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▲ DENIS KAISER

FROM DECEMBER 1849 TO MAY 1850, JAMES AND ELLEN WHITE PUBLISHED THE “PRESENT TRUTH” IN OSWEGO, NEW YORK, WHERE THEY WERE ENTERTAINED BY ELIAS AND MARY ELIZABETH GOODWIN, EARLY SABBATARIAN ADVENTISTS IN THAT LOCATION. THE STORY OF ELIAS’ CONVERSION IS FASCINATING.¹

For many years he had been an “expert gambler” and he was able to make a living by gambling. He spent his nights at the gambling table and caught up with sleep during the day. One night in 1843 he lost interest in the game and decided to go home early in the evening. While walking along the street, he passed by an open stairway that led up to a hall where a man was preaching about the prophecies of Daniel. Curiosity led him into the hall and he listened to the speaker’s discourse intently. As he set down and listened, he felt somehow impressed that the speaker needed money. After the close of the meeting, he walked up to the speaker and handed him a five-dollar bill. He was not even out of the building and was already cursing himself for giving the man the money. Back at home he tried to sleep but he could not stop thinking about the image and beasts of Daniel and the solemn impression that the end of all things was at hand. Convicted, he left his gambling lifestyle behind and kept going back to that hall to listen to other speakers. He accepted Jesus, was converted, and joined the Millerite movement.

Elias wanted to meet the man again who had been instrumental in changing his life. A few months later, the same speaker returned to the hall and testified of a wonderful experience he had

there the previous time. He stated, “When I started out to preach the near coming of the Lord, I told him I would go as long as he opened the way. As I came on the steamer to this city, an entire stranger, I had only fifty cents left. I prayed most earnestly in my cabin. I said, ‘Lord, if my work is done I can as well stop in Oswego as anywhere else; but if there is more for me to do, open the way.’ At the close of my sermon, a man handed me five dollars, and I have not lacked since. None of the brethren could tell who the man was; I would like to meet him.”

After the meeting Elias approached him and said, “I am the man who gave you the five dollars, I want you to go home with me.” Amazement overcame them as they shared their respective experiences.

God works in unexpected ways. Elias Goodwin’s experience is a reminder to listen to the little promptings of the Holy Spirit, which may transform both our and other people’s lives. ■

1. J. N. Loughborough, “Experiences in the Publishing Work—No. 10,” *Review and Herald*, Sep. 24, 1908, 21.

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