

## The Devil's Boomerangs

### ~Other Speakers S-Z: Billy Sunday:

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" -- Eccl. 11:9

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" -- Galatians 6:7

You can always get the truth out of the Bible.

Of course you can always find truth elsewhere, but never from so clear a source. Nothing was ever printed more true than "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap."

God will not coerce and attempt to force any man to be a Christian. When he dies, however, he will be judged for his sins. He must face the day of judgment.

Do as you please. Lie, steal, booze, fight, prostitute. God won't stop you. Do as you please until the undertaker comes and puts you in a coffin and then the Lord will have His say. Lives of pleasure shall have an end, the wicked shall not live half their days.

If I sat in the pew and you were up here preaching there are four questions I would ask that you answer satisfactorily before you could win me.

First: Are you kindly disposed to me? Second: Do you want to help me? Third: Do you know what you are talking about? Fourth: Do you practice what you preach?

No man can say I am not kindly disposed to him. I do want to help every man and woman. I have read and studied and everything I preach comes from the Bible. What I say this afternoon is based on indisputable facts. I have no ambition except to alleviate the misery and suffering that comes through sin. I'll not pump you full of hot air, and what I preach I'll practice. If I didn't practice what I preach I'd leave this platform and never try to speak to an audience again.

If sin wasn't so deceitful it would not be so attractive.

The devil doesn't let a man stop to think what he is doing, that in every added indulgence in a drink he grows weaker. Some people think that to be a Christian means to be a weakling sort of a sissified individual. When I played baseball and was serving the devil, I circled the bases in fourteen seconds from a standing point, and I believe I can do it now. No man has ever beaten that. Han Lobert and some of the rest may have equaled it, but none has ever beaten it. I used to be handy with my dukes, too, before I became a Christian, and I can go so fast now for five rounds you can't see me for dust.

When I was with the Chicago Y.M.C.A. I did the saloon route for a time handing out invitations to men's meetings in Farwell Hall. One day I met a young man I had known in Iowa. He was half drunk and a broken down, drunken bum came along. I told my friend that if he persisted in drinking he would become as the bum. He laughed and said he would never be a drunkard. One year later he was down and out, his job gone and his home wrecked.

No man ever started out with the intention of becoming a drunkard. Line up all the drunkards on earth and ask them and they will all tell you they never intended to be drunkards. They all started as moderate drinkers.

Christianity is capital and capital is character. Your character is what you do business with and there's a big difference between character and reputation. Reputation is what people think about you, and character is what God, your wife and the angels know about you.

For a man to preach and practice the gospel of Jesus Christ makes him trustworthy. There was a time when people wouldn't trust me to hold a yellow dog fifteen minutes.

Many men live only for money. They care for nothing else, but I believe they are in the minority. You cannot measure a man's success by the rattle of the cash register. All some men have is money. Subtract \$50,000, booze and women from some men and you will have nothing left.

I haven't a word to say against the rich man who got his wealth honestly and is trying to do good with it. The Bible doesn't have a thing in it against a man because he's rich. Look at Solomon. He was worth about \$6,000,000,000, according to our standard of gold and silver. Yet he was a Godly man.

But there's a lot of good-for-nothing lobsters who think they are called by God to go up and down the country harping for a limitation of wealth and cussing and damning the rich man for every dollar he has, while they sit around and cuss and damn and never work.

If you want to use your genius and ability to get all you can and use the surplus over your own needs for the good of humanity, I hope you all will be millionaires. If you want to get all you can, and can all you get, I hope you'll all go to the poorhouse.

When Commodore Vanderbilt, who was worth \$200,000,000, died, he called in a minister and asked him to sing for him that old song Vanderbilt's mother used to sing in Moravia, "Come ye sinners, poor and needy!"

Worth \$200,000,000 and yet poor and needy when he came to his death. The next day one man told another Vanderbilt was dead. "How much did he leave?" asked the second man. He left it all. He could not take one cent with him.

But don't stop for anything I say. Go on piling up money until you have a pile as big as the tabernacle. When you die you can't take it with you, and if you could it would melt or burn up.

Just remember, however, that it will not be long before you and I go to the beyond.

Another thing I want to talk about this afternoon is the immorality of the country. Sixty thousand girls were ruined last year by the white slave traffic. But I don't believe any woman was ever ruined but that some brute of a man didn't take the initiative. If what I hear about you young bucks is true, when you come back home from trips, no decent girl ought to speak to you, allow you in their homes or even to look at you. And I understand some of you old married rakes are at it, too. I think the lowest, vilest, most damnable buffoon and triple extract of infamy and degeneracy in the world is the one who will plight his troth and marry, and leave his wife at home to go out with a prostitute.

I wouldn't wipe my feet, I wouldn't spit or blow my nose on society that makes a distinction between the man who sidesteps and the woman who goes wrong. The crying need of the age is a single standard for the sexes. It makes no difference to God whether one wears a plug hat or a hairpin. When a man wants to marry, does he select a girl from the red-light district? No. He goes to some decent, virtuous girl and asks her to accept his whisky soaked, sin blackened, diseased carcass.

A man visited a house of prostitution and found his sister there. He murdered her, although she had as good a right there as he had. Talk about your buccaneers of the Spanish Main, or the heartless men who sat at the feet of Jesus Christ as He hanged on the cross, and gambled for the coat on his back - I'd rather trust my daughter with them than some of the smooth rascals in society. They go around with their trousers rolled up, and their only aim is to lead the next girl they can astray. Then they go back to a lot of young bucks like themselves and laugh at her.

I say they are interlopers in decent society. There must be a Hell. If there isn't where would these low down scoundrels who force motherhood upon a woman and then haven't the manhood to accept fatherhood go? There couldn't be a better argument for Hell. And a lot of you young bucks walk around with a pistol in your hip pockets, and if it would explode it would blow your brains out. I believe that any man low-down enough to deliberately ruin a young girl and sell her into a life of shame should be shot on the spot. Shooting is too good for him. What is wrong for the woman is wrong for the man and any other code is rotten.

If a man has the right to sit around telling smutty stories a woman has the same right. The man adulterer is no better than the woman adulteress. There are many young men so vile that the only good use that could be made of them is to dip their heads in buckets of soapsuds and use them for mops.

Perhaps you have no idea of the extent to which the black plague has grown in this country. Much more than half the young men of this country are or have been afflicted with venereal disease. Eighty per cent of the abdominal operations performed on women are caused by disease contracted from their husbands. Most cases of blindness in infants is caused by disease in their fathers. I know this is plain talking, but what is

needed in this country are men not afraid to talk plainly to men. There are men hobbling diseased around Omaha who say, "Oh, I don't go to hear Billy. He is too vulgar for me." Rot. Plain speaking is always vulgar to the rascal and old fool who is afraid to hear the truth.

There are 500,000 prostitutes in this country. Besides them, there are 1,500,000 who are not classed as prostitutes, being kept on the side. Every year 100,000 prostitutes die, directly or indirectly, from the diseases peculiar to their trade. Think of it!

Eighty per cent of the cases of total blindness in the world are a result of venereal diseases. Perhaps the person himself or his parents were not afflicted, but their ancestors were some time or other. The cause of the downfall of Greece and Rome was the degradation of woman's honor and no attempt by men to curb their beastly desires. And the virtue of womanhood is the rampart wall of American civilization.

Some men say they drink because it makes them cool in summer and warm in winter. Then why is it the booze fighter dies from sunstroke or freezes to death quicker than the man who doesn't drink? That's easy. The alcohol drives the blood to the surface, where it warms or freezes quicker.

You drink because there is alcohol in it, and if the alcohol was taken out you might as well drink water. Some of you let 1,000 gallons of beer slop drain through you to get the value of one and three-quarter pounds of beefsteak. If you want to make swill barrels out of your stomachs, go ahead.

One of the first indications of a crushed strawberry stomach is a crushed strawberry nose. Some of the diseases from drinking are locomotor ataxia, stammering, jaundice, Bright's disease.

I defy any man this side of Hell to show me any scintilla of benefit that ever come from hitting the booze.

It is strange the drinking man thinks I am his enemy when I am only trying to protect him from the things he is rushing into. By my voice, my vote and by all my power I am trying to add twenty years to his life, pull the pillow out of the window and put in a pane of glass, and to feed and clothe his wife and babies the way they should, and put carpet on his floor. I can pass the saloon in my strength and not have a desire to take a drink, but there are many who cannot, and I don't see how men can do anything but drown the dirty rotten business in Hell. Drive it back into Hell, where it ought to be, men.

I have seen more drunken men since I came to Omaha, more drunken men in the tabernacle than I have seen in any other city in seven years.

Whisky is rarely pure. Less than 15 per cent of the whisky sold in this country is unadulterated. That's the chief reason it makes men commit crime.

If you want to know what whisky does to you, drop the white of an egg into a glass when you go home, cover it with whisky and let it stand for a time. The white of the egg will harden. That is what whisky does to your nerves. It affects them the same way and you reel and mutter, because your nerves are whisky soaked. If I could show you men today the inside of a drunkard's stomach, hold his liver or kidneys up to your view, that would be all you would want to make you quit hitting the booze.

Alcohol poisons the system, prevents the liver and kidneys doing their work and eventually sends a man tottering and reeling to a drunkard's grave or to an insane asylum. Men may look healthy but if they drink they are not. Something is wrong with their heart, liver or kidneys. If you don't believe me ask your physician.

I have been drinking your Omaha water for three weeks and I do not believe that anywhere in the country have I drank better, clearer, more refreshing water. I asked where your water came from and they told me from the old muddy Missouri. I could hardly believe that water could be made so pure by filtering. But just in that way do the liver and kidneys filter your blood and when you fill your system with alcohol you stop the filtering process. For 1,900 years alcohol has ruined its millions, sent men to drunkard's graves, impoverished families, wrecked homes and filled our institutions. How much longer are we going to stand it?

Because of my fight against this rotten business, I have suffered attacks from newspapers and from the dirty gang that howls at every man who dares interfere with their illicit profits.

I have been lied about, vilified, insulted, defamed in Omaha since coming, but let me tell you, men of Omaha, any little, rotten, stinking two-by-four sneaking editor of a vile, unspeakable sheet can revile me and talk about

me until he is black in the face and I will not give up my fight against that dirty, Godforsaken, rotten business as long as I live.

I'll reach further down and higher up than any man you ever heard of to save you, your wife and babies from the fangs of that beast and I am not going to be turned back or dismayed by the opposition of a pack of curs.

The spawn of Hell barks at my heels from one end of the land to the other. The open saloon is the hotbed of political corruption and the breeding place of criminals, and nest of anarchy, and the incubator of poverty, misery, squalor, want, dishonesty and all that is vile.

I've been through blood and fire for Jesus Christ, and when some of the preachers stop preaching about the New Jerusalem and start preaching against the whisky crowd and the red-light district in these cities something is going to happen.

You Methodists can talk about infant baptism, and the Presbyterians can howl about perseverance and half waters close over me you'll say and the Baptists can howl about water and half of your members go where you can't get a drop.

When I leave old Omaha you can take me down to the Missouri River, tie a millstone around my neck and drop me off the bridge. And when the waters close over me you'll say "There goes a man who wasn't afraid to preach the truth."

You say you can't prohibit men drinking. If Jesus Christ lived in Omaha men would booze fight, men would side step. But when you say you can't enforce the laws you lie. You can enforce the laws against booze as much as against anything else if you have honest, decent officials to do it. There is not a law in the United States which prohibits. There is a law against murder, but does it prohibit? No. Would you advocate a repeal of all the laws because they do not prohibit? No. You wouldn't let a man murder any one he wanted to by paying a license of \$1,000; or for \$500 ruin any girl over 16 years of age; or for \$250 seduce young girls - or for \$200 license him to crack any safe - or for \$50 license him to burn buildings. That's what you do with the whisky gang.

As many of you know I was a member of the old White Sox ball club, the best club that ever stepped on a diamond. We could beat any other nine men that ever donned a uniform. I was converted in Chicago and forsook the old crowd. The other boys saw me go to Jesus one night in Chicago, but none followed.

Listen! Mike Kelley was sold to Boston for \$10,000. Mike got half of the purchase price. He came up to me and showed me a check for \$5,000. John L. Sullivan, the champion fighter, went around with a subscription paper and the boys raised more than \$12,000 to buy Mike a house.

They gave Mike a deed to the house and they had \$1,500 left and gave him a certificate of deposit for that. His salary for playing with Boston was \$5,000 a year. At the end of that season Mike had spent the \$5,000 purchase price and the \$5,000 he received as a salary and the \$1,500 they gave him and had a mortgage on his house. And when he died down in Allentown, Pa., they went around with a subscription paper to get money enough to put him in the ground. Mike sat there on the corner with me twenty nine years ago when I said, "I bid you good-bye."

Williamson was the shortstop, a fellow weighing 215 pounds, and a more active man you never saw. When Spaulding took the two clubs around the world, I was the second man asked to sign a contract. I was sliding to second base one day - I always slid head first - and I hit a stone and cut a ligament loose in my knee. I got a doctor and had my leg fixed up, and he said to me: "William, if you don't go on that trip I will give you a good leg." I obeyed, and I have as good a leg today as I ever had. They offered to wait for me at Honolulu and at Australia. Spaulding said: "Meet us in England, and play with us through England, Scotland and Wales." I didn't go. Ed Williamson went with them, and while they were on the ship crossing the English channel a storm arose, and the captain thought the ship would go down. Ed dropped to his knees and prayed and said: "God, bring this ship safe into harbor and I promise to quit drinking and be a Christian." God abated the storm and the ship went into the harbor safely. They came back to the United States and Ed came back to Chicago and started a saloon in Dearborn Street.

I would go through there giving tickets for the Y. M. C. A. meetings and would talk with him, and he would cry like a baby. I would go down and pray for him, and would talk with him. When he died and they put him on the table and cut him open and took out his liver, it was as big as a candy bucket. Ed Williamson sat there on the

street corner with me twenty-nine years ago, when I said, "I bid you good-bye."

Frank Flint, our old catcher, who caught for nineteen years, drew \$3,500 a year on an average. He caught before they had chest protectors and masks and gloves. He caught barehanded.

Every bone in the ball of his hand was broken; you never saw a hand like Frank had. Every bone in his face was broken and his nose and cheek bones, and the shoulder and ribs, had all been broken. Frank was discharged from the Chicago club because he would drink, and nobody else wanted him. He used to hang around the saloon all the time. Many a time I have found poor old Frank asleep on a beer table. I turned my pockets wrong side out and dumped every cent I had on the table and said: "Frank, you can always look to me for half of what I have. I haven't as much now as I had when I was playing ball." Then I was drawing \$5,000 and \$7,000 a year, and was offered \$1,000 a month if I would play ball. But I stuck to my job at \$85 a month.

His wife left him, and one day he staggered out of a saloon and was seized with a paroxysm of coughing. His wife happened to meet him and the old love for him returned. She called a carriage and summoned two policemen, and they carried Frank to her boarding house. She summoned five physicians, the best that money could get.

They felt his pulse, counted, and then told her he couldn't last very long. She leaned over and whispered: "Frank, the doctors say it won't be very long now." Frank looked up and said: "Send for Bill." I hurried over to the house, and as I stood beside his bed he reached up his left hand and put it around my neck and drew me down to him. He said: "Bill, there is nothing that gives me so much comfort as to have you come down on an occasion like this. I can see the crowd hissing when I strike out and they need a run, and I can hear them cheer when I catch a foul tip, or throw a fellow out on the base. But it don't do any good, now, when I come to a time like this."

Frank coughed and his life went out. The umpire had leaned over him and said: "You're out." Frank Flint sat on the street corner with me twenty-nine years ago, when I said, "Boys, I am through."

Men of Omaha, did they win the game of life or did I?