

# **The Divine Art of Soul-Winning**

by

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## **CHAPTER 7 -**

### **HOW TO DEAL WITH VARIOUS CLASSES**

WE NOW TURN to the actual work of dealing with both the professedly converted and the unconverted. Let us first think of the former class.

#### **I. CONVERTED PERSONS**

Those with whom you will come in contact who need personal dealing, may be divided into two main classes: those who are open backsliders, and those whose Christian experience is unsatisfactory.

1. Open backsliders. It is assumed that you have made sure that the person with whom you are dealing was genuinely converted, and are satisfied as to whether he is a possessor or merely a professor.

If the person does not seem anxious to return to the LORD, and shows no real sorrow, although at times he longs for "the good old days," use Jeremiah 2:5, 13, 17, 19, showing the ingratitude, bitterness, and folly of his longer pursuing his godless way. Bring him face to face with the inevitable issues of his conduct in the life to come. Use also I Kings 11:9; Amos 4:11; Luke 11:24; II Peter 2:20-22.

If, however, the person manifests a genuine sorrow for sin and desire to return to the LORD, it is a great joy to bring the healing balm of the Scriptures to his sad heart. Note how gently the LORD dealt with penitent Peter: "**Go and tell my disciples and Peter.**" Let us, too, be gentle in our dealing. Our first task is to assure him of GOD's willingness to receive all who return to Him. Use Hosea 14:1-4 with its joyous promise of restoration.

Luke 15:11-24 has been wonderfully used in encouraging wanderers to return from the far country. Next get him down on his knees and compel a full and unvarnished confession and forsaking of sin (Jeremiah 3:13; I John 1:9). This is absolutely essential to restoration. Then show that if he has done his part - confessing, acknowledging, and forsaking his sin - GOD has done His part, forgiving, cleansing, and restoring. Get him to thank GOD for having received

him back into His fellowship. In some cases it may induce brokenness to go through Psalm 51 with the inquirer.

2. Those whose Christian experience has been unsatisfactory. First ascertain the reason. The causes of spiritual decline are much the same in most cases: neglect of prayer, Bible reading, or witnessing, worldliness, indulgence of sin or doubt, no assurance of salvation, no victory over sin.

(a) **NEGLECT OF PRAYER** - a sadly common neglect among Christians, and probably, along with neglect of the Bible, the most fruitful cause of backsliding. Some time ago the writer met a fine young man, truly converted and anxious to go on for GOD, and yet who was making no progress. In response to a question he admitted that he did not regularly read and pray. On having the part which prayer and Bible reading play in the Christian life explained to him, he said: "I did not know, and no one ever told me that this was necessary to growth in the Christian life." It was touching to hear him pray as though GOD had given him a great revelation. Never take it for granted that the young convert will automatically read and pray. Instruct him on this point. Endeavor to find the reason for the lack of prayer and suggest possible causes (James 4:2). Show value of a quiet time (Matthew 6:6). Quote CHRIST's example (Matthew 14:13, 23; Mark 1:35), as well as that of other saints (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10; Matthew 26:41; Ephesians 6:18).

(b) **NEGLECT OF BIBLE.** Show the place the Bible must ever hold in the life of the happy Christian. Ask why it is that it seems so difficult to find time for Bible reading and prayer, and yet time is found for everything else. Suggest that the reason is that the Devil knows if he can prevent this he will paralyze the whole of the believer's life of service. Use I Peter 2:2; James 1:21, 22; II Timothy 3:15-17; a passage which shows the part the Bible plays in saving from error and equipping for service; Psalm 119:9, 130, one of the secrets of victory; Psalm 1:1,2; John 5:38, 39; Acts 17:11; John 8:31.

(c) **NEGLECT IN WITNESSING.** In many cases the real joy of salvation is never experienced until open confession has been made. Ascertain if the inquirer has ever done this, and if he is still witnessing. If not, show that this is the cause of the unsatisfactory experience. One who is ashamed of JESUS cannot be happy. Use Romans 10:9, 10; Matthew 10:32, 33. Witnessing is part of the believer's duty as well as his privilege. If the reason of nonwitness is fear of ridicule or persecution, use John 12:42, 43. Encourage personal work with Daniel 12:3; Proverbs 11:30; Philippians 4:13.

(d) **COMPROMISE WITH THE WORLD.** Since James 4:4 is true and "**friendship of the world is enmity with God,**" it naturally follows that the Christian who is on good terms with the world is not on good terms with GOD, and vice versa. GOD has commanded us to be separate from the world and not to love it (I John 2:15-17; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Matthew 6:2-4; Luke 8:14). Bring the inquirer to the point where he will make a definite and final break with the world (I Corinthians 6:19, 20; 8:13; Colossians 3:17; I Timothy 4:6; I Corinthians 6:12).

(e) **ENSLAVED BY SIN.** A man in one of Moody's meetings said he would like to come, but he was chained and couldn't come. A Scotsman said to him: "Aye, man, why don't you come, chain and all?" He said: "I never thought of that." The One who saved from the guilt of sin is able to save from its enslaving power (Romans 6:11; I Corinthians 15:57).

(f) No ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. The cause of this may be ignorance. Many have no idea that a believer can, before he dies, know with certainty that he is saved. With this class of person, use I John 5:10-13, stressing the last verse. Also John 1:12; 3:36; 5:24; Acts 13:39. Make clear what believing on CHRIST really means, and make sure that this saving belief is present. Sometimes, however, the lack of assurance is due to tolerated sin. In such a case, find out what is hindering, press for a confession, and assurance will generally result. Use Isaiah 55:7; John 8:12; Psalm 32:1-5. A very general cause of lack of assurance is a dependence on feeling. Sometimes the inquirer feels saved, but at other times he is sure he is not saved. The task of the worker is to induce him to cease from looking at his own inward feelings and to rest on the sure Word of GOD. Tell him that GOD's unchanging Word is far more trustworthy than his fickle feelings. Use such a verse as John 3:36, calling attention to the fact that "believing" is assuredly followed by "having" eternal life. Romans 8:1 and John 5:24 assure that for the believer judgment is past. Eternal life is given, and cannot be taken away. John 10:28, 29; Exodus 12:1-13 have been much used in this connection. The sprinkled blood ensured safety while the Word of the LORD believed assured of safety.

An old lady, full of joyous confidence, was asked: "But suppose Christ should let you slip through His fingers?"

She replied at once: "But I am one of His fingers."

There is no possibility of the true believer being separated from the love of CHRIST (Romans 8:38, 39). Do not let the inquirer go until he can say with absolute assurance: "I know that I have eternal life."

## II. UNCONVERTED PERSONS

These may be considered under five headings:

1. Anxious or interested. What a joy it is to the zealous personal worker to come across someone anxious to be saved. Some time ago a man came to the door of the Bible Training Institute, weeping so much that a minute elapsed before he could tell us his errand. "Have you a Bible here?" he inquired. "Certainly. Come in. What is troubling you? Do you know the joy of having your sins forgiven?" "No, but that's what I've come about." What a joy it was to lead this man to CHRIST, to see the cloud lift from his face, and to see his handkerchief, already saturated with tears of repentance, doing service again, but this time for tears of joy. The man, who lived hundreds of miles away, had been under conviction of sin for six months as a result of reading literature sent out from the Institute, and had made his way to the Institute to find CHRIST. Unfortunately such cases are all too rare. There seem to be very few who are really concerned and anxious about their souls.

The first thing to do with one in this condition is to assure him of GOD's willingness and ability to save (Luke 19:10). Next show that GOD requires repentance, or a sorrow for sin real enough to make him willing to forsake it (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3; Isaiah 55:7). Repentance involves confession; for GOD cannot forgive sin until it is confessed to Him (I John 1:9). Then show what CHRIST had to suffer before GOD's love could have full sway, and He could righteously forgive

men. It is often very effective to have the seeker read Isaiah 53:3-6, using the first person singular instead of plural, e.g., "**Surely he hath borne [my] griefs . . . He was wounded for [my] transgressions, he was bruised for [my] iniquities,**" etc. This will accomplish the dual purpose of convicting of sin and awakening faith in CHRIST. Endeavor to make the picture as graphic as possible. Having got the inquirer to repent and confess his need, and explained the cost at which the gift of eternal life was bought, the next step is to show that before he can be saved he must not only repent but believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15; Acts 16:31). But what is it to believe?

### **What it is to believe**

It is of the utmost importance that the personal worker be able to show clearly the nature of saving faith, or what is meant in Scripture by "**believe on The Lord Jesus Christ,**" The sin for which men are condemned is - "**Because they believe not on me**" (John 16:9).

In a letter received recently an inquirer said:

"I believe in CHRIST, but the devils also believe and tremble, and they are not saved," Here is the worker's problem in a nutshell. There are obviously two kinds of belief - one purely mental, the other involving the whole of the moral nature. The purely mental opinion that it is true that CHRIST lived and died for men, works no saving change in the heart or life. What, then, is it to believe to the salvation of your soul? It is to so put your confidence in CHRIST as being what He claimed to be your SAVIOUR and Sin-bearer - that you put yourself absolutely in His hands for salvation. If I am suffering from a dread disease for which a certain surgeon says he has an unfailing remedy, it is not sufficient that I believe that he can cure me. That is merely an opinion. I do not really believe until I put my case in his hands. I do not believe in my banker until I place my money in his keeping. Believing without trusting is not faith. Perhaps no illustration is more effective than that of Blondin, the tight-rope walker who, having walked the tight-rope across Niagara Falls, first alone, and then pushing a wheelbarrow, asked a little fellow who had been watching him breathlessly, whether he believed that he could wheel him across the rope in the barrow. "Of course I do, sir," replied the lad, "I saw you do it." "All right, jump in." "Oh, no, sir, you don't catch me," was the honest reply. He believed (mentally), but he did not trust.

Another way of presenting this truth is by showing from John 1:12 that believing and receiving are synonymous. "**As many as received him**" - as personal SAVIOUR and Sin-bearer - thereby received "**power to become the sons of GOD.**"

The final step is to lead the inquirer to definitely believe in CHRIST and receive Him as SAVIOUR. Use John 1:11, 12 again, somewhat as follows: "You have now confessed your sin and need. You believe that when Jesus died He bore the punishment for your sins and that He longs to be your SAVIOUR and Master. Will you now take Him to be such?" "Yes, I will." "Well, what does this verse say you are now?" "A child of GOD." "And you are really a child of GOD already?" If the inquirer is not clear on this point, go over the ground again. Do not leave him until the last doubt has been removed.

Another verse which the writer frequently uses is John 5:24: "Have you heard GOD's Word

about CHRIST tonight?" "Yes." "And do you believe that GOD sent His Son into the world to die for your sins?" "Yes." "Well, what does GOD say you have?" "Everlasting life." "And have you everlasting life?" If hesitancy is shown, take him back over the ground until he can give an unequivocal "Yes."

"And will you ever be brought into judgment for your sins?" "No." "Why not?" "Because Jesus bore the judgment for me." The worker may have to supply this answer. "And what other change has taken place?" "I have passed from death unto life." "Then let us get down on our knees and thank Him for His gift."

It is well to emphasize the divine order - the fact, faith, and then feeling.

JESUS did it - on the Cross.  
GOD says it - in His Word.  
I believe it - in my heart.

Feeling that you are saved cannot come before you are saved, any more than feeling you are well after an illness cannot come until you are well. And as you cannot be saved without believing, faith must precede feeling. As faith must have a fact to rest on, the fact must precede faith. Many inquirers want to feel saved before they believe in CHRIST, and they make their feelings the test as to whether or not they have believed, thus reversing the divine order. I believe it, not because I feel it, but because GOD says it and JESUS did it. Make sure that the anxious one is resting not on his own feelings but on GOD's Word.

Go and find them ere they perish,  
Tell them of the Saviour's love;  
How He came to guide them safely  
To the Father's home above.  
Go and find them in their darkness,  
Bound by chains of slavery;

Tell abroad the proclamation,  
JESUS CHRIST can set them free.  
Go and find them, hasten! hasten!  
Time is fleeting fast away;  
They are dying, lost and hopeless  
While you linger day by day.

- Oswald J. Smith

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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