Gipsy Smith’s First Convert

The day after I came to know Jesus as my Savior, as a lad in my father’s gipsy wagon, the world was a new world to me. I could not help singing. In those days I could really sing! I never got wrecked even on the high c’s!

I went out on my work as usual. I was in the lumber business, selling clothespins at two pence a dozen. The first house I came to the lady bought some, and I asked her if she would like to hear me sing. My heart was full. I wanted to tell her about Jesus. I was afraid and unable to speak, but I knew many hymns. She said yes, so I sang:

“Who’ll be the next to follow Jesus?
Who’ll be the next His cross to bear?
Someone is ready, someone is waiting;
Who’ll be the next a crown to wear?”
Then I saw her tears, and I was so afraid that as soon as I finished the hymn I took to my heels and ran as fast as I could.

Twenty-five years later I was holding a parlor meeting in a certain city. Among the ladies present was one who came to shake hands with me after the meeting.

“Well, Mrs. Chivers,” I said, “I am glad to see you! You used to buy clothespins from me when I was a little boy. Do you remember one day when I sang for you and ran away?”

“Yes,” she said, “and let me tell you about it. My daughter, a girl in her teens, was in the room and as you sang she came and stood beside me. When you had gone, she said: ‘Mother, if a poor little boy is able to love and confess Jesus, I think I ought to love Him too.’

“So we knelt down together, and my daughter gave her heart to Jesus. She is here with me today. She has now children of her own, and all these years she has been a true follower of Jesus.”

Sing the gospel if you have a voice! You never can tell in whose hearts your words may find a lodging.—Record of Christian Work, Signs of the Times, May 1923.

Quote: “He shall best comfort God’s Israel who has needed comfort; and he shall best preach salvation who has felt his own need of it.”—By Spurgeon, Signs of the Times, May 1923.

I remember a selection in a school textbook which I read when I was a child. It made a deep impression on me—an impression which lasted long after the title of the selection, the name of the author and that of the book in which the story appeared were forgotten. It was about a boy on a treasure hunt. As he started out, he carelessly plucked a flower from the garden by his home and carried it in his hand as he roamed in quest of storied wealth.

Suddenly he came upon a cave that was filled with the rarest and most beautiful gems. A kindly old gentleman, who appeared to be in charge, welcomed him and told him to help himself to whatever he wanted, but added, as the boy selected some fine gems, “Don’t forget the best.”

The boy then took some of the very finest of the jewels, and was about to depart when
the old man again cautioned him not to forget the best. So the boy turned back once more and filled his pockets to overflowing with the precious gems and again left the cave.

And once more the old man called after him the words of admonition. But the boy now had so much he felt that he could carry no more, so he departed.

When he had gone a short distance, he looked back; but both the old gentleman and the cave had disappeared. And when he looked at the gems in his hands, he found they were nothing but common pebbles as were the ones with which his pockets were filled.

And the one thing which had transformed the ordinary objects into wealth and beautify—the flower from his own home yard—he had disregarded and lost while seeking rarer treasures far away.

The sesame to happiness was already in his possession had he but known it while he sought in distant places for imaginary riches. He cast aside the real treasure that belonged to him and became one of the many people with empty lives.—By Ethel M. Johnson, *These Times*, February 1952.

Quote: “You can do anything if you have enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hope rise to the stars. Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eye, it is the swing in your gait, the grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of your will and your energy to execute your ideas. Enthusiasts are fighters. They have fortitude. They have staying qualities. Enthusiasm is at the bottom of all progress. With it there is accomplishment. Without it there are only alibis.”—By Henry Ford, *These Times*, November 1967.

NEW from Pacific Press—*Almost Home* by Ted N. C. Wilson. All around us today we see striking evidence that Jesus is coming soon. That’s a reason to rejoice—but it’s also a call for us to get out of Laodicea and get to work preparing to meet Jesus when He returns. General Conference President Ted Wilson challenges us to live up to our name, *Seventh-day Adventists*. Wilson says, “We’re almost home. Now isn’t the time to give up. It is the time for us to seek the Lord and give ourselves in service to Him. God will bless us as we do!” Be sure to pick up a copy of *Almost Home*.

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As the body of David Livingstone was being carried to its final resting place in Westminster Abbey, crowds lined the streets to honor the missionary-explorer. In the
crowd stood a grief-stricken man who had been his close friend as a youth. However, he had scorned Livingstone’s decision for Christ, as well as his choice of career in remote Africa. The marks of dissipation and disillusionment showed on the man’s face as, choked with emotion, he admitted, “What a fool I have been! I have put the emphasis on the wrong world.”—By Kenneth J. Holland, These Times, January 1982.

Quote: “Hypocrite: Person who sets a good example when he has a good audience.”—From Coronet, These Times, November 1969.

George Macdonald, in one of his books, wrote about a woman who had experienced a sudden tragedy. The heartache was so crushing and her sorrow so bitter that she spoke aloud, “I wish I’d never been made.”

Her friend, in what appears to be divine wisdom, whispered, “My dear, you are not made yet. You’re only being made, and this is the Maker’s process.” We can let God take our troubles and make out of them a garment of Christian fortitude which will not only warm our souls, but will serve to inspire others.—By Robert V. Ozment, These Times, July 1963.

Quote: “I could not live in peace if I put the shadow of a willful sin between myself and God.”—By George Elliot, These Times, October 1972.

and began to preach the gospel.

At the end of six years, he wrote a letter to the governor of Illinois and said: “My record is very black. I have served time, as you know, in the Joliet prison and in the Chicago prison, and they have my photographs there, and the record of my crimes. It makes me feel bad. I have proved the genuineness of my conversion. I should like to make a special request of you that you secure for me the record of my crimes and my imprisonments and my photographs, and send them to me.”

The governor wrote back and said: “Mr. Callahan, your request is unprecedented in the history of this state. Nothing of that kind has ever been done; but because of the great respect we all have for you because of the confidence we have in the fact that your life is a changed life, I am enclosing in this your photographs and all the records that are found in the Joliet prison of your crimes. Here they are: take them with my compliments.”

John Callahan built a fire in the grate, and burned all those records. He wrote a letter to the man who had charge of the prison in Chicago, and received a similar response. He wrote letters to other men in charge of prisons, stating what had been done in Illinois; and in every case he secured the record of his crimes; and they were all destroyed. Then he stood up and said, “John Callahan is a free man. All the record of his crime has been expunged. Not a trace of it is left.” Then he could stand forth and ask “Who is there to condemn me for my past life?”

That is just what God does for a poor sinner. He does not keep his record around always so that the devil can take it and hold it before him. God changes the record.—By William H. Branson, Signs of the Times, February 2, 1926.

Quote: “Every saint has been born into the family of God by a miraculous conception.”—By Charles G. Bellah, Signs of the Times, March 17, 1931.

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Three Wishes

I wish I had a telescope
   To scan the starry skies;
But since I have no telescope,
   I’m glad I have two eyes.
I wish I had a kitchen run
By push-button commands;  
But while the kitchen’s still a dream,  
I’m glad I have two hands.  
I wish I had a car  
To give my friends a treat.  
But until that new car comes along,  
I’m glad I have two feet.  
Two eyes to look to God above,  
Two hands to clasp in prayer,  
Two feet to carry me to church,  

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Compiled by Dale Galusha. Please pass this newsletter on to others.

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