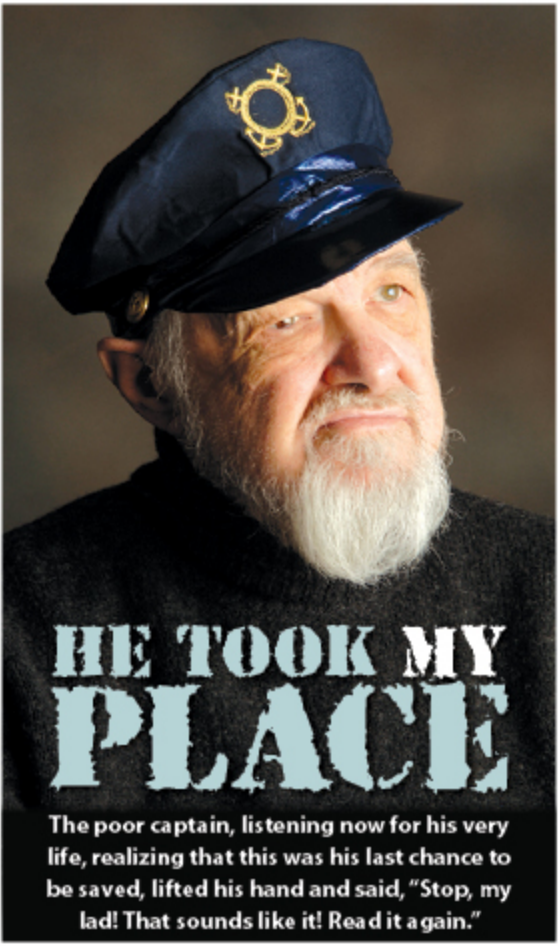

HE TOOK MY
PLACE
The poor captain, listening now for his very life, realizing that this was his last chance to be saved, lifted his hand and said, "Stop, my lad! That sounds like it! Read it again."

JOHN COUTTS, an ungodly sea captain, lay dying in his cabin in mid-ocean. He felt helpless and alone, and shrank back as the dread of eternity seemed to close in upon him. Calling the first mate he asked, "Williams, can't you get down on your knees and pray for me? As you know, I've led a wicked life, and I'm afraid this is the end!"

But the first mate was not a praying man, and said he just couldn't do it, though he surely would if he could. The captain then called for the second mate, and in a frantic voice pleaded, "Ask God to have mercy on my soul!"

"I wish I could, Captain," he replied, "but I've never prayed in my life."

"Then see if somebody on board has a Bible," the captain pleaded. "See if somebody can read the Bible to me!"

They searched the ship for someone who could pray, or at least had a Bible. They were about to give up the search, when a sailor said that he had seen the cook's boy reading a book that looked like a Bible. The first mate located the cook's boy, Willie Platt, in the galley. He finally admitted, rather timidly, that he had a Bible. "Then take it, my boy," said the mate, "and hasten to the captain's cabin. He wants you."

As Willie entered the cabin, the captain lay still, the pallor of death already upon his face. Seeing the boy, he rallied and cried out, "Is that a Bible, my boy?"

"Yes, Captain."

"Then sit down, lad, and see if you can find something that will help me, for I'm afraid I'm going to die soon. See if you can find something about God having mercy on a sinner like me."

Willie wished he knew his Bible better. He could only think of one verse, one in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah that his mother used to read to him. He turned hopefully to this wonderful chapter which sets forth so fully God's love for poor sinners such as John Coutts, and started to read. Reading slowly, he came to the fifth verse - "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

The poor captain, listening now for his very life, realizing that this was his last chance to be saved, lifted his hand and said, "Stop, my lad! That sounds like it! Read it again."

"Captain," replied Willie, "my mother used to have me put my name in that verse. May I put it in now, and read it the way she taught me?"

"Certainly, son; put your name in, just where your mother told you and read it again." Reverently and slowly, the boy read it as follows:

"He (Jesus) was wounded for my (Willie Platt's) transgressions, He was bruised for my (Willie Platt's) iniquities: the chastisement of my (Willie Platt's) peace was upon Him, and with His stripes I (Willie Platt) am healed."

When he had finished he felt the captain's hand

upon his arm. "My boy," he said, "put your captain's name in, and read it again. Put in John Coutts! John Coutts!"

Willie read again, very slowly: "He was wounded for John Coutts' transgressions, He was bruised for John Coutts' iniquities: the chastisement of John Coutts' peace was upon Him; and with His stripes John Coutts is healed."

The captain lay back on his pillow and repeated over and over those precious words of Isaiah 53:5, putting in his own name each time. The joy of Heaven filled his soul as he laid hold by faith upon the Saviour, seeing that His great work on the cross was sufficient to pay for his sins.

Before he fell asleep in Christ he witnessed to every man on board that he was saved, for the "chastisement" (punishment for sin) which he so richly deserved had fallen upon Another.

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23

Beloved reader, do you know anything about this salvation? Have you taken your place as a guilty sinner before God, and trusted in Christ for pardon?



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