

OLD PETER.

PETER was an old sailor. A vessel in which he once shipped was struck by lightning, and one of his shipmates killed. It sobered Peter. It made him think, he said, of the judgment-day. He went to his locker, and took out his Bible. "I want to find the Pilot that can weather me through that storm," said Peter; "it's scary business, shipmates, to find us on a lee-shore there, with the rocks of our sins right 'longside, and hell yawning not far off."

Peter took to his Bible. He did not make much headway until he came into port, and went straight to a Bethel, or sailor's church, which he did as soon as he was off duty.

"I want to find the good Pilot," said Peter to the minister after service.

"The Great Captain of your salvation, Jesus Christ," said the minister; "he's here. He's nigh to every poor sinner that calls upon him."

"I'm one on 'em," said Peter, the tears streaming down his sunburnt cheeks, "and I want to ship in his service. I am pretty near water logged in my sins; I ha'n't any chart, compass, or anchor, and I'm drifting to perdition. I want the Pilot that went to the fishing-smack on Galilee, and said to the skipper when he was well-nigh sinking, 'It is I; be not afraid.' How shall I get at him?"

"Down on your knees, Peter, and pray; tell him just how you feel, and just what you want, and don't give up or put off till you find him; for He says himself, 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find.'"

Peter and the minister knelt down to pray in the Bethel, for the people had gone, and Peter cried mightily unto the Lord. "Save me, Lord, or I perish," was the burden of his prayer.

And the next time his shipmates saw Peter, he really seemed a "new man." Some people say you cannot get religion in a minute; but the fact is, it does not take God long to pardon your sins, if you

only are honestly setting out to get them pardoned. It does not take long for a man to tack about, when he once sees he is on the tack to ruin. "Right about" from a bad road to a good road may be done as fast as steps can carry you; but it can't be done without the first step, and that is really the decisive, the most important step of all. "Turn, sinner, turn." "Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." And God will forgive a poor sinner, and receive him to favour, and make him one of his people, just as soon as he does this. So that "getting religion," as some people call it, or being saved from the dreadful consequences of your sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, who died "the just for the unjust," may be, and really is a very short work; it is a simple act on your part—a childlike giving up of yourself to God. This is what the penitent thief on the cross did; and he had time to do no more. Building up a religious character indeed takes time; it is the growth of months and years.

Well, from that time Peter was "a new man." People saw that he was indeed the old weather-beaten tar he was before, but a changed spirit was in the man. Instead of the swearing, drinking, reckless, spending old Peter, he was clean-mouthed, sober, humble, anxious to have every body else ship in the same service he had.

"Don't put it off," he used to say. Bible in hand, he is talking to an old sailor. "I must take time to think of it," says he. "To think of what?" cried old Peter; "whether you are a sinner? You know you are. Whether you'll be lost if you die as you are? You know he can-breakers are ahead. Your anchors won't hold you. Don't put it off."

"I am not so bad as you think; I am not so bad as others," says another.

"But you are bad enough," cries Peter. "The best sinner on earth is too bad for heaven. One sin ruined Adam. You are drifting to perdition. This calm is dreadful. Your keel will soon ground on the rocks. Would that you would cry out now, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' A storm is brewing. Hail the great Pilot. Don't put it off."

Old Peter loved the young people. "Bless God that you are young," he used