



*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him (James 1:5)*

The Union disaster at the Battle of Shiloh has been attributed in part to the failure of a young Union Major General named Wallace. General Wallace was impatient and impetuous to a dangerous degree, and these traits helped to add to his disaster in command. He had a very young orderly, reputedly too young to enlist, who kept the General's saber shined to a high gleam, his boots blacked and polished, and his uniforms in an immaculate state of repair. But the boy was devoutly Christian, and General Wallace was agnostic at best. The boy's nightly prayers and Bible study annoyed Wallace to no end.

One day, after a series of particularly disappointing setbacks in command, he returned to his tent and found the boy praying. Wallace had seen enough of this 'ridiculous' behavior. "Get that Bible out of my tent and never let me catch you praying here again," scolded Wallace. But the boy revered God more than a Union general. He responded, "Sir, have I not been a superlative orderly to you? I keep your uniforms, sabers, and other accoutrements in immaculate condition, but I will not stop honoring my Lord." Well, here was a stand-off. The young boy apparently could not be intimidated by the youngest Major General in the Union Army - so a truce took effect since the boy was a commendable orderly and not easily replaced.

Having encamped on the banks of the river one day, Wallace found his escort of troops under siege by Confederate cavalry regulars. Scampering to gather soul and body, the Union troops, along with Wallace, withdrew (if that is the right term) across a bridge to which they set fire upon crossing to prevent pursuit. The young orderly of Wallace suddenly jumped up and ran back across the burning bridge to retrieve the saber of Wallace which the General had left hanging on a tree branch. As he was returning, he was shot by the enemy and fell into the flames. Though he was dragged to safety, he died a few hours later. Before dying, he requested that his well-marked Bible be given to General Wallace.

The War ended and years went by before the dormant spirit of Wallace was aroused to the boy's Bible. One of the leading atheist of the day, Robert Ingersol, a friend of Wallace, suggested that he read every word of that Bible and once-and-for-all put an end to that ridiculous fable of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wallace took the challenge. As he read, a concept of a book came to mind. He would write a novel of a Jewish Roman centurion whose life seemed to constantly come into contact with Jesus, the Messiah. In the writing of that novel, Wallace was converted, lock-stock-and-barrel, to Christ. The book was published in 1880 - fifteen years after the end of the War Between the States, and was one of the biggest sellers in the history of American literature - the Book? *Ben Hur - a Tale of Christ!* by Lew Wallace!