

## **PASTOR RUSSELL'S CANDID VIEW OF "BILLY" SUNDAY SAYS "BILLY" IS UNIQUE—HIS VIRTUES AND FAULTS**

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**God and Man Dishonored by False Doctrines Which Preachers Do Not Believe—Fake Preaching Abominable to God—Instilling Superstitious Fears a Crime—If the Bible Does Teach That Eternal Torture is the Fate of All Except the Saints, It Should Be Preached, Yea, Thundered, Weekly, Daily, Hourly—If It Does Not So Teach, the Facts Should Be Made Known And The Foul Stain Dishonoring To God's Holy Name Removed.**

Asked recently to express his candid opinion of the "baseball evangelist," Pastor Russell made some kindly but pungent remarks on "Billy" Sunday, the most noted preacher of our day. The Pastor would not depart from his custom and the Bible rule, "Speak evil of no man." His remarks merely appertained to "Billy's" preaching of the Gospel.

"Billy" Sunday catches the public eye and ear by the novelty of his methods. Some go to hear him lambaste the preachers on the platform behind him, and to watch their faces and see them smile as though it were a good joke when he tells them that their preaching has made the churches cold storage places with little storage, or when he likens them to the Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, of old, or when he tells them that they are leading their congregations straight down to Hell. These things told in the newspapers seem so astounding that people must see and hear for themselves.

### **"Billy's" Chair-Smashing Proclivities**

Others go to hear "Billy" because it is the "fad." Business men and electric and steam railway managers realize that thousands will come to town as they would to a circus. They bring pressure to bear upon the poor preachers; for "Billy" wisely insists that he will not come and save the citizens from Hell if there is any competition in the business—insists that all the churches close down. Under the pressure the preachers cannot help themselves and try to make the best of it, hoping that people will not take "Billy" seriously as respects their hypocrisy, etc., and assured that he will divide the spoils evenly amongst all the churches—not the financial spoils, but the souls for "cold storage" or to be let down to Hell.

Others attend to see "Billy's" acrobatic feats, jumping onto a table or smashing a chair; others because they have been invited to be of the large choir; others to say that they have heard "Billy" Sunday. The worldly adage is, "Nothing succeeds like success," and every time "Billy" succeeds he has more success.

Amongst Billy's virtues we should not forget the fearless way in which he attacks the social customs and sins which assail the family and the community, the fearless way in which he tells the preachers what he really thinks of them and what the masses of the public think of them, and the above-board manner in which he bargains the result of his efforts for cold cash—the meeting of the expenses and the giving to himself of certain collections for himself and his troupe. If the Gospel must be sold, it is better to have it done in the open rather than in the name of the heathen, the collectors getting the most.

To the extent that "Billy" Sunday seeks to defend the Bible against the Higher Critics, to the extent that he really shows up the coldness, formalism, hypocrisy, of the Church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-17), to the extent that he encourages righteousness of life and discourages drunkenness and lewdness, we can surely wish him Godspeed, and trust that some good is accomplished by him, in awakening the people to do some thinking for themselves along religious lines.

### **Some of "Billy" Sunday's Faults**

The Pastor said that if the reports that "Billy" prayed to God most irreverently, and addressed the Redeemer as "Old Pal," were true, then "Billy's" influence on the public would lead on in the direction in which the world is now rapidly moving anyway—toward irreverence. He hoped that "Billy" would become more reverent, and believes that this result would follow a better knowledge of God. He could scarcely reconcile with honesty Billy's attempt to tie up all the souls he saved, in the churches which he declared were cold storage plants leading down to Hell. He wished that "Billy" would reconcile these opposites.

He was pleased to note that "Billy" Sunday's last sermon in each place was usually on the Second Coming of Christ; and that "Billy" apparently recognizes the present and last stage of the Church, typified in Laodicea. This caused him all the more to wonder why "Billy" would help people into the Laodicean Church which the Bible styles Babylon, and declares that God spews out of His mouth. (Revelation 3:16) Next Sunday the Pastor will discuss the Second Coming of Christ, viewing that great event and Messiah's Kingdom from a somewhat different angle from Billy's.

The Pastor declared that it makes his blood boil with righteous indignation to find Billy's preaching a practical endorsement of the God-dishonoring theory that the great mass of humanity are to suffer eternal torment because they were born in sin, mis-shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5), and then failed to live saintly lives. True, "Billy" does not explain Hell. Like most preachers he probably hides his true thought on the subject, while allowing the common people to think that he believes in a Hell of eternal tortures. The Pastor could not believe that Mr. Sunday or any other intelligent man of our day really believes this invention of the Dark Ages, which antagonizes the Bible as well as common sense.

Mr. Sunday and all other preachers who realize the fallacy of this great “doctrine of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1) owe it to the people, who trust them and who make up their collections, to tell them the truth. More than this they owe it to God that this foul stain upon the Divine character be denounced. They owe it to themselves as men to stand for and speak out the truth and to assist in opening the eyes of the poor, deluded world.

The Pastor hopes that Mr. Sunday will yet realize that no one can long maintain a moral standard higher than that which he attributes to his God. The injustice and persecution of centuries is largely attributable to the false doctrines which represent the Creator as a demon who unjustly and unlovingly created our race with the knowledge and intention that 999 out of every 1000 would endure an eternity of torture.