

I Was At Both Births

by Walter Lewis Wilson, M.D.

MANY YEARS ago in a little Missouri town, I had the privilege of bringing a baby boy into a modest home. It was their first little lad and, of course, the parents were quite proud of him and had great hopes for him.

As the lad grew, he developed a wandering spirit. School had no charm for him, but the lure of the world was very strong. Having finished grade school, he took his high school work but did so under protest. He wanted to see what was beyond the shores of America. He wanted to visit in other lands. He wanted the experience of sailing the sea, of climbing mountains and of hearing foreign languages. This call grew stronger and stronger in his soul until one day he left home for parts unknown.

He was an aggressive lad and found it quite easy to make his way here and there, by working at almost anything that was offered and seizing every opportunity for travel. He was quite resourceful, made friends quickly and enjoyed life. However, such wanderings do not bring permanent peace to the heart, and so even in his case the drifting about from place to place became monotonous and wearisome. He finally decided that he would join the navy, learn a trade, and prepare a way wherein he might amount to something in the world. He had a fine physique, was alert and attentive, and was soon accepted and stationed on one of our great battleships.

It happened that on this battleship, as is the case on a number of our men-of-war, there was a group of Christian men, true believers, who held services from time to time on the vessel as they were permitted by the officer in charge. These are active men. They carry their Bibles. They meet for prayer. They hold Bible classes and seek in every way to win the hearts of their fellow sailors. Our friend did not belong to any of these groups, for he was not a Christian. He did have an honest heart, so made no pretense of being one. On a certain night, he happened to be thrown in company with one of these Christian lads, for they were assigned to the same duties during the night. The saved boy said to his pal, "Bill, I have a splendid book full of short stories that I believe you would enjoy reading. These are all true stories, and they are so interesting that I doubt if you will lay the book down before you have read it through. Will you read it if I lend it to you?"

Bill replied at once that he would, and that he would return it after finishing it. There were times during the night when he could read without breaking any of the rules of the ship, and so he was soon perusing the pages of *The Romance of the Doctor's Visits*. It happened as his buddy had said;...he could hardly lay it down. After he had read about half of it, the Spirit of God revealed the Lord Jesus to his soul, and there on the deck of the battleship he trusted Jesus Christ and accepted Him to be the Lord of his life and the Saviour of his soul. He finished reading the book during the night, and toward morning returned it to his Christian companion. His face was aglow with joy. He was filled with the peace of God. He handed it to his friend and said, "Thank you so much, Hal, for lending me that book. I found Jesus Christ while I read it. He has saved me, and I am one of you Christians. I have wasted too much of my life already. Now I hope to make up for it. You tell all the gang that they have a new brother. Bill has trusted Jesus Christ.

The time was so divided on the ship that Bill could not get off to attend the services which I was holding in the harbor city. He asked Hal, however, to give me the following message: "Tell the doctor that I owe him two debts of gratitude. The first, because he brought me into the world the first time, and the second, because he brought me to Jesus Christ through his messages, and I have been born into the kingdom of God. I am so glad that he was at both births. Take to him my deep appreciation and gratitude."

How thankful it made me feel to know that the wee baby, who brought such high hopes to his parents when he was born the first time, was about to bring them the greatest joy that Christian parents can have—the joy of knowing that their child has become a child of God by the new birth!

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