worshipping the Eternal God and Father of all, is not generally degraded into a mere naval parade. There is a reaching after holier and higher gifts of God. And to the spiritually minded man who can discern spiritual things, there is an evident work of the Spirit going on in Her Majesty's fleet. The change of character and conduct is evident in the medical and police reports, as well as in the streets and resorts of seaport towns. It is seen in some men-of-war's men and marines kneeling daily in private prayer in their mess-places and barrack rooms, in the communicant's classes, and adult schools, not only on board ship but when on shore. One man-of-war's man in every six is a total abstainer. Communion and communicants afloat have increased, though not in proportion to other symptoms. There is a more general participation in the voluntarily attended services on board, and, where churchwardens permit it, in the various means of grace in churches on land. This great and general religious movement in Her Majesty's fleet is a matter, not of opinion, but of observed fact.

Many agencies have been at work to promote these great

changes. The mode of paying wages, which was at the bottom of much profligacy, has been so amended as to no longer necessitate vice; but as to render family life possible to the sailor.¹ Training ships have been inaugurated and well worked out. Continuous service has replaced intermittent and precarious employment, and has done much to make the means of livelihood constant and certain. A system of rewards for good conduct and for extra-professional attainments has replaced mere repression and the lash. Frequent leave to go on shore has familiarized men-of-war's men with the land, and taught them how to avoid its dangers. Leave-breaking with its hideous profligacy, though far too prevalent, is condemned by the public opinion of shipmates. Teetotalism advances rapidly. A thousand foremost seamen are active workers in the temperance cause. The question whether spirits should be introduced into the Sailor's Home at Portsmouth was recently put to "the vote" and negated by a large majority of the men-of-war's men at that port. Those who would understand the details of ship life should read "A Seaman's Life on Board a Man-of-War," Griffin & Co., Portsea. Price 6d. It is perhaps rather *couleur de rose*, but it enters into many particulars showing the care taken of men-of-war's men in body, mind, and soul; and how superior they are physically, intellectually, and morally to landsmen of the same social grade. The organizations emanating from the Admiralty have all, of late years, been against vice, and in favour of virtue. Indeed, it is due to the Admiralty to acknowledge that their lordships now keep a good deal in advance of the officers serving afloat, in desire to promote truly religious and virtuous practices. Probably few of the naval authorities who took part in these changes of system had anything else in view than an enlightened and far-seeing desire for the benefit of Her Majesty's service. Possibly they knew not of the Weekly Union in Prayer for the Royal Navy; or if they had known of it, they would hardly have traced any connection between it and their own actions. But God works by various instruments and in many ways.

One direct and evident result of the revival of the Weekly Union in Prayer for Her Majesty's Navy in 1859, was the opening by some of its members, of a Tuesday evening prayer meeting for naval chaplains, officers, seamen and marines in the Devonport Sailor's Home. This was started on the first Tuesday of 1860, under the presidency of the late Rev. W. R. Payne, M.A., R.N., then chaplain to the Royal Naval Hospital at that port.

¹ The number of immoral women has been greatly reduced. Even ladies can now walk the streets of Portsmouth and Devonport without seeing or hearing anything offensive.

The meeting continued with varying numbers for five years. Ere six months, however, there sprang out of it a Royal Naval Scripture Readers' Society, based on Church of England lines. This was then the almost sole representative of the volunteer element in religion on board the Queen's ships. It was conducted solely by naval chaplains and naval officers, and was the first instance, we believe, in which chaplains serving afloat were induced to unite for the general good of seamen, outside of their individual ships. Laymen had heretofore been mainly conspicuous in promoting united efforts to advance God's kingdom in the navy; but here were chaplains on full pay quitting their isolation, and uniting with one another and with laymen, to promote the glory of God and the general good of souls on the seas. The Scripture Readers supplemented the labours of chaplains in the larger ships by an individualizing ministry, hitherto practised by few of the naval clergy; whilst they aided the officers in the other two-thirds of the fleet to make amends for the entire absence of clerical ministrations on board their vessels.

Such a movement, springing from within the navy, and conducted exclusively by its chaplains and officers, naturally excited, in so conservative a service, much opposition. It represented voluntarism as the spiritual outcome of officialism in naval religion. It was not antagonistic to the existing public worship; but, in a truly conservative spirit, the Royal Naval Scripture Readers' Society sought to make the worship more life-giving, more real. It fostered and nourished the spiritual outcome of the recognized services, the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual soul. Its agents no sooner appeared, Bible in hand, amongst the messes, than godly seamen, converted under the official services, appeared here and there amongst the hundreds forming the crews. These holy seamen had not heretofore been known in that capacity to one another, to their chaplain (if the ship had any), nor even to the more devout officers. Seamen associating in the same ship, or even in the same mess, are often utter strangers to one another as to their religious cravings or spiritual experiences. An outsider introducing messmates to one another as Christian brethren, found the nucleus of a permanent Bible class already on board, with a resident teacher ready to hand, only awaiting his touch to call it into being. The light was already there, but it was hidden under a bushel, and the Reader placed it on a candlestick. The effect on large crews, of unsuspected companions witnessing for Christ by joining Bible classes, &c., was remarkable. These voluntarily attended meetings or classes spread from ship to ship, so that a prize was given for the best essay on "Bible Classes in the Navy," which was published in

1870.¹ It is quite true that, here and there, such voluntarily attended meetings had been held in this ship-of-war and in that within living memory. But that which was infrequent before now became general. We had ourselves previously served in a frigate without a chaplain, in which a prayer-meeting was held every evening for five years (1852-7). Whether off Cape Horn or in Bhering Straits, within the tropics or in the temperate zones, in a gale or in calm, at sea or in port, in the Atlantic or in the Pacific oceans, this little prayer-meeting, varying from two to twenty in number, met regularly every evening in the gunner's cabin. On Sunday afternoons the Evening Service was said in the same place. This was, of course, besides the one Sunday service conducted for the whole crew of 250 men by the captain. Only once in the course of those five years was, as the good gunner wrote, that little prayer-meeting "honoured by the presence of a clergyman." What a responsibility rested, then, on that gunner, as the only teacher of that small band, and through them of their 250 shipmates! And he himself, what knowledge could he, who had spent his whole life from boyhood on board ship, have of theology for such a responsible office? He stuck, however, to his Bible and Prayer Book, with a copy of Wesley's Commentary and of Wesley's Hymns, as the main part of his theological library. He thus kept himself and his little band straight on the rails.

In the course of the second decade of the Weekly Prayer Union for the Navy, a great change took place as to private prayer. It required the courage of a Daniel to kneel night and morning in the presence of several hundred shipmates, in ordinary daily private prayer. There were, it is true, a few men and boys, like young Charles Parry,² when a midshipman, in 1851, who dared to do so; but, practically, kneeling in private prayer was regarded as impossible. Even for years after daily public prayer was revived, kneeling, either in private or in public prayer, was still regarded as an offence against public opinion. Many consciences were cruelly burdened by the sense that they were not honouring God in this matter, and that their not doing so was in deference to worldly companions. Prayer in the hammock after a hard night watch, with a prospect of having soon to turn out again, was apt to be very brief, and often to be forgotten altogether. In 1870, a private letter sympathizing with them in this difficulty was lithographed in *facsimile*, and sent to each of the 700 or 800 young officers in the gun-room. It suggested that what

¹ "Bible Classes in the Navy." Royal Naval Scripture Readers' Society, 4, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C. Price 6d.

² See "Memorials of Commander Charles Parry, R.N." Hatchards & Co. Price 3s. 6d.

was pressing on the conscience of the recipient of the note, equally pressed on the minds of others of his messmates ; and he was advised to speak privately in a night watch to one of them, and to arrange to kneel simultaneously in private prayer morning and evening. The advice was in many instances taken, and the *Britannia* did the rest. At the same time, it was suggested to the commanding officers of the boys' training ships that the bugle should sound the "Still," night and morning, for two minutes of silence and cessation of movement. In this interval all were at liberty to kneel in silent prayer, but nobody was to be compelled to do so. The practice once started, met a felt need, and soon spread to the sea-going ships. We hope that there is not now a ship-of-war in which knees do not bow daily without encountering intolerable social persecution. The silent influence of a few seamen kneeling quietly in morning and evening prayer, in the presence of their comrades, has been known to alter the whole tone, language, and conduct of a large ship's company. To help these young men to live a life of prayer, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has recently published "The Book of Private Prayer for Seamen and Marines Afloat." We cannot say that we are fond of religious books specially written for sailors. They are generally weak productions all round—weak in literary ability, and still weaker in theology, with an offensive jargon which passes amongst landsmen for nautical language. But though "The Book of Private Prayer" bristles with nauticalities, it does do so necessarily, and therefore not offensively. Of its ability, fervour, and spirituality there can be no question. The prayers are beautiful adaptations of the Church's collects to the various exigencies of individual life. Our only qualm about the book is that, seeing it is written for sailors so much dependent on lay teaching, it somewhat strangely refers the anxious inquirer throughout to a clergyman. Whilst considering how rare are the opportunities which seamen have of receiving the Lord's Supper, it gives rather much prominence to an ordinance which seamen can seldom obtain. A sailor pronouncing upon the theology of a S. P. C. K. book would be rather out of place, but it does seem to us a little stiff.

The religious activities developed in Her Majesty's fleet during the last thirty years gives special importance to the kind of guidance and instruction under which anxious souls fall. The number of sea-going ships carrying chaplains has decreased to forty-three, and the services of these clergymen are rarely extended to the five times more numerous vessels flying pennants, including coastguard cruisers, which do not bear chaplains. Indeed, even the royal yachts, manned by some two hundred men, are never visited by clergymen. Thus, it is upon laymen that the great majority of the crews are dependent for worship and teaching.

Happily, though the number of naval chaplains has decreased, their usefulness has been increased by the removal of senseless obstructions. Thus they have, within the period under review, been authorized to visit sick and dying men on board, a privilege or duty often previously denied to them. They can now also administer the Holy Communion at least once a month. This, however, is generally done privately in the captain's cabin, where foremast seamen cannot attend, or in some hole-and-corner part of the ship, other than the place where public "prayer is wont to be made." Consequently, few sailors avail themselves of the chaplain's services as to this holy ordinance, although they frequently show their sense of its value by administering it to one another. The rite of confirmation is now encouraged, whereas, as recently as 1860, the chaplains of the Channel squadron were forbidden to invite a bishop to administer it. The setting apart of a screened place for religious gatherings during the evening hours, at the request of the men and on the recommendation of the chaplain, is recognized by the Admiralty since 1870. The issuing of the books from the ship's library has also been relegated to the chaplain's care, affording a valuable opportunity for speaking individually to the men. Tracts, the issue of which were formerly forbidden, are now not only allowed, but even supplied. Prayer books and hymn books, so essential for the joint participation of the crew in public worship, are now furnished in adequate numbers. In these and other ways, the naval chaplain is much less untrammelled, and can therefore be much more useful to the crew of his own ship than he was permitted to be thirty years ago. Moreover, the regular return of men-of-war's men and marines to the depôt ships and barracks for some months—after periods of three or four years' service at sea—brings them periodically under the influence and teachings of the forty-six stationary chaplains. And we can confidently affirm that the weekly prayer for the navy has been and is being answered, that "Grace may be given to our chaplains to be wise, faithful, and diligent servants of Christ; and that the Spirit of God may abundantly bless their labours, to the awakening and establishing of many souls." Still, even whilst in these harbour ships, the seamen often derive much religious instruction from laymen and from certain ladies who take a prominent part both in public worship and teaching on shore at the principal naval ports.

It not unnaturally occurred about ten years ago to some naval men, chaplains, and others, that it might be advantageous to establish in the navy, as a bond of union and communion amongst the more devout officers and men, a society for purposes of mutual prayer and Christian fellowship. This took shape in the form of the Naval Church Society, at Portsmouth,

which includes "officers, men and boys who are baptized members of the Church of Christ." By the annual publication of the names of its members, the society supplies, in the ceaseless changes of nautical life, a means of mutual recognition between pious officers and men meeting in all parts of the world. It has lately published a prize essay on "*Lay Work in the Royal Navy*,"¹ which treats of the organization, instruction and training of volunteer lay teachers in that service. The essayist takes a strong stand on evangelical principles, which he defines to be synonymous with Scriptural ones; and claims for the Church of England, that as it honours and uses Scripture more than any other church, it is therefore the most truly evangelical.² He, however, points out—

That four men and boys in every hundred in the Royal Navy are Presbyterians, and that the numerous dissenting denominations, between them, all together, supply 9·4 per cent.; whilst the Roman Catholics number twelve in every hundred. . . . It should be the part of the 7·6 per cent. baptized in the Church of England, as the vast majority on board, to pay due deference and respect to the various religious convictions of the minority.

The essayist gives a sad picture of certain very earnest officers and men who, adopting a creedless, shifting, and self-asserting religion, in which every one adopts what is right in his own eyes, have fallen away from Scripture truth, by leaning too much on their own imaginations. He ascribes their fall to a reaction from the perfunctory way divine worship is too often conducted, and which disgusts earnest men with the Church of England services, which they wrongly assume to be at fault. Taking to themselves various names, such as non-sectarians, brethren, &c., they set themselves against all ministerial teaching, whether of clergymen or scripture-readers, and look on human knowledge as opposed to the Spirit's work. With an overweening conceit in their own infallibility, and giving fanciful interpretations to special texts, they cast aside this portion of Scripture and that, as the "inner light" suggests, till at last the greater part of the Bible is thrown overboard. Thence, discarding Christ in several of His offices, and the continuous sanctification of the Holy Ghost, they are led from one degree of unbelief to another, until by various stages they drift

¹ "*Lay Work in the Royal Navy.*" Griffin & Co., Portsea. Price 2d.

² In his hot zeal for the whole Word of God being the Rule of Faith, the essayist has been obviously misled by the title of "*Church Doctrine, Bible Truth*," into suggesting it amongst the books for a lay teacher's library. The strong Evangelical tone of the whole essay on "*Lay Work in the Royal Navy*," shows that the writer could not have known anything of the book thus included in the list.

into infidelity. It is to save those who are thus drifting from the secure moorings of the Word of God that the essayist strongly pleads that lay teachers should themselves be taught, and should not be left to devise theological systems each out of his own uninstructed brain. Many of the thousand foremost seamen who are actively working the temperance cause are also religious leaders, and they are by no means the only laymen looked up to by their comrades for interpreting and expounding Holy Scripture. Ways are suggested by which the services of the chaplains might be utilized for the instruction and training of these devout laymen, the better to fit them for their highly responsible teaching duties. The spiritual oversight of naval chaplains might also be usefully extended to the numerous vessels of war, on board which clergymen very seldom officiate. As this essay has been selected for the prize by three experienced naval chaplains and two officers serving afloat, in competition with fourteen others which have been all deemed worthy of publication, "Lay Work in the Royal Navy" comes before the public with an *imprimatur* which makes some amends for its otherwise anonymous character.

We have left ourselves little space to refer to "Lay Work in the Merchant Navy,"¹ on which the Missions to Seamen Society has published a prize essay. However, the subject has already been referred to in the article on "Missions to Merchant Seamen," signed by the late Admiral W. A. Baillie Hamilton, which appeared in THE CHURCHMAN, for August, 1881. Encouragement, sympathy, instruction, and guidance are even more needed by lay workers for God in the mercantile marine than in the Royal Navy. There are over 38,000 vessels flying the British red ensign, which ought to carry 38,000 Christian congregations, and at least that number of officiating lay workers. Not one of these ships carries a chaplain when at sea. True, a few passenger ships have, in some of their voyages, clergymen amongst their passengers, who sometimes interest themselves pastorally in the crews. In emigrant ships, daily prayers are usually arranged for, but in these the crews are not always allowed to participate. There are also other long-voyage ships and sailing coasters, in which the officers nobly fulfil their Christian duties towards their men. When in port the parochial clergy rarely officiate on board, and the bishops seldom recognize in their charges and pastorals that the shipping and barges are part of their diocesan responsibility. So that, from boyhood to the grave, merchant seamen are almost wholly dependent on lay teaching, whether at sea or in port. Almost

¹ "Lay Work in the Merchant Navy." Price 6d. Published by the Missions to Seamen, 11, Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C.

the only important exception to this is the twenty-three chaplains employed by the Missions to Seamen. Indeed, had they lay teachers of any kind, in any considerable number of merchant ships, we might well rejoice. There are, it is true, many noble efforts made by godly officers to minister in holy things to their men. And whole crews are thus often found converted to Christ; for no body of men respond so readily to the Gospel message, faithfully delivered by those who speak out of the fullness of their own heartfelt experience of the power of the Holy Ghost, than do men at sea. All honour to the officers who thus labour for souls. They may fairly claim encouragement, sympathy, instruction, and guidance from the National Church of this great maritime empire. Alas, little of these do they ordinarily receive at most ports, whether at home or abroad. Our dissenting brethren are not so "forgetful to entertain strangers," and have long been forward to countenance and encourage God's work on the seas. The Bishop of London, being in pastoral charge of all who are not within any diocesan bounds, is in some sort Bishop of the Seas. His lordship has recently decided to accord his formal recognition to those sea-officers who desire it for their highly responsible work for God amongst their crews. The Missions to Seamen endeavours to extend its influence over every ocean, by enrolling the godly officers as helpers, and by maintaining correspondence with them, through its chaplains, in whatever part of the world they may be sailing. There are now some 350 Missions to Seamen helpers officiating in as many merchant vessels.

To help those who conduct short week-day prayers for their crews, the Convocation of Canterbury has drawn up an excellent "Manual of Prayers, Scripture Reading, and Hymns for the use of Seamen at Sea." This excellent manual provides forms of united prayer for use on the morning and evenings of week-days only. Such united worship is of the character of family prayer—during which the crew stand—and does not last more than ten minutes. Captains usually make the necessary selections for themselves from the Book of Common Prayer, but the Convocation "Manual" does this for them. It is complete in itself, requires no reference to any other book, and saves a good deal of turning over leaves, which on a breezy deck without a table is inconvenient.

In the majority of the 38,000 registered British merchant ships, there is no public recognition whatever of Almighty God, His Word, nor His Day. There can be in such ships no kneeling in individual prayer, and no reading of the Bible in the fore-castle. General godlessness and irreligion is the prevalent condition of these prayerless British vessels. The mixture of nationalities depraves the crews still more, except where Scandinavians predomi-

nate. There is little mutual respect or regard between the owners, the officers, and the men in such employments. In too many cases, there is not only indifference to each other's interests, but antagonism between employers and employed, which is fruitful of evil to all concerned. "The unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," is unknown in large numbers of British merchant ships, because no attempt is made to lead their crews "into the way of truth." Misery, indiscipline, and vice prevail, because the employers and the officers cast God out of their business. This is specially a case for intercessory prayer after the example of the Naval Prayer Union. Accordingly, the Missions to Seamen has invited the friends of the mercantile marine to join every Sunday morning in praying "that shipowners, officers, and crews may, in all their thoughts, words and deeds, seek God's Glory and the increase of His kingdom."

The late Admiral W. A. Baillie Hamilton well says:—

It must be remembered that these men in general have been brought up in their boyhood in our schools; and, further, instructed in religion by our Church. But in consequence of their after-life, there was almost certain to be the lapse, loss and decay of that which they had imbibed in their childhood. And it is the chief object of the Missions to repair this melancholy waste.¹

Not long since we met a chief mate on his way to Fleetwood from Liverpool, in immediate response to a telegram to join a Nova Scotian ship bound to Honduras. He knew nothing of the captain, the crew, or the vessel in which he was to sail next morning. He had served twenty years at sea, in about the same number of sailing ships, trading to all parts of the North Atlantic and adjacent seas. He was very proud of his achievements at Sunday School as a boy, by which he had received from the present Bishop of Derry prizes for superior answering and for attendance. Yet he had never in those twenty years known the united worship of Almighty God to be conducted at sea, and scouted the idea of its being possible to thus worship God on board ship. He couldn't say he had been often to church when his ship was in harbour; for churches did not care to have him. His sailor clothes, and his being "a stranger," made him unwelcome to the pew-openers; so there was no use of his going. He had never heard of a clergyman going on board any merchant vessel in any port, and could not credit such a thing occurring. He had not traded to the ports in which the Missions to Seamen chaplains work afloat since their appointment. He had known lay agents to visit ships when in port, but he had no great respect for them. He knew as much about

¹ THE CHURCHMAN, No. 23, August, 1881, p. 322.

theology as they did, but he would gladly listen to a real clergyman, who had been to college, and knew what he was talking about. He had never known any seaman kneel in prayer in the fore-castle—the thing was impossible—nobody but a landsman would think of such a thing. But stop—yes, there was a sailmaker in one ship with him, a man from Belfast, who always did so, night and morning. The crew tried the sailmaker's courage and patience a little, but they soon found that he could stand fire and they let him alone. There was no bad language in that ship; the men became a decent, well-behaved lot.

The chief mate was a honest, steady fellow, who knew what he had seen in life, but didn't know much more; and he was greatly astonished when he was told that there were many British merchant ships in which God was worshipped, His Word honoured, and His Day kept holy. He acknowledged this was so in the Scandinavian ships, but he could not understand Christian usages in English vessels. We need not say that it was pointed out to him how he, an ex-Sunday school scholar, had thrown away twenty years of opportunities for honouring and serving God, and urged upon him to give himself to God now, and serve Him faithfully in the forthcoming voyage. When we parted from him at Fleetwood, it was with a sad sense of what Admiral W. A. B. Hamilton calls "the lapse, loss and decay of that which they had imbibed in their childhood," going on in the prayerless ships of the British mercantile marine.

The more one contemplates the problem of converting the abundance of the sea, the more clear is it that the chief agency to be employed must be that of sailors themselves. It is in blue water the sailors are in the fittest frame of mind to receive religious exhortations. Their ships are their homes. The officers are their natural leaders. What naval officers do for their men in holy things, some merchant officers also nobly do, and all can do. It is not so much education that is wanted as the spirit of God converting the soul, and the subsequent guidance, instruction, and encouragement of the clergy on shore. The Missions to Seamen is striving to fill up this gap; but we need not say that 350 officers enrolled as Helpers, and brought under clerical guidance and sympathy, is not anything like the proportion of godly officers to be found in the 38,000 merchant ships. Nor are the forty-six ports occupied by its chaplains and honorary chaplains anything like the number of ports in the world into which British commerce carries mercantile officers and men. A very wide-spread, large hearted, and general organization is needed to meet the captains and their crews in whatever port they unfurl the British flag. The bishops of every seaboard diocese at home and abroad, should look on the sailors in their

harbours as part of their episcopal charge. The waterside clergy should overcome their official hydrophobia and board the shipping and barges in their parishes. And especial pains should be taken to make the captains and officers feel that they are looked upon as fellow-labourers with the clergy in conveying to their crews the ministrations of the Gospel of God. Sailors are missionaries for good or for evil to the whole world. Surely it is not a nautical question alone, but one for the whole Church of Christ, that their example, their influence, and their teachings should be that of the first sailor-apostles, and of their Lord.

W. DAWSON.

ART. II.—WILLIAM RUFUS.

The Reign of William Rufus. By E. A. FREEMAN, M.A., Hon. D.C.L., LL.D. Two vols. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press. 1882.

OF the reign of William II. historical students who may be ranked in the "general reader" class know probably very little. Yet the years during which William Rufus reigned are of high importance in relation to constitutional history, while they supply a store of interesting narratives as regards both persons and places. Mr. Freeman's present work, promised in his "History of the Norman Conquest," is rather long, and in certain places rather dry. Of those who take it in hand some, at all events, will think that the smaller details are elaborated with unnecessary care. There are two volumes, each five or six hundred pages long, on the history of only thirteen years. Who can master our national annals at this rate? For the sake of the large number of persons who are fond of reading history, but whose disposable time is limited, books which give a clear, full view of a reign or period in small compass, so that it may be mastered with enjoyment, are much to be desired. The writer of such an historical book, no doubt, should go to first-hand authorities, should weigh and compare the various documents and books which throw light upon his subject, should be accurate, judicial, and laborious. The work should be thoroughly done. Yet the result of his investigations, surely, may be given in a handy octavo, readable all through. For the ordinary reader compression is certainly expedient. Mr. Freeman's style, however, is well known, and the volumes before us will not diminish his reputation. To the cause of historical study he has rendered great services. His command of a subject