



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

The Sanctification of Uncle Sam

REMARKABLE CONVERSIONS, INTERESTING INCIDENTS and STRIKING ILLUSTRATIONS

By Rev H. C. Morrison, D.D.

CONTENTS

(4 of 52 pages selected)

- 1 One of the Most Remarkable Conversions Under my Ministry**
- 2 The Man with Snakes in his Boots and Monkeys on his Bedpost
- 3 A Gracious Manifestation of Grace
- 4 The Difference in Offering Prayer and Issuing Orders
- 5 Restoration and Salvation
- 6 A Father's Prayers are Answered
- 7 Unloading a Cow
- 8 An Interesting Incident in My Early Ministry
- 9 Obedience to the Higher Law
- 10 Entering the Ministry on Horseback
- 11 Plowing Deep
- 12 The Old Colored Preacher
- 13 "A City Set On An Hill"
- 14 My Arrest and Rescue
- 15 Saved to Serve

Chapter 1

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE CONVERSIONS UNDER MY MINISTRY

He was a man of about seventy years of age. In his younger days, he was a blacksmith by trade.

For awhile, he was a sailor. He was a cavalry soldier in the United States Army during the Civil War.

When there was no enemy to fight, he fought his comrades and spent no little time in the Guardhouse. At the close of the War, he came back to Kentucky and lived in the town where I found him.

When I discovered him, he lived in the basement of a poor shack, perched on a hillside in the suburbs of the city and made a scant living fishing and catching driftwood when the river rose and brought logs and trash from the country above. He and his wife lived alone. She was a tall, gaunt woman and knew all about an abusive husband and hard times.

Sam is what we shall call him. He was often drunk and had many conflicts with the police. He had been shot up frequently and much of the time was in the workhouse of the city. The police regarded him as one of the most dangerous men in the city and when they found him drunk, took pains to get any fighting equipment he might have

about him off of him before they awoke him. He served one term in the penitentiary for killing a man. He served another term for appropriating property to which he could prove no legal title. He was very profane, shrewd, and wicked. He was fearless; he understood men remarkably well, and with proper religious training and education he would have made a very remarkable man.

Passing by the cave-like shack in which he lived, I noticed his wife peering around the corner, had a badly bruised face. On inquiry, I found that Sam, in a fit of drunken anger, had beaten her severely.

The police informed me that he was in the workhouse and I went out to see him. I must confess that my visit to him was more in the line of duty than of pleasure. I felt that I should see and have a talk with him, however degraded he might be or how unwilling to converse with a preacher.

When I got out to the workhouse a Negro girl, who was assisting in keeping the place, let me into his cell, locked the door and went away with the key. I found myself alone with one of the most desperate men I have ever met. In my imagination, I saw my obituary in the afternoon paper. It read about like this:

“Rev. H. C. Morrison, with more zeal than wisdom, permitted himself to be locked up in a cell out at the workhouse with old Sam Mc. The man, enraged at the presence of the preacher beat him to death with a stool. It was a most unfortunate tragedy. Mr. Morrison was a promising young minister and highly respected by his many friends in this city. His presence among the people will be greatly missed. Funeral services will take place tomorrow afternoon at three o’clock in the Methodist Church.”

This funeral notice looked very unpleasant to me and I determined to postpone the obsequies to some later date if possible. So, looking the man in the face as pleasantly as I could, I said, “My friend, I have come out to have a quiet talk with you and see if we (putting the emphasis on “we”) cannot arrange to do a little better than we have been doing.” I extended my hand. The old man seized it and broke into tears, saying, “Mr., if anything can be done for me, it is time it was done. I am one of the most wicked men in the world.”

We had a long talk together. He wept and I prayed and I felt greatly encouraged. I realized that I had met with a very unusual man. He talked with frankness and intelligence. He poured out a confession of his many sins and begged me to help him. He promised me faithfully that he would never touch another drop of liquor. I met him soon after he was released from the workhouse and found him staggering drunk. I took him by the hand and said, “Sam, you promised me that you would never take another drop of liquor.” He pulled away from me, braced his feet the best he could and commenced shoving up his sleeves, saying, “I made you no such promise and don’t you say I did.”

He said, “I promised you I would never get drunk again, but I never said I would not take my dram.

I gotta have my toddy.” I looked up at the clouds and said, “I believe we are going to have rain.” He quieted down. We had a chat and renewed our friendship.

Soon afterward, we had a revival at our church. A certain evangelist and his wife were with us.

The wife frequently did the preaching and did it well. She attracted the crowd and my old friend, Sam, slipped in one night, sat on a back seat and heard her. I suppose it was the first time he had entered the church in many years. The next night sometime before preaching I went down in the slums to preach on the street. As I went down, I met Sam, hurrying to the church. He exclaimed to me that he was going early to get a seat close to the front, so he could hear the woman preach. He said it was wonderful the way she talked. When I got back from my street service, the church was packed. Sam was sitting on the end of the third pew from the front. He was in his shirt sleeves and carried an immense walking stick. I went around, gave him a keen slap on the shoulder and putting my lips close to his ear, said, “Sam, I believe you’ll get religion tonight.” It surprised him greatly. I hastened away without any argument or giving him time to offer any objection to my prophecy.

At the close of the sermon he came at once to the altar. He wept and prayed most earnestly. We stayed with him until late. He went away in great grief. The next morning early, he rang the parsonage door bell. As I went down the hall, looking through the glass door, I recognized his ragged clothing and said to myself, “Sam has been converted and has come early to tell the good news.”

When I opened the door, I found his eyes red and his face swollen with weeping. I asked him if he had found salvation. He said, “No, but I’m still seeking, but Tom Averill is dying and something must be done for him

quickly. I have come for you to go to see him. He has lived like I have. He's a wicked man. He's lost. If you can help him, you must come quickly."

I got my hat and hurried away with Sam. We warmed up to each other. I had a feeling as we hurried up the alley of the slums that there was a third person with us who was not visible to the passers-by. We went into a miserable hut and found an old raw-boned man in his seventies with his feet slipping over the brink. Sam said to him, "Tom, here's the feller who was a tellin' me that Jesus could save the likes of us. Let him talk ter you."

At a time like this, a preacher does long for divine guidance. I knelt by the old man's bedside and told him that God so loved the world that He gave His Son to die for it; that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; that those who came to Him He would not turn away; that in His death He made an atonement for the sins of all men. I did my best to give him the very essence of the Gospel. He seemed to take it eagerly; then I prayed. I called on Sam to pray. He started out by saying, "Lord, You know I'm not fittin' to pray for anybody." We had a heart-melting time. I believe poor old Tom was saved. I earnestly hope so. It would be an unutterable joy to meet him on the other side.

Sam and I walked slowly away together, and I could feel that he was gaining ground. Meanwhile, it was very clear that we were falling deeply in love with one another. He was hanging to me for help and I was hanging to Jesus to help us both. Meanwhile, we were getting into a very blessed atmosphere of repentance and prayer and faith.

Sam came to church that night early, got close to the front and came to the altar at the first call; others came, and souls were converted Sam hung on. He prayed aloud. Most of the congregation left.

Not over ten or twelve persons remained in the church. Among them, one of the most prominent women in the city, strongly tinctured with worldliness, giving but little evidence of spiritual life, also a brilliant young doctor, a confirmed skeptic whose wife was a member of our congregation. He attended church and we were good friends. He watched the struggling penitent with great interest.

It was near eleven o'clock at night when Sam arose in triumph and flung the sleeves of his ragged coat around my neck. He had the victory. He wept, he shouted, he laughed. The intellectual, worldly woman came up in tears and said, "The Lord is in this place." The young skeptical doctor seized my hand and said, "Brother Morrison, I have known old Sam Mc. Since I was a boy. He has been a miserable drunkard, a poor thief. If he holds out, I will never utter another word against the Bible or the church or the saving power of Jesus Christ."

Sam did not know his age. He did not know a letter in the books. He must have been about seventy years of age. He was quite bald-headed with a little rim of dirty, straggling hair around the lower part of his head. Everybody in the church seemed to fall in love with him; he was the "Uncle Sam" of the whole congregation. The people bought him clothing, sent food up to his house. We soon got his wife down to the church and she was happily converted, and both joined the church. We made Sam sexton. He didn't know very well how to keep the building clean, but the dear, good women would slip in and do some extra work without a word of objection to him or letting him know that he was not keeping the church in the best of order. About a year after his conversion, I left the place. He held on faithfully. The pastor who succeeded me said there had not been a more miraculous conversion in all the annals of missionary work.

A good many years passed. I held a woods meeting in a community twelve miles from the little city in which Sam lived. He walked down, gave a good testimony. He heard the people witnessing to full salvation. He listened with wonder and delight. He stood up and said, "If there's any more than what I've got, I must have it. What the Lord gave me is so good I want all He's got for me." He came to the altar and entered with great humility, and, at the same time, with great boldness, into the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. He shouted and rejoiced wonderfully. He walked back home to tell his wife of what a marvelous blessing had been poured out in his soul. He had been a great tobacco user. A few days after this gracious baptism, he came to me and said, "Do you know a man can't chaw 'baccer and have this blessin'? I took one chaw after I got this and the Master rebuked me. I ain't a-goin' to chaw no more. I don't want no more.

Not long afterward, there was a big rise in the river. His fishing boat and tackle were all washed away. He walked seventy miles down to Louisville, came into my office, laughing and rejoicing and said, "My boat and fishin' tackle is all gone and I jis' come down here to live with you. I'll take charge of this buildin', build your fires and sweep your floors."

I consented, and we rented him a house. He sent for his wife and was with us several years. He was a blessing to the place. Everybody loved him. I frequently went up to his house for prayer. I do not believe that any human being ever loved me with a warmer, more loyal heart than “Uncle Sam.”

One Saturday evening, Mr. Pritchard paid him his weekly wages and he left the office praising God. He went home, threw the money into his wife’s lap, gave God glory, left the house and undertook to cross the street on some mission. He had grown quite deaf and was now very old, I should think at least eighty years of age. He stepped in front of a swiftly moving street car which lifted him high into the air. It seemed that he was dead when he fell back upon the pavement. I judge his soul was in Heaven before his dear old body struck the cobblestones.

I was preaching at the Wichita camp meeting. Mr. Pritchard sent me a telegram, telling me of “Uncle Sam’s” death. Of course, it gave me grief, but I went off into the woods by myself, except my invisible Friend, and wept and laughed and shouted quietly the praises of our Saviour, and felt fully assured that my dear old friend had landed safely in eternal blessedness at the feet of that glorious Christ who is able to save to the uttermost.

It is simply wonderful how far Christ can reach with His loving arms after the fallen, and how omnipotent His majestic shoulders to bring back the lost to pardon and purity and peace and everlasting life and blessedness.

*This article was sourced from the Wesleyan Heritage Library CD and is to be distributed free of charge.
Edited and published by T. E. Plumb and volunteers 2001. We hope this selection has built your faith to
enter His own Rest...*

For further information or purchase details for the complete CD see <http://www.EnterHisRest.org>
