

Seven New Testament Soul-Winners

by

W. B. RILEY, A.M., D.D., L.L.D.,
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

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CHAPTER ONE

JOHN BAPTIST - THE PIONEER SOUL-WINNER

"Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour" (John 1 :35-39)

I AM beginning with you, this morning, a series of seven sermons on Soul-Winning. I propose to bring from the New Testament the names of seven men whose experiences are recorded by the pen of inspiration, and who are worthy examples of this superb work.

Those seven men will be:-

1. John, Baptist - The Pioneer Soul-Winner
2. Andrew - The Fraternal Soul-Winner
3. Philip - The Faithful Soul-Winner
4. Ananias - The Skillful Soul-Winner
5. Peter - The Popular Soul-Winner
6. Paul - The Passionate Soul-Winner
7. JESUS - The Supreme Soul-Winner

It will be conceded, without controversy, that soul-winning is essential in the development of the individual Christian's life, and is a sine qua non in the on-going of the church of GOD. We doubt not that these seven names will be accepted as the most outstanding of the personal workers known to the New Testament. [13]

I begin with John the Baptist because he was a pioneer in this work, and I invite your attention to three suggestions born of this inspired record of his success:

- He Introduced the Saviour;
- He Proclaimed Substitution;

- He Secured Disciples.

He Introduced the Saviour

He affirmed that JESUS was the Messiah of promise.

The Old Testament prophets had been describing the coming One under varied figures:

- The Psalmist as THE ANOINTED ONE (45:7 and Isaiah 61:1);
- Isaiah as THE LEADER AND COMMANDER (55:4);
- Daniel as THE MESSIAH (9:25),

and other features of His character too numerous to mention.

But now, if John be right, He has arrived, and to that fact he refers when, seeing JESUS coming unto him, with uplifted finger, he said:-

"Behold the Lamb of God!"

To be sure, the language itself suggested sacrifice and substitution, but the subject of both, according to the prophets, was to be THE MESSIAH.

"Familiarity breeds contempt." We can hardly know what such an announcement meant. Keep in mind that this was the Person of prophetic promise, and for centuries the faithful had looked for him; and John's announcement would almost be akin to the astonishment of the "**shout**" that shall enlist the instant and ecstatic attention of saints when, in His Second Coming, he shall cleave the sky and they shall hear "**the sound of His voice.**" [14]

In one of the chapels of Oxford University there is a beautiful stained-glass window decorated on the outside with sacred pictures of the Old Testament and on the inside with corresponding pictures from the New, so that when the sunlight falls upon the window the two are blended; and those who study them sitting or standing inside the sacred enclosure see at one and the same time the Old Testament type and its New Testament fulfillment. For instance: Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac on the outside, and CHRIST on the Cross on the inside.

A writer, calling attention to this, declares it beautifully illustrates the connection between the Old Testament and the New, and that which pictures can do (and in this instance do do) language accomplishes as well, for pictures may be verbally painted.

John's exclamation "**Behold the Lamb of God!**" was the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament promises of the Messiah to come.

Time has in no wise changed this necessity. If we will be personal workers today we have to point men to the CHRIST and declare His Messiahship, His Saviourhood.

John declared himself His servant only.

In answer to the query, "**Who art thou?**" we have him replying:-

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord . . . "
(John 1:22-23).

And later:

"Whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose";

And still further:-

"He . . . is preferred before me . . . " (John 1:27).

He assumes, then, not only second place, but a servant's place.

It was of minor importance what people thought of him, but it was all important that they should know His Master, His Saviour, His Lord!

Is not the present trouble with church membership at that point? We do not appreciate the Saviourhood of JESUS CHRIST; we do not realize the dire need men have of Him.

When Dwight L. Moody was yet alive, he said one day:

"I believe that if an angel were to wing his way from earth up to Heaven, and were to say that there was one poor, ragged boy, without father or mother, with no one to care for him and teach him the way of life; and if GOD were to ask who among the angels were willing to come down to this earth and live here for fifty years and lead that one to JESUS CHRIST, every angel in Heaven would volunteer to go. Even Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Almighty, would say, 'Let me leave my high and lofty position, and let me have the luxury of leading one soul to JESUS CHRIST'." [15]

And yet there are thousands of His professed servants who never apply for that privilege or even deem it important that they undertake that task! GOD pity us, and let the example of John instruct us!

He emphasized the Nazarene's infinite superiority.

He not only reminded them that CHRIST was preferred before him, but a little later he said of CHRIST:-

"He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:30).

In other words, he clearly apprehended the infinite superiority of JESUS. He did not belong to the company of men who instituted comparison between JESUS of Nazareth and other prophets, or a comparison between the CHRIST of Scriptures and the 20th century philosopher, and pay Him the doubtful compliment of being a possible superior.

Carnegie Simpson says:-

"It were an easy task to compare Him with other saints or heroes of history and show that He was morally better than they. To do this would be, however, but to say the least part of the truth about the character of JESUS. Let us state the complete truth at once. He had not simply less sin and more virtue than others. His supremacy is not comparative; it is absolute. He is the stainless man, the sinless Being;" yea, and He also is the God-man, the world's one and only hope!

When John attracted the attention of his disciples to Him, he meant to say no less of Him.

Are we telling men of this wonderful One, this "**Counsellor**", this "**mighty God**", this "**everlasting Father**", this "**Prince of Peace**"?

If not, why not? [16]

He Proclaimed Substitution

He presented Him as the Paschal Lamb.

"**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29).

Go back to Exodus 12:3 f. and you will find a vivid description of this Paschal appointment:-

"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house."

Pharaoh had so often hardened his heart against GOD, that the Lord had brought upon him the tenth and last of His humbling plagues. This time the first-born in every house was to die. For every Jewish family a perfect lamb, or its equivalent, was to be slain; but the killing was not sufficient, for it was not the death but the blood - the life - that was to save Israel from this judgment.

"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you" (Exodus 12:22-23).

If one would know what anxiety was brought to Israel, what infinite agony it imposed upon the Egyptians, and what was the extent and value of the miracle of Grace to believers through the shed Blood, then he might also comprehend something of the value of "**the blood of Jesus Christ His Son**" which "**cleanseth us from all sin**" (I John 1:7).

What is the problem of life, anyhow, other than finding salvation for sin; and to what source has mortal man looked with any degree of success, save JESUS?

Charles Darwin started his life as an ardent believer. His early studies were with the view to the ministry, but his grandfather's philosophy of Evolution undid his faith and made of him an infidel. [17]

Admiral Sir James Sullivan tells us that Darwin often expressed to him his conviction that it was useless to send missionaries to the Fuegians, probably the lowest of the human race.

Sir James, on the other hand, had replied that he doubted if any beings existed, too low to comprehend the simple message of the Gospel of CHRIST. Finally, when the Fuegian Islands were dotted with churches, and the cannibals had become Christians, Darwin admitted his mistake and sent a Five Pound Note by the hand of Sir James to help on the Cause!

What finer proof of John Baptist's claim than is found in that fact!

Many a savage island has been influenced after a kindred manner. Missionaries have visited them and found them living on so low a moral level as to be little, if any, above the brutes. Without money to entice them, without armies to compel them, they have brought to them JESUS and His love, and in a few years have seen the same change that Joseph Clark witnessed in the heart of Africa, - naked savagery beautifully garbed; low lust lifted to the level of pure love; cruelty displaced by kindness; selfishness by the spirit of sacrifice; heathenism changed to Christianity.

There is but one Who can work it, and He is "**the Lamb of God**" whose Blood "**cleanseth us from all sin.**"

John saw Him receive the Spirit's seal.

A. J. Gordon, in his classical work, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, tells us that one of the most instructive writers on Hebrew worship and ritual says that it was the custom for the priest to whom the service pertained, having selected a lamb from the flock, to inspect it with the most minute scrutiny, in order to discover if it was without physical defect, and then to seal it with the temple seal, thus certifying that it was fit for sacrifice and for food.

The Father's seal upon JESUS CHRIST was set in the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT upon Him, - a testimony to His Sonship and the seal of His separation unto sacrifice; and John saw that, and, referring to it, said:- [18]

"But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:33).

Little wonder, then, that

He declared Him to be the Son of GOD.

When Billy Sunday was about to enter upon his Boston campaign, he was consulted by a newspaper reporter, and in the interview he asked Billy what was the matter with our country. To this question, that successful evangelist replied:-

"The curses of America today are Modernism, Materialism, Humanism, and Communism. They absorb everything but the truth. They deny everything but falsehood. They are tunneling under our faith and homes and churches and government. A keg of powder in one hand and a fuse and a box of matches in the other, they are teaching our boys and girls in most of our schools and colleges that you have no mind; you have no soul; you are a piece of animal machinery, and you respond to the stimuli. In other words, there is no GOD; there is no Devil; there is no Heaven; there is no hell; there is no right; there is no wrong! There is nothing but you, and you are nothing but an animal descended from a monkey or a gorilla. What you want you have a right to have. Today the individual opinion is the seat of authority.

"I brand that numbskull philosophy as anarchy, pure and simple. America can be saved from these four, and all other curses by the old and ever new Cure, the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST."

He is the Son of GOD! He is the Saviour of men!

Fosdick once preached a sermon on "*The Peril of Worshipping JESUS*", but the language employed was misleading. The true peril is that of profession without conviction, Christianity without CHRIST. The world will never come to know GOD aside from JESUS of Nazareth; He and GOD are One!

" . . . **He that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . .** " (John 14:9). [19]

"He that hath the Son hath the Father also."

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"
(Acts 4: 12).

John's Gospel, - "**behold the Lamb**" - then, remains the Gospel of today - the lone Gospel; and, thanks be to His name, THE SUFFICIENT GOSPEL!

He Secured Disciples

First of all he made friends to himself.

These two disciples who followed JESUS were John's disciples first! That is essential in successful soul-winning. The man who cannot win his fellows to him will never win them to the Lord. That is the chief difficulty in the personal work of some people; they lack winsomeness; or they lack tact; oftentimes they lack the personal appeal; and sometimes - even though blessed with all of these they lack interest - men and women alike fail or refuse to employ the influence that should be exerted upon others for CHRIST.

I have read somewhere of how two strangers happened to attend the same church for several

Sundays. No one spoke to either of them. One said:-

"I will give that church one more chance. If nobody speaks to me next Sunday I will never go there again."

The other man said:-

"I don't like this sort of thing. If no one speaks to me next Sunday, I'll speak to someone."

As it happened, the usher placed the first man in a seat in front of the second and, as often occurs, no one greeted either of them. As the first man was about to stalk out of the church forever, the second man turned and put out his hand and said:-

"Good morning, Sir. I'm glad to see you. Fine sermon, wasn't it?"

They were both pleased at having made a friend, and continued to come.

It is an illustration that needs no application. In case one is too dumb to see the main point, then I will find out whether it had any significance for you at the close of this service. [20]

John deliberately turned over his disciples to JESUS.

That should be the work of every Christian; in fact, that is the supreme service that one can render to the Son of GOD; and when I say "that one can render" I mean that "anyone can render," - I care not how high, how intellectual; I care not how lofty, how cultured in mind, how exalted in office.

Gladstone, seeking the salvation of his humblest fellow by pointing him to the Son of GOD, is Gladstone at his best.

The Christian Index, some years ago, rehearsed the story of how when outlaws murdered Governor Stuenburg of Idaho, William E. Borah - now a conspicuous Senator - was the prosecuting attorney, and Clarence Darrow - the uniform friend of criminals - was the defender.

On a certain afternoon, in connection with the trial, Darrow usurped some hours in a tirade against religion, against government, against home, against everything that good men are accustomed to regard as desirable, and wound up with a string of abuse against CHRIST and the Bible.

Borah sat like a statue through these hours, and when his colleagues were ready to spring to their feet in answer to the insults, he motioned them down.

At last the defense rested, and then the great lawyer-statesman stood up, walked directly in front of the jurors. He looked at Darrow for a moment; he looked to the face of the judge, and then turned to the waiting crowd in the courtroom. Turning from them to the jurors, he said:-

"Gentlemen, when I heard the attorney from Chicago uttering his sneers at your religion and my religion, there came back to me, as there must have come back to you, the recollection of the

time when, as a little boy, I stood at my mother's knee and heard her read from our Bible."

Then, with a swift, sweeping gesture of his mighty arm at Darrow, his voice rang out through the courtroom: [21]

"Too late, too late, after two thousand years to cry 'fraud' to the God-man of Calvary! Too late, too late, in the dawn of the twentieth century, to write 'imposter' on the brow of the Figure on the Cross!"

Thank GOD for the man, who, like John the Baptist, can lay his talents at the feet of JESUS! And, like John the Baptist, count it the climax of Christian accomplishment to win one convert to Him!

When Roy L. Smith was yet in Minneapolis, in one of his sermons he said:-

"You men who have professed loyalty to JESUS CHRIST, compare your loyalty to Him with your loyalty to other things. The man who is loyal to his favorite team takes time off for the games and pays admission at the gate, and keeps informed as to the team's progress, and boosts hardest when it is most in need. The man who is loyal to his club behaves after a kindred manner, keeping his dues paid up and regarding its rules and regulations.

"Can a man be loyal to CHRIST and use nothing of time, money or interest for Him?"

Nay, verily!

I tell you, brethren, the more I reflect upon these things, the more I am convinced for myself and for you, that our deadly indifference to the unsaved about us, our unconcern for the un-churched, is the proof that our profession is more shoddy than substantial, more meaningless than meaningful, more a matter of respectability than of the Christian religion.

What John commenced, CHRIST completed.

He pointed his two disciples to JESUS.

One day with CHRIST made them forever disciples of the Man from Nazareth.

Taylor Smith tells us that the great Scottish scholar, Professor Duncan - familiarly known to his students as "the Rabbi" because of his Oriental scholarship - was one day found by his biographer talking to a poor old woman.

Wishing to speak to Dr. Duncan, the narrator lingered near and heard the learned man say, as he put his hand on the old lady's bent shoulders,- [22]

"Now, you have promised to seek; only remember, seeking won't save you. But if you seek, you will find, and finding, He will save you!"

What more can I say this morning? What more need I say? It is just as true this moment as it was when John announced it:-

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Look and Live! [23]

~ end of chapter 1 ~
