

“Put Your Captain's Name In It”

An ungodly sea-captain lay dying in his cabin in mid-ocean, death staring him in the face. He shrank back in the presence of “the King of Terrors,” and the dread of Eternity took fast hold upon him. Captain Coutts sent for his first mate, and said: “Williams, please get down on your knees and pray for a fellow. I have been very wicked, as you know, and I expect I shall go this time.”

“I am not a praying man, Captain; so I can't pray. I would if I could.”

“Well, then, bring a Bible and read me a bit, for my rope is about run out.”

“I have no Bible, Captain, you know, I am not a religious man.”

“Then send for Thomas, the second mate,” said the Captain—“perhaps he can pray a bit.”

The second mate was soon in the presence of his dying Captain, who said to him: “I say, Thomas, I am afraid I am bound for Eternity this trip; get down and pray for me. Ask God to have mercy on my poor soul.”

“I would gladly do it to oblige you, Captain—if I could; but I have not prayed since I was a lad.”

“Have you a Bible, then, to read to me?”

“No, Captain, I have no Bible.”

Alas! for the poor Captain. How awful his condition—on the brink of Eternity and without Christ. They searched the ship over for a man who could pray, but they searched in vain: and for a Bible, but one could not be found until one of the sailors told the captain he had seen a book that looked like a Bible in the hands of the cook's boy, a little fellow named Willie Platt.

“Send at once,” said the Captain, “and see if the boy has a Bible.”

The sailor hurried off to find Willie, and said to him—“Sonny, have you a Bible?”

“Yes, sir, but I only read it in my own time.”

“Oh, that is all right, my lad; take the Bible and go to the Captain's cabin. He is very sick and wants a Bible—thinks he is going to die.”

Away went Willie with his Bible to the Captain's cabin.

“Have you a Bible, my boy?”

“Yes, Captain.”

“Then sit down, and find something in it that will help me, for I am afraid I am going to die. Find something about God having mercy on a sinner like me—and read it to me.”

Well, there was one chapter he and his mother loved—Isaiah 53—and often had they read it together. So Willie turned to that blessed chapter that so fully sets forth the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, in dying for such as John Coutts; and began to read.

When he got 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 by His stripes we are healed”—

The Captain, who was listening intently, said, “Stop, my boy, that sounds like it; read it again.”

Once more the boy read over the blessed words, “He was wounded for our transgressions.”

“Ay, my lad, that's good—that's it, sure.”

These words from the Captain encouraged Willie, and he said, "Captain, when I was reading that verse at home, mother made me put my name in it. May I put it in now?"

"Certainly, sonny; put your name in it just as your mother told you, and read it again."

Reverently, and slowly the boy read the verse: "He—Jesus—was wounded for Willie Platt's transgressions—He was bruised for Willie Platt's iniquities"—and so on.

When Willie had finished, the Captain was half-way over the side of the bed and reaching toward the lad he said, "My boy, put your Captain's name in the verse and read it again."

Then the lad slowly read the verse again: "He was wounded for John Coutts' transgressions"; "He was bruised for John Coutts' iniquities," "The chastisement of John Coutts' peace was upon Him," "and by His stripes John Coutts is healed."

When Willie had finished the Captain said, "That will do, my lad, you may go now." Then the Captain lay back on his pillow and repeated over and over again those precious words of Isaiah 53:5, putting in his own name each time, and as he did so, the joy of heaven filled his soul—he was saved! Yes, praise the Lord, he was saved! Another poor sinner saved, for whom Jesus died.

The soul of Captain Coutts soon passed away. His body was rolled in canvas, placed upon a plank, and allowed to slide overboard into the water, to be seen no more until Jesus comes and the sea gives up its dead.

Before John Coutts fell asleep in Jesus, he had witnessed to every one on his vessel that the Christ of God—the Man of Calvary—was wounded for his transgressions, was bruised for his iniquities, and the chastisement that he so richly deserved had fallen on his Blessed Substitute—and by His stripes—the stripes that fell on Jesus—he, John Coutts, had been healed. Can you, my reader, say the same?

*Jesus, my Saviour, on Calvary's tree
Paid the great debt, and my soul He set free,
Oh, it was wonderful—how could it be?
Dying for me—for me.*

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