

BILLY SUNDAY AND THE MASCULINIZATION OF
AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM: 1896-1935

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Dedication

In loving memory of my grandmother, Agnes Van Meter McLane, who taught me to love
and appreciate history.

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Introduction

There were many changes taking place in America as the country entered the twentieth century. One of the most noticeable changes was the growing numbers of evangelists traveling across the country. While America from its earliest days had a strong Protestant heritage, there was something distinctive about the new breed of Protestant Evangelist. While the previous generations of preachers and evangelists focused more heavily on living Christian lives in order to reach heaven, the new breed of evangelists taught their congregations that it was important for them to make a positive impact on the world in which they were living. These preachers further emphasized to their church members that not only was it important to avoid sinning, but also that they should get involved in society in order to make the country better. This “social gospel” of religiously inspired civil engagement sought to bring about major changes in society while also attempting to help the disenfranchised and the poor. It was during these times that Billy Sunday entered the national stage as a very innovative evangelist.

Billy Sunday spent his early years living in various towns and cities throughout Iowa. Sunday grew up without a father and spent time working on a farm and trying to find work wherever possible. It was during these developmental years that Sunday discovered his love for baseball. Almost overnight, he had become a sensation in Nevada, Iowa, as the townspeople loved to watch him play because of his incredible speed and agility. Sunday began his career in major league baseball in 1883 and played for eight seasons on three teams, Chicago White Stockings, Pittsburgh Allegehenys, and the Philadelphia Phillies. It was while he was playing professional baseball, that Sunday converted to Christianity and started volunteering at his local church. He began working

with men and young boys, presenting himself as a role model and encouraging them to become Christians.

At the end of the 1890 season, Sunday made a surprising move and walked away from professional baseball. He chose instead to pursue working for the church and eventually he hit the road fulltime as a reveling evangelist. From the beginning of his evangelistic ministry in 1896 up until his death in 1935, Sunday spoke to approximately 100 million people. His sermons were packed with baseball gestures, fast paced preaching, and a masculine message aimed at appealing deeply to men.

There is little doubt that Billy Sunday was one of the most famous evangelists in American history. In the past hundred years there have been many books written about him. Many of the early biographies written on Sunday were written during his lifetime and two of the earliest works on Sunday were officially authorized by Sunday, including *The Real Billy Sunday: The Life and Work of Rev. William Ashley Sunday, D.D.* *The Baseball Evangelist* by Elijah P. Brown and *Billy Sunday: The Man and His Message* by William T. Ellis. These books were very positive and painted Sunday in the highest possible light and have often been criticized by other Sunday scholars for lacking in objectivity.

In 1932 and 1933, *Ladies Home Journal* serially published Sunday's autobiography. Sunday's autobiography was full of the wit and colloquial speech that had made him famous. While it provides a firsthand account into the life of Billy Sunday, the issue of objectivity is once again raised as he only wrote what he wanted to be remembered about him.

After his autobiography had been published, there was a period of thirty years where there was not much published about Billy Sunday. Then in 1955, William G. McLoughlin Jr. wrote a book called, *Billy Sunday Was His Real Name*. Written twenty years after the death of Billy Sunday, McLoughlin's book was different than the literature to date as it was more critical of the baseball evangelist. Ten years later, Bruce Lockerbie added his work titled *Billy Sunday* to the field of literature in 1965.

Today there is a renewed interest in the life of Billy Sunday. There have been many books released concerning various aspects of his baseball career, ministry, and life in general in the last twenty years. In the 1990s and early 2000s the following books have joined the vast collection about Sunday, *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America* by Lyle W. Dorsett in 1991, *Billy Sunday and Big-Time American Evangelism* by Roger Burns in 1992, *Hero of the Heartland: Billy Sunday and the Transformation of American Society, 1862-1935* by Robert F. Martin in 2000, *Sunday at the Ballpark: Billy Sunday's Professional Baseball Career, 1883-1890* by Wendy Knickerbocker, and *A Pictorial History of Baseball Evangelist Billy Sunday* by W.A. Firstenberger in 2005. Firstenberger is the Billy Sunday Museum curator and he is currently producing a movie about the life of Billy Sunday.

It is quite apparent that there had already been a great deal written about Billy Sunday before I began this inquiry. However, this study of Sunday will be different as it shall focus on how Billy Sunday attempted to masculinize American Protestantism during his ministry. Billy Sunday was one of the leading figures in the masculinization of American Protestantism during the early twentieth century. My paper shall explore how it was that Sunday gained national recognition and prominence and how his baseball

career helped shape the masculine rhetoric in his sermons, many years after he stopped playing baseball.

This work shall attempt to examine the ways in which Billy Sunday masculinized American Protestantism during his ministry. In order to better understand Billy Sunday, one must know more about his early years before major league baseball, and so I shall discuss his childhood and adolescence leading up to his rookie season. The loss of young Sunday's father was a very significant event as Sunday records in his autobiography. The question then arises, how did the death of Billy Sunday's father, impact his perspective on masculinity and Christian manhood throughout his life.

Chapter one focuses on Billy Sunday's rural upbringing, his adolescence, and finally his major league baseball career. Understanding the Midwestern and masculine values that influenced Sunday during his upbringing in rural Iowa and his baseball days is crucial in learning why Sunday turned out the way that he did. In many ways, Sunday furthered already popular ideas rather than advancing new ideas. For example, while he was playing for the Chicago White Stockings, the owner of the franchise, Albert Spaulding, did his best to make his franchise a "dry" franchise in order to enhance his team's ability to win ball games. Sunday later would take the lead in the temperance movement across the country and he was constantly promoting the idea that healthy sobriety was an outward sign of modern male Christianity. These are also the crucial formative years when Sunday first develops his masculine ideology and learns how to take his crowd-pleasing tactics he learned on the ball diamond and transfers them onto the evangelistic circuit.

Chapter two examines the masculine methods that Billy Sunday used during the course of his ministry. Everything Sunday did was intentional and calculated. I will observe the various ways that Sunday conveyed his masculine message to his audiences. I will also examine the reaction that Sunday received both from supporters and opponents and the overall impact that Sunday's ministry had in masculinizing Protestant Christianity here in America.

Chapter three explores Billy Sunday and his fight against alcohol. Billy Sunday was crucial in helping to pass the Eighteenth Amendment. But, more importantly, it was his ability to associate being "dry" with being a real Christian man that helped attract many men to the Temperance movement. The aggressive, confrontational, and often militaristic language Sunday used against alcohol enabled him to reach a male audience where many temperance advocates had previously failed. He capitalized on his previous baseball experience which lent him credibility as a very male role model that differentiated him from many preachers who were often viewed as being effeminate, or enervating. For Billy Sunday, the battle against the liquor interests was a struggle and he was determined to be victorious as a sign of his triumphant pious manhood.

Chapter four examines the link that existed between the Second Era Ku Klux Klan and Billy Sunday. Sunday was not the only evangelist to receive financial support from the Klan. However, he was most likely one of the most famous and so the connection between the Second Era Klan and Billy Sunday is worth exploring as it impacts his ministry and the massive reinvigorating attempt to masculinize American Protestantism. The extent to which the Klan advanced Sunday's vision of a new American manhood will also be gauged. I will argue that, the shared goal of

masculinizing Protestant Christianity is what brought together the Klan and Sunday. Both felt that America was under attack and that unless they acted quickly to re-energize Protestant manhood, the country would be degraded.

In many ways Billy Sunday was a polarizing figure. He helped divide people amongst class, religious, and educational lines. Sunday also fused religion and professional sports together. By fusing professional sports and religion together, he also helped fuse religion and popular culture together as well. Professional sports became a vehicle for integration of newly arrived immigrants to climb up the social ladder in U.S. society. Sports also provided Sunday an outlet to launch his social critique against what he saw as the declining morals of society. Sunday also intertwined religion and vaudeville and by doing so he created a form of religious entertainment. While he primarily focused much of his energy on getting more men to become Christians, Sunday also drew a large following among women. While Sunday's masculine methods were geared for men, his message was also applauded by women who believed that his message was beneficial to them as well.

Chapter One: The Making of a Masculine Protestant Preacher

William Sunday joined Iowa's Twenty-third Volunteer Infantry in August 1862 and was with his regiment during the second half of his wife's pregnancy. Private Sunday sent a letter to his wife Mary Jane, whom everyone called Jennie, requesting that if their child was a boy, she would name him William Ashley Sunday. Jennie gave birth to William Jr. on November 19, 1862, in a two-room log cabin in Story County near Ames, Iowa, while William Sunday Sr. was serving in the Union Army.

While her husband William was absent, Jennie Sunday was able to turn to her parents, Martin and Mary Ann Cory for some assistance in taking care of her three sons. Some of her neighbors also assisted the Sunday family by donating food to Jennie to feed her little boys while William was in the army. Even though Jennie's parents were helping her take care of her two older sons Albert and Ed, Jennie was still their primary caretaker. She knew life would be quite difficult, as is often is the case for women whose husbands were serving in the military.¹

Unfortunately for Jennie and her small three sons, William Sunday would not return. Jennie received a letter informing her of William's death a few days after Christmas 1862. The records from the United States Department of War included the following information about Private Sunday:

The records show that William Sunday was enrolled August 14, 1862, at Des Moines, Iowa, and was mustered into service September 19, 1862, as a private in Company E, 23d Iowa Infantry Volunteers, to serve three years, and that he died of disease December 22, 1862, at Patterson, Missouri.²

¹ Rachael M. Phillips. *Billy Sunday: Major League Evangelist*. Uhrichsville: Barbour Publishing Company. 2001. 10-11

² Theodore Thomas Frankenberg. *Spectacular Career of Rev. Billy Sunday: Famous Baseball Evangelist*. Columbus: McClelland & Company, Publishers. 1913. 28

During the Civil War, more soldiers died from diseases than were killed during open warfare. Jennie joined the ranks of tens of thousands of widows who were left to try to raise their children on their own. Billy Sunday offers his own recollection in his autobiography:

I never saw my father. He walked from Ames, Iowa, to Des Moines, thirty miles, to enlist in the Civil War, and was assigned to Company E, Twenty-Third Iowa Infantry in August, 1862. I was born on my grandfather's farm one mile south of Ames, Story County, Iowa, the nineteenth of the following November. My father was born near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and was of Pennsylvania Dutch parentage. He was a contractor and brick mason by trade, and built one of the first brick buildings ever erected in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He sleeps in an unknown grave beneath the eternal flowers and perpetual sunshine of the Southland, waiting for the trumpet of Gabriel to sound the reveille on the Resurrection morning. Then, for the first time, I shall look into the face of him whose name I bear, and whose blood comes through my veins.³

Sunday longed for a father role model in his life and throughout his life he held his father up in the highest esteem and when he was older, Sunday, wrote a poem about his father:

No more the bugle calls the weary one;
Rest, noble spirit, in your grave unknown.
I shall see him and know him among the brave and true
When a robe of white is given for his faded coat of blue.⁴

It is apparent that Sunday was very proud of his father for bravely serving in the Union Army and he greatly anticipated the day when he would see his father for the first time.

Jennie was thus left alone to provide for her three young sons. If that task was not complicated enough, little Billy Sunday was constantly sick during the first three years of his life. Jennie Sunday was very devoted to her infant son Billy primarily because he was a small and sickly child.⁵

³ William A. "Billy" Sunday. *The Sawdust Trail: Billy Sunday in His Own Words*. Iowa City, University of Iowa Press. 2005. 1-2

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1

⁵ Phillips 11

Jennie then married again, this time to a man named Leroy Heizer, before Billy was two. Having a sick child caused a great deal of pain and stress for her. A traveling French doctor named Dr. Avery came through Ames, Iowa, at about this time and he is credited with creating a medicine made from mulberry leaves, elderberries, roots, and other wild fruits for her sickly child. Billy Sunday soon became stronger and began playing with the other children.⁶

If the pain of growing up without a father was not tragic enough for Billy Sunday, he soon experienced loss in a more personal way. By the time he was ten years old, the Sunday family suffered through the deaths of Billy's half-sister Elizabeth, four aunts, an uncle, and his grandmother Mary Ann Cory whom he loved deeply.⁷ During this time, Jennie's marriage with Leroy was also dissolving. In 1871, Leroy Heizer and Jennie Sunday separated and three years later the couple divorced, despite the social stigma against divorce in the United States during that era.

Leroy Heizer was an alcoholic, and often times he would neglect and abuse his family for the bottle.⁸ The drunken Leroy gave little Billy his first exposure to how alcohol can be harmful to the welfare of the family. Perhaps the greatest long term effect on Billy Sunday's life was his first exposure to alcoholism. Leroy also demonstrated the often slow and painful decline suffered by men under the addiction to alcohol. Their manhood would slowly deteriorate as both their lives and their families also fell apart. The sad truth was that alcohol did not just destroy the alcoholic, as some claimed, but also hurt everyone around him as well.

⁶ Karen Gullen. *Billy Sunday Speaks*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. 1970. 208-209

⁷ W.A. Firstenberger. *In Rare Form: A Pictorial History of Baseball Evangelist Billy Sunday*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. 2005. 1-2

⁸ Robert F. Martin. *Hero of the Heartland: Billy Sunday and the Transformation of American Society, 1862-1935*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press. 2002. 4

After Jennie and Leroy separated, she was once again left alone to take care of her children, which now included two children (Roy and Elizabeth) she had together with her second husband. In 1874, she placed two of her older sons, Edward and Billy into a home for orphaned children of Civil War soldiers in Glenwood, Iowa. This experience allowed the boys for the first time to be physically active by playing sports and participating in other activities outdoors.⁹ In 1875, the Glenwood Orphanage closed, and the two Sunday boys were moved to another facility in Davenport, Iowa. They remained there until 1876, when Edward, turned 16 years old and was no longer eligible to remain. Billy was only 14, but he did not want to remain at the orphanage without Edward, and the two brothers returned to Ames.

Not long after Edward and Billy returned home, Ed found a job working as a farm hand for a neighbor. Fourteen year old Billy remained on his grandfather Cory's farm and helped him with odd jobs for several months. One day Grandfather Cory told Billy and his younger half-brother Roy to get a yoke for his horse. While the two boys were bringing the yoke, Billy said, "we pulled the rings out of the end" and Grandfather Cory became furious and scolded the boys harshly for their carelessness. Billy later said that his grandfather yelling at him really "cut him to the heart" because "I am of a sensitive nature." He left his grandfather's farm, and from that day he was on his own. Billy then moved to the Story County seat in Nevada, Iowa. Nevada was significantly larger than Ames and for Billy there would be more opportunities. He managed to find odd jobs working as a hotel janitor, stable boy, porter, and as a clerk.¹⁰ These were lowly jobs and so from his early work experience Sunday gains humility. One of the advantages to

⁹ Martin 5

¹⁰ Lyle W. Dorsett. *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America*. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1991. 13-14

moving to a city such as Nevada was that it allowed Billy a chance to climb the ladder of social mobility and experience opportunities that he would not have been able to experience remaining down on the farm in Ames.

One day, Billy requested a day off so that he could go to Ames and visit his family. His request was granted. When he returned an entire day later than agreed, he found out that he had been fired and could no longer remain where he was living. A few days later, Billy managed to find a job working for a Civil War veteran, Col. John Scott and his wife. While he was with the Scotts, he worked hard and received some of the love and attention that had eluded him, and even began to receive his first formal education at Nevada High School. Billy Sunday also joined the Nevada town baseball team, and his lightning speed soon set Billy apart from his teammates and opponents. Sunday's ability to chase down fly balls and run the bases with great agility and speed earned him a reputation as a solid ballplayer.¹¹ This was the first time in his life that he stood out for possessing a positive talent and so he continued playing baseball.

In 1880, at the age of eighteen, Billy Sunday decided to leave Nevada, Iowa. He moved to Marshalltown, a larger, thriving community thirty miles to the east where he had been recruited by the volunteer fire brigade. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, there were often competitions between rival fire departments to see which could arrive at a fire first. The Marshalltown department had heard about the speed of young Billy Sunday and immediately recognized that he would be an asset for their fire department. Billy was also given a job at the Marshalltown furniture store. In addition to holding down two jobs, Billy found time for his passion, baseball. Joining the Marshalltown baseball team was a decision that would change his life forever.

¹¹ Dorsett 14

Billy Sunday soon became a fan favorite for the Marshalltown baseball team. Sunday continued to awe fans wherever he played with his blazing speed stealing bases and also defensively by making incredible catches on the run in right field. The Marshalltown baseball team improved significantly with his addition to its roster, and by the end of the 1882 season the team had defeated virtually every team in East Iowa, and some people claimed that they were Iowa's best team. Many cities and towns naturally developed sporting rivalries with surrounding communities. This gave each community a sense of identity in their local teams and also gave local farm boys a chance to experience celebrity status by becoming the local sports hero. This notoriety helped Sunday acquire his claim to fame.

Rumors and stories of the greatness of Billy Sunday and the Marshalltown baseball team reached the capital of Iowa and many of the prominent residents of Des Moines believed that their baseball team could beat the Marshalltown team. A \$500 bet was made between some of the residents of the two towns regarding the outcome of a baseball game. The Marshalltown team traveled the 90 miles to Des Moines and Billy Sunday played well. Marshalltown cruised to a 15-6 victory. One Marshalltown fan, who, traveled to Des Moines to attend the game was known as Aunt Em. She was the aunt of famous Chicago White Stocking player Cap Anson.¹²

Aunt Em told her nephew stories about the victory and the great baseball player on the Marshalltown baseball team named Billy Sunday. She said, "You have to see this boy run and catch, no one can match him."¹³ Initially Anson did not act upon this information, but eventually he gave in to the insistent pressure and offered Sunday a

¹² W. Terry Whalin. *Billy Sunday*. Uhrichsville, Barbour Publishing Inc. 1996. 64-66

¹³ *Ibid.*, 64-66

tryout with the Chicago White Stockings. Billy Sunday told his employer Mr. Wilbur at the furniture store that he was going to try out for the White Stockings and so he left his job repairing furniture in order to try out for one of the best baseball teams in the National League.¹⁴ The White Stockings had been a dominant team in the National League winning over 50 games in the three previous seasons before Sunday joined the team.

There was no doubt that Billy Sunday was a country boy in a big city. In 1883, Chicago was one of the largest cities in the United States, and it was very different than most places Sunday had been to in Iowa. It also had a large immigrant population from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as a significant black population. It also had many gigantic buildings that certainly were quite a sight for the young boy from the small towns of Iowa. Billy Sunday was not alone in his culture shock.

As baseball historian David Voigt observes:

For many players with rural backgrounds, the adjustment to city-ways was difficult. Not surprisingly, many made spectacles of themselves. Most managers, however, depended on the mocking contempt of other players to educate their rustics to the ways of urban etiquette. Under such pressure, most learned [and] conformed quickly.¹⁵

Sunday was just another example of a growing phenomenon taking place in American cities with professional sports franchises during the end of the nineteenth century. Many young farm boys were moving to the big cities where they played professional sports and those that were physically talented enough were rewarded with substantial contracts that gave them opportunities of advancement that they would not have had if they had

¹⁴ Phillips 57-58

¹⁵ Wendy Knickerbocker. *Sunday at the Ballpark: Billy Sunday's Professional Baseball career, 1883-1890*. Lanham, The Scarecrow Press Inc. 2000. 16

remained on the farm. But as we shall see, the proliferation of professional sports teams catalyzed other vital changes in U.S. society, religion, and culture.

Sunday purchased a sage-green suit for \$6.00 and then borrowed \$4.50 for a train ticket from Marshalltown to Chicago. The ticket cost him \$3.50, leaving Billy Sunday with \$1.00 left to his name but an opportunity of a lifetime to try out for the White Stockings.¹⁶ Once Sunday got off the train in Chicago, he immediately went to A.C. Spaulding's Sporting Goods Store, the place where Cap Anson telegraphed Sunday to meet him. Sunday arrived at the store at 7:00a.m., as most of the stores in Iowa open up for business at that time, but to his dismay he was the only person there. The store opened an hour later, but most of the Chicago White Stockings players arrived at 10:00a.m. It was Cap Anson who approached Sunday and introduced himself. Anson was a large, tall man who clearly commanded respect from his teammates. Anson said to Sunday, "Billy, they tell me that you can run some. Fred Pfeffer is our crack runner. How about putting on a little race this morning?" Billy Sunday replied, "I am ready sir." Sunday then borrowed a baseball uniform from one of White Stockings pitchers, but the uniform was too large for him; and since Sunday did not have any baseball shoes, he ran the race against Pfeffer barefooted. Billy Sunday crossed the finish line 15 feet ahead of Pfeffer, and immediately the Chicago White Stockings took notice of the young Iowan from Marshalltown. After Sunday was told that he had made the team, Cap Anson asked, "How are you fixed for money?" Sunday responded, "I have one dollar" so Anson tossed him a \$20 gold piece. This act of kindness and generosity on the part of Anson made a lasting impact on Billy Sunday.¹⁷ The veteran Anson immediately became a friend and a

¹⁶ Firstenberger 12

¹⁷ Whalin 68-70

cherished father-figure to Billy and they shared mutual respect and admiration for one another.

Cap Anson was the player manager for the White Stockings and he was also one of the star players on the team. Anson believed that self-disciplined manliness was an important part of baseball players' demeanor. It was rumored that Anson did not smoke or drink and he was reputed to live by a personal code of rigid honesty and unyielding pride. However, it is known that he would often use vile language and get into heated arguments and battles with umpires, opponents, and even fans. Anson believed in rigorous team discipline and thus would not tolerate any activities or behaviors such as drinking that would distract his teammates from their main objective which was winning ballgames. Just as his stepfather Leroy demonstrated how alcohol could destroy an individual, Anson was an example to Sunday of how one could excel if he avoided alcohol, a dangerous solvent of manhood. Wendy Knickerbocker, a baseball enthusiast and author of the baseball biography *Sunday at the Ballpark*, described Cap Anson as a top-notch player manager:

A premier batsman and leader, Anson is widely regarded as the foremost on-field baseball figure of the 19th century. He was stern, iron-willed, and incorruptible. He played in the National League from 1876-1897, and over those twenty-two years his batting average fell below .300 only three times. He led the National League in runs batted in eight times, and that record and his career batting average of .329 helped gain his berth in baseball's Hall of Fame.¹⁸

The Chicago White Stockings not only had Cap Anson, but they also had Mike "King" Kelly on their roster, and together these two players were quite a duo. Mike Kelly was a very talented baseball player who has been credited with being the inspiration for Ernest Thayer's 1888 poem *Casey at the Bat*, and he was also the

¹⁸ Knickerbocker 28

inspiration for a popular song called *Slide, Kelly, Slide!* Mike Kelly was described on the Hall of Fame plaque dedicated in his memory as, “a colorful player and audacious base-runner.” A modern sportswriter described him as:

One of nineteenth-century baseball’s most swashbuckling characters. The King’s picture decorated the wall of saloons, barbershops, and poolrooms all over the city. His dashing style, strong good looks, and infectious Irish wit charmed everyone. Mike was a familiar figure in the city’s nightlife, in his expensive tailor-made suits, squiring beautiful women, never meeting a bottle he could not empty.¹⁹

Baseball in the large cities also allowed newly arrived immigrants an opportunity to display their athletic talents as well. Many ethnic minorities, including the Irish, Germans, and Polish found baseball to be a stepping stone toward social advancement as many doors were otherwise closed to them. Many of the established White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestants in major league baseball were concerned with such an increased number of Catholic players as they believed it would lead to more drinking amongst their players.

In 1882, the Chicago White Stockings set a record with 117,000 total fans in attendance for the season. The *Chicago Tribune* wrote, “no city in America except Chicago... can turn out such crowds.”²⁰ The baseball teams would often split the gate receipts between the visiting and home teams during this era. The Chicago White Stockings drew so many fans that some games were moved from their opponent’s home venue to their home ballpark known as Lake Front Stadium. Not all of the other teams in the league were pleased with Chicago’s dominance of the National League. When the White Stockings forced their Cleveland opponents to switch a game from Cleveland to

¹⁹ Knickerbocker 28

²⁰ Tom Melville. *Early Baseball and the Rise of the National League*. Jefferson, McFarland & Company Inc. 2001. 118

Chicago, the response in Cleveland was outrage. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* scathingly wrote, “the Chicago club management, when not busy trying to boss every other club in the League, is endeavoring to cheat all the rest in some way.”²¹ Regardless of whether the other teams liked or hated it, the dominance of the White Stockings was evident and that caused the *Chicago Tribune* to ask its readers, “What would the rest of the League do without Chicago to help pay salaries and expenses?”²² Baseball was now clearly developing as a major spectator sport, providing star players with access to an adoring public that could amplify and broadcast players’ talents and influence.

The White Stockings undertook a major renovation of their Lake Front baseball stadium that year, and their ball park has been described by one baseball historian as:

One of the more lavish facilities of the 1880s. Reportedly costing the White Stockings the princely sum of \$10,000 to remodel in 1883, [Lake Front Stadium] accommodated 10,000 patrons; it had a band near the main entrance and, for wealthier fans, eighteen boxes featuring arm chairs and curtains to keep out the sun or the gaze of unwelcome viewers. The box seat of Albert Spalding even came equipped with a telephone connected to the clubhouse.²³

Baseball historian, Larry Names summarized the White Stocking’s acquisition of Billy Sunday, “Late in May Anson hired a new substitute outfielder, a young man from Ames, Iowa, named Billy Sunday. The newcomer wasn’t much with a stick, but he could run, catch, and throw with the best of them.”²⁴ The acquisition of Billy Sunday by Cap Anson and the White Stockings was not surprising. The White Stockings were so notorious for using all means necessary to acquire talent that the *Chicago Tribune*

²¹ Melville 121

²² *Ibid.*, 119

²³ Knickerbocker 20

²⁴ Larry D. Names. *Bury My Heart at Wrigley Field: The History of the Chicago Cubs: Part One: When the Cubs were the White Stockings*. Neshkoro, Angel Press. 1996. 204

observed, “every country club has one good bat which he [Anson, the Chicago captain] invariably confiscates for the King’s service.”²⁵

Billy Sunday began his rookie season playing sparingly in the spring of 1883. Even before he made his debut for the White Stockings, Sunday’s name was already a newspaper favorite.²⁶ One reporter from *Sporting Life* wrote this about him, “The Chicago Club have engaged a new player by the name of Sunday. This settles it. The Chicagos are no longer opposed to Sunday playing.” After Billy Sunday’s third game with the White Stockings, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that, “Sunday was with them. This was a surprise to many, as it has been supposed the league allowed no Sunday ball-playing.” At the end of one game early in his rookie season where Billy Sunday struggled both offensively and defensively, the *Chicago Tribune* mocked, “There had been no Sunday ball-playing.”²⁷ Despite his slow start, Cap Anson never lost faith in Billy Sunday. By the end of the 1883 season, Sunday had made 54 appearances at the plate, tallied six runs, thirteen hits and five RBIs. Sunday also struck out 18 times and finished the 1883 season with a .241 Batting Average.

At the end of the 1883 season, many people were looking for scapegoats to blame for the lack of team success, despite the fact that the White Stockings finished the season 59-39 and finished second in the National League. According to *Spalding’s Base Ball Guide*, the enemy of many major league professional baseball teams was drunkenness.

As they reported:

One of the prominent evils of the season of 1883 which may be justly ranked among the abuses of professional ball playing, was the drunkenness which prevailed in the ranks of many of the club teams. The

²⁵ Melville 121

²⁶ Knickerbocker 21

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31

number of [National] League and American [Association] matches that were lost last season by dissipation of players would surprise the fraternity were they enumerated in full.²⁸

Albert Spalding continued to wage his relentless crusade against drunkenness as he was certain that his team could have done even better that year were it not for the drunkenness of many of the White Stockings players. Spalding was so concerned about excessive drinking and the negative impact it had on his players' performance that he redoubled his efforts to enforce a sobriety, ensuring that his team would play their optimal baseball in every game.

In order for Spalding to rest assured that his team would play well, he had decided that there would be no drunkenness on his team. For Spaulding to police such a strict policy, he needed constantly to monitor his players and know what they were doing at all hours of the day and night. It should then come as no surprise that the veteran leader Cap Anson was chosen by Spalding to enforce his strict rules of sobriety for the White Stockings. Many of the players gave little consideration to the detrimental impact their behavior had on their team's success and resented his apparent nagging and policing of their private lives. The *Philadelphia Sporting Life* was also aware of the level of resentment that the White Stockings players felt towards Anson when it wrote:

It is no secret that Anson is very unpopular with the Chicago team... who regard him as a bully and tyrant, and there are many who attribute the bad playing of a team which contains great ability to a reckless spirit engendered in the men by their desire to get away from Chicago and the hated Anson.²⁹

If many of the players disliked Cap Anson for enforcing Spalding's rules, Billy Sunday was not among their ranks. Anson took a special liking to Billy Sunday as they

²⁸ Knickerbocker 35

²⁹ Ibid., 36

were both from Marshalltown, Iowa. Sunday, in return, looked upon Anson as a vital, disciplined mentor. As early Billy Sunday historian, Elijah Brown, notes, “Anson was never more contented than when for one reason or another, he had Sunday with him. His partiality for the young player had long been noted, but Sunday was so generally liked it had never caused any enmity or jealousy.”³⁰

Despite his lackluster 1883 season, Billy Sunday remained with the White Stockings in 1884. The decision to keep Billy on the roster led *Sporting News* to declare, “Sunday is retained, but a more efficient right fielder and batter will be secured to take the place of Kelly when the latter plays [catcher].” Cap Anson had taken a risk in allowing Billy Sunday a place on the White Stockings’ roster, and so it is evident that Anson was invested in Sunday and wanted him to succeed. The personal feelings that Anson felt towards Sunday were well known, as Anson once remarked, “[Billy was] as good a boy as ever lived, being conscientious in a marked degree, hardworking, good-natured and obliging.”³¹ And so despite Sunday’s lack of star performance during the 1883 season, Anson may well have believed that Billy Sunday’s aptitude for team discipline made him worth keeping for the White Stockings. Anson justified his decision to keep Sunday on the roster when he said, “I was confident that he would yet make a ball player and hung onto him, cheering him up as best I could whenever he became discouraged.”³² There was such a strong desire for teams to win at all costs that a player manager such as Cap Anson was held responsible for the talent that they recruited.

³⁰ Elijah P. Brown. *The Real Billy Sunday: The Life and Work of Rev. William Ashley Sunday, D.D. The Baseball Evangelist.* Dayton, Otterbein Press. 1914. 66

³¹ Knickerbocker 33

³² *Ibid.*, 34

Player managers also served an important role in ensuring that their team was focused and prepared to play each game.

In 1884 there was a major rule alteration in National League baseball that would impact the way the game was forever played. The National League decided that pitchers would now be allowed to throw the baseball overhand instead of pitching underhand. This change in the rules affected baseball in several ways as it allowed pitchers to throw the ball faster and have greater control over its location. The rule change ultimately made it more difficult for batters since they would now have to increase the speed of their swing of the bat to make contact with the ball.

On April 6, 1884, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article detailing how Billy Sunday had improved his game from the previous 1883 season:

Sunday has improved in appearance and in play since last season, and he bids fair to be one of the most valuable outfielders in the country this year. Anson thinks the youngster whom everybody guded last season will this year show that he is a ball-player all around.³³

It appeared that the drinking situation had not improved to the liking of President A.G. Spalding as the *Sporting Life* acknowledged in a piece they published on May 28, 1884, that stated:

Captain Anson on Tuesday last received a letter from President Spalding saying that the Chicago team must play better ball... He authorizes Anson to hire detectives to watch his men if they do not stay in bed after being put there at 11 p.m. every night.³⁴

This curfew sought to restrict players from engaging in late night drinking and partying and it was looked upon by White Stockings as being dictatorial and unfair.

³³ Knickerbocker 34

³⁴ Ibid., 35

Billy Sunday was one of the few players besides Cap Anson on the Chicago White Stockings that was known to be a very light to moderate drinker. Billy Sunday himself wrote about drinking during his baseball playing years:

I never drank much. I was never drunk but four times in my life. I never drank whisky or beer; I never liked either. I drank wine... I used to go to the saloons with the baseball players, and while they would drink highballs and gin fizzes and beer, I would take lemonade or sarsaparilla.³⁵

The 1884 season ended and the Chicago White Stockings finished with a record of 62 wins and 50 losses. The team finished in a dismal fifth place in the National League. Billy Sunday's individual statistics also declined from the previous season although there was some improvement in specific hitting areas. Billy Sunday's batting average dropped to .222, but he did manage to improve to 4 home runs. He also had one triple, 4 doubles, and 39 hits overall in 176 at bats.³⁶ While Sunday's personal statistics were not overly impressive, he was very well liked by all his teammates and was an asset for the club.

Despite all the problems with drunkenness and apparent dissatisfaction towards Cap Anson by several of his White Stocking teammates, the 1885 outlook for the Chicago White Stockings was optimistic. One of the major reasons for this optimistic outlook was the fact that the White Stockings had successfully retained their players and resisted attempts made by a rival baseball league known as the Union Association to take away their talent. Baseball Historian Larry Names describes the 1885 Chicago White Stockings baseball team as follows:

The Chicago Ball Club came out of the conflict unscathed. The entire team was intact. Cap Anson was back, of course, for his tenth season as a player and seventh as field boss. Fred Pfeffer, the Louisville native,

³⁵ Knickerbocker 37

³⁶ <http://www.baseball-reference.com>

returned to play second base for the third year in a row for the White Stockings. Tommy Burns would be at short-stop; Ned Williamson at third; Abner Dalrymple in left field; George Gore in center; Mike Kelly in right; and Silver Flint behind the plate. This latter group was beginning their sixth consecutive campaign in Chicago. For a pitching staff, Anson had Larry Corcoran, John Clarkson, and Joe Brown. On the bench were Billy Sunday, Sy Sutcliffe, Nat Kellogg, Ollie Beard, and Fred Mann.³⁷

1885 was a special season since it was the first season that the Chicago White Stockings would play in their new \$30,000 home stadium, named West Side Park, located on Congress Street. Many of the residents around Congress Street were not pleased that the ballpark was built in their middle-class neighborhood and they feared that the addition of a baseball stadium would attract rowdy fans and players and could potentially pose a threat to the safety of the neighborhood. However, Albert Spalding wanted his team to be located in the middle of a quiet and safe neighborhood with the hopes that this environment would rub off on his players.

Albert Spalding was so serious about the problem of drunkenness that he instituted a no-drinking policy for his Chicago White Stockings team. This is the abstemious working world in which Sunday matured. Spalding believed that if his players would remain dry and sober that they would play at their highest level. *Sporting Life* published the following story about the no-drinking policy:

The Chicago Club has sat down upon the drinking class of its players pretty heavily for 1885. From May to October, 1885, any man who violates the total abstinence rule of the club will do so at the cost of a decreased salary, so important in its amount as to make the indulgence very costly. If he carries out the rule strictly during the championship period, then his salary is increased by some hundreds of dollars. In fact, his spreeing will cost him as many hundreds as his total abstinence will add to his salary. This promises to be effectual.³⁸

³⁷ Names 213

³⁸ Knickerbocker 40

Billy Sunday was highly influenced by the no-drinking policy that Spalding had put into play. His anti-drinking rhetoric helped mold and shape young Sunday as he matured in a strict abstinence environment on the White Stockings.

Then, as now, off-field behavior of major professional athletes was a major concern of owners and managers. The lucrative rewards of a winning team gave sports capitalists such as Albert Spalding a powerful economic incentive to regulate the behavior of their players and reshape popular conception of masculinity in the process.

At the halfway point of the 1885 season, Billy Sunday had a .371 batting average. At that point in the season, Billy Sunday and George Gore were the only two Chicago White Stockings batting over .300. However, at the end of the 1885 season, just Cap Anson and George Gore maintained batting averages over .300.³⁹ 1885 was also the year that the media really began to take notice of Billy Sunday's incredible base running ability:

His pace between bases is simply terrific, and when he goes to bat the crowd seems instinctively to turn its eyes toward the carriage line or the right field fence. What to any other man would be a two or three-base hit, is to Sunday a three-bagger or a home run, and the way he climbs over the earth between those bags is something to part the lips and open the eyes of any man with a soul in his body or blood in his veins.⁴⁰

This description of Sunday's baseball performance indicates that was he embodied visceral masculine excitement each and every time he took the field.

The praise for Billy Sunday was widespread. *Sporting Life* said this of Billy, "Sunday is about as good an-every day player as Chicago can boast. The man doesn't live who can beat him at base running, he is a strong, safe batter, and his fielding play is

³⁹ Names 215

⁴⁰ Knickerbocker 41

generally faultless.” When it came to his defensive ability, *Sporting Life* commented, “What a runner is Bill Sunday. The ball can’t travel far that he chases.”⁴¹

The 1885 season was the season that Billy Sunday emerged as a popular fan favorite. On August 23, 1885, the *Chicago Tribune* keenly observed, “Sunday is becoming a prime favorite of the ball-loving public in Chicago... When Sunday picks up the [bat] everyone seems to anticipate fun, and the young player rarely fails to give them a lively foot-race between bases.” Chicago White Stockings’ President Spalding also noticed the way that Sunday mesmerized the crowd as he announced, “People love to see him run.” Billy Sunday was so astoundingly fast that the fans loved watching him run the bases. Even when Billy was thrown out stealing, the crowd always cheered loudly giving him recognition for his fast, aggressive, and daring base running.

Despite all the praise that Billy Sunday received, he was also criticized on occasion. In September of 1885, *Sporting Life* wrote:

Sunday continues a pet, and is improving in every game he plays in. He has taken chances at base-stealing lately which older heads would not have taken, and has been thrown out for his temerity upon more than one occasion. He can only hope to improve through practice, however, and if he will combine a little good judgment with his running abilities he should eventually make one of the crack base-runners of the country.⁴²

Sunday found himself struggling at bat during September and October of the 1885 season. Like virtually every baseball player to ever play the game, Sunday also found himself in a batting slump. He managed to only get 14 hits at 54 at bats, and the *Chicago Tribune* stated, “Sunday is fast losing his reputation as a batter.”⁴³ He learned that the press will constantly praise you when you are playing well, but they begin writing your

⁴¹ Knickerbocker 42

⁴² Ibid , 43

⁴³ Ibid., 44

obituary the moment you fall into a slump. This, however, was simply the reality of sports entertainment and not a personal grudge against Billy Sunday. In fact, Billy Sunday was arguably one of the most universally liked baseball players of his day by fans, players, and journalists alike. Billy was still a small town farm boy and did not take part in many of the extracurricular activities such as fighting, swearing, and public drunkenness like many of the players in the National League during his day.

Even though Billy Sunday was having a rollercoaster season in 1885, his Chicago White Stockings were playing their best baseball in years. Billy finished the season improving his batting average from .222 in 1884 to .256 in 1885. He only had two home runs, two less from the previous season, but he did increase his overall hits from 39 to 44 from the season before. The White Stockings ended their season with a record of 87-25, finishing first in the National League, and winning their respective Pennant. After the White Stockings won the National League Pennant, *Sporting Life* put together biographical stories about all the players on the team. Their assessment of Billy Sunday was simple but honest:

The right fielder and substitute, like Anson, comes from Marshalltown, Ia., and is under the special care of Anson. Sunday was not known before the present season... He is one of the coming great players. He excels as a sprinter, and is becoming very expert in base stealing.⁴⁴

The 1886 season would be a life-changing season for Billy Sunday. But it was an event that took place off the baseball diamond that changed young Sunday's life. Once *Sporting Life* learned of his conversion, it published a story about his experience on July 21, 1886. The press asserted that, "Bill Sunday has joined a Presbyterian church in

⁴⁴ Knickerbocker 48

Chicago, and will now proceed to convert his wicked brethren on the Chicago team.”⁴⁵

This tongue in cheek story would later become prophetic as Billy Sunday would eventually give up his life in baseball to pursue an evangelical Christian ministry aimed at converting sinners.

Billy Sunday met his future wife at Jefferson Park Presbyterian Church in Chicago. During an interview after the death of her husband, Nell Sunday gave the following account of her husband Billy Sunday’s conversion, “In 1886... he found the Lord Jesus as his Saviour in Chicago, while he was still playing ball with the Chicago team. He was invited to the Pacific Garden Mission and there he heard the message of Salvation. After several hearings, he said, ‘Yes’ to the Lord at the invitation of Mrs. Clark. Then he came to a Westside church in Chicago, Jefferson Presbyterian Church, which happened to be my church. He joined the church and we became acquainted.”⁴⁶

The decision to accept Jesus Christ as one’s personal Lord and Savior was an individual decision that was customary in most Evangelical, Protestant, Christian denominations. Billy Sunday got saved through that Presbyterian Church in Chicago. Billy Sunday came to believe that he had a higher purpose in his life than to simply play baseball. However, rather than simply giving up baseball altogether, he continued to play and also do church work at the same time. In August of 1886, Sunday acquired an eye infection that bothered him for several months, which consequently led to reduced playing time. Towards the end of the season, even the newspapers were commenting on Sunday’s lack of playing time. The *Chicago Tribune* wrote, “correspondents want to know why Dalrymple and Sunday are not played more frequently.” It seemed plain as

⁴⁵ Knickerbocker 56

⁴⁶ Ibid., 79

day that Billy Sunday was receiving very little playing time and thus *Sporting Life* declared, “Chicago seems to have little use now-a-days for Bill Sunday. The new men have shoved him into the background.” Once again, the newspapers were rallying behind Billy Sunday as *Sporting News* suggested that it was unfair for Billy Sunday to ride the pine and that Cap Anson should trade him off if he wasn’t going to play much in Chicago, “Anson ought to release Billy Sunday instead of keeping him tied up with the Chicagos... He is too good a ball player to remain idle.”⁴⁷

The evidence that his eye infection hindered Sunday’s playing could be found in the decline of his batting statistics. Sunday did not manage to hit a single home run in 1886. He only had 25 hits in 103 at bats and a batting average of .243. While Sunday might not have put up his best numbers in 1886, his team the White Stockings finished the 1886 season with a record of 90-34 and won back-to-back National League Pennants.

After winning the National League Pennant, the White Stockings failed to win the World Series. This irritated Spalding, and he immediately took out his anger on his players. In November, Spalding refused to pay his players their bonuses that he had promised them if they won the National League Pennant for the second consecutive season. Shortly thereafter, Spalding took it upon himself to enforce his zero drinking policy by heavily fining several of his star players as the *Sporting Life* story reveals, “Big Ed Williamson says that together Kelly, Gore, Flint, himself and another player were fined \$2000 at the close of the season for drinking. He believes that the loss of the series of games to the St. Louis Browns was the cause of punishment inflicted by the Chicago President upon these men.”⁴⁸ After the Chicago White Stockings failed to win the World

⁴⁷ Knickerbocker 57

⁴⁸ Ibid., 64

Series in 1886, Spalding became fed up with his team and decided to make major changes to his roster. The market forces in professional sports conjoined to encourage players to police one another more rigorously. Financial incentives in the form of bonuses for successful seasons encouraged players to turn one another in for inappropriate behavior.

During the off season, Spalding went to work on revamping his roster. He sent his left fielder Abner Dalrymple to the Pittsburgh Alleghenys and his center fielder George Gore to New York. Albert Spalding also eventually dealt Jim McCormick, one of his starting pitchers, to Pittsburgh where he was reunited with Dalrymple. With all the moves that the Chicago White Stockings had made, many fans in Chicago were concerned that their team would be wrecked. The skepticism of the White Stockings fans caused *Sporting Life* to write, “Oh, please stop the silly chatter about Chicago weakening herself for next season. There will be younger blood of tried metal and fewer whisky bibbers on the team. Call you that weakening?”⁴⁹ Even the professional sporting press clearly emphasized and amplified the importance of sobriety for male athletes. The proliferation of U.S. Journalistic media also conspires to change popular conception of proper masculinity.

The biggest loss of the off season came when Mike “King” Kelly was sold to Boston for an incredible \$10,000. The decision to let one of the most popular players on the Chicago White Stockings roster go was definitely not a popular one, but Albert Spalding did just that and defended his decision to release Kelly:

Kelly’s presence was not vital to the club’s success. We needed Kelly last year very much more than this, for then we were weak behind the bat and had to have him. Now we are particularly strong at the point and can

⁴⁹ Knickerbocker 64

spare him. They say we have weakened our club by letting Dalrymple, Gore, and Kelly go, but we have still the same old in-field, and our out-fielders have shown themselves to be clever players. Besides, old Anson is still there, and we'll make the other fellows hustle just the same.⁵⁰

It was clear that Albert Spalding was still doing everything in his power to put together a sober Chicago White Stockings team that could win the Championship. The release of Mike Kelly was a step in the right direction for an increase in sobriety as Kelly was known on the team as one of the biggest drinkers. The *Chicago Tribune* was also quite aware what Spalding was attempting to do and the paper remarked, "it is said that there will be more total abstainers on the diamond this season than ever before. This is a move in the right direction, as base-ball *men* are unanimous in the assertion that better playing is sure to be the result." *Sporting Life* was able to find some humor in Spalding's decision to create a dry franchise as they argued, "the *Chicago Herald* thinks that the Chicagos next season may not win the pennant, but they will certainly prepare themselves for the transformation into a highly successful Good Templar lodge."⁵¹ Once the White Stockings had released Kelly, the responsibility to fill his shoes fell to Billy Sunday. The *St. Louis Globe* questioned Sunday's ability to replace Kelly, "During the seven years Kelly was with the Chicagos he averaged over 100 runs per season. How many will Sunday make?"⁵² While it is clear that Sunday was not as skilled a ballplayer as Kelly, his willingness to remain sober and respect and obey the rules put forth by Spalding made him a better fit for Chicago.

Ironically the *Chicago Tribune* was not about to let another city's newspaper bad mouth one of their local players and so they replied:

⁵⁰ Knickerbocker 65

⁵¹ Ibid., 65

⁵² Ibid., 65

Kelly... could not cover as much ground as Sunday.... The *Tribune* is not underestimating his abilities when it says that as a fielder, pure and simple, he is not the equal of Sunday. One of the deciding games with Detroit [last season] was unquestionably saved by a marvelous catch by Sunday in the crowd in right centre field. It was a ball that Kelly could not have come within gunshot of.⁵³

The 1887 season once again saw major changes to the National League rules.

One of the most noticeable changes no longer allowed a batter to request a high or low pitch and instead replaced that system with a strike zone that would go from the batter's knees to his shoulders. The league also instituted a rule that would allow a batter to take first base if hit by a pitch. There were also two changes in pitch counts; the number of balls needed to walk was reduced from seven to five, and the numbers of strikes before a batter would strike out was raised from three to four. 1887 was also the first season that stolen bases were officially recorded.⁵⁴

In addition to his 1886 conversion, Billy Sunday made another change entering into the 1887 season, as he decided to grow a mustache. In the 1885 Chicago White Stockings team photograph, Sunday was one of the only players without one and in 1886 he was the sole player without a mustache. Billy Sunday even wrote Nell Thompson about his attempt to grow a mustache, "Oh Nell, don't you get frightened. I am growing a mustache... I am going to let it grow so when I come again it will be out nice and long." For whatever reason Sunday may have had, he decided to abandon his mustachioed look towards the end of the 1887 season as was evident in photographs taken of him later in the season showing him clean shaven once again.⁵⁵ The 1887 was

⁵³ Knickerbocker 66

⁵⁴ Ibid., 67

⁵⁵ Ibid., 69

going to be special for Sunday as it was to be his first he would play as a newly converted Christian.

In one game on May 18, 1887, the Chicago White Stockings lost 11-4 and the newspapers were very critical of Sunday's play. The *Chicago Tribune* reported, "the fielding of Sullivan and Sunday was simply outrageous and was in strong contrast to the work of the old outfield." Shortly thereafter, *Sporting Life* joined the chorus of criticism against Sunday in its article questioning the composition of the outfield:

Just what ails Billy Sunday and Jimmy Ryan in the outfield I cannot say unless it is that the boys have not got their minds and hearts upon their work. If such is the case I can only say that they cannot get down to an earnest, deep-thinking realization of what is expected of them any too soon.⁵⁶

Billy Sunday wrote a letter to his sweetheart Nell Thompson in which he admitted that he was battling a crucial injury that impaired his ability to play in the outfield, "I have a great sore on my Left Hip so I can scarcely walk worst I ever had." Billy Sunday was certainly doing his best to tough out his injuries and on 25 May, Sunday was caught stealing twice in a 4-2 loss, but despite being thrown out twice, the crowd was pleased with his efforts. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that "it tickled the spectators immensely" and it was crystal clear that Billy Sunday was appreciated for more than just his speed. It was his demeanor, work ethic, and effort that made him so likeable to the White Stockings fans, but being one of the fastest men in baseball certainly did not hurt him when it came to crowd appeal. Things were slowly declining for Billy Sunday in Chicago as Cap Anson decided to move Billy Sunday from center field to right field and the *Chicago Tribune* claimed that Sunday himself was acknowledging his steady decline,

⁵⁶ Knickerbocker 71

“Sunday says he is playing the worst ball of any man in the Chicago team.”⁵⁷ Sunday was very critical of his performance and he was convinced that he was playing below his abilities. Sunday was much more humble than many baseball players of today.

Unfortunately for Billy Sunday things were going from bad to worse. At the end of the following month during a game on June 28, 1887, Sunday bravely attempted to steal second base and was injured on the stolen base attempt. The aftermath of what happened to young Sunday was described in detail by the *Boston Herald*:

Sunday was cheered when he stole second by one of the most daring and longest slides ever witnessed here. It was seen that he was injured, and the players gathered around him. His right shoe was removed, and Sunday made three attempts to stand erect, but each time failed and fell to the ground. He was carried off the grounds in [Tom] Burns’ arms.⁵⁸

It was apparent that Billy Sunday was injured and that he would be out of baseball for some time. The *Chicago Tribune* assessed Sunday’s injuries and wrote pessimistically about his recovery time, “Sunday may not be able to play for four weeks or more. In making that awful slide... he struck the bag with his right foot and turned in at the ankle, inflicting a severe sprain.”⁵⁹ Billy Sunday did not return to the diamond until the sixth of August. The fans applauded for Sunday each time he was up to bat. In the bottom of the sixth inning Billy Sunday made a spectacular catch and the *Tribune* praised Sunday for the remarkable defensive play:

Sunday made the most brilliant and difficult catch ever seen on the grounds... [The batter] caught a ball just where he wanted it and drove it away down toward the big flagstaff. Sunday started the minute it was hit, running toward the east like the wind. He was sprinting in the same direction that the ball was flying, and about twenty feet from the east wall the ball came down over his left shoulder and was caught. ... Sunday hurt his ankle a little in this effort, but not seriously. As he came across the

⁵⁷ Knickerbocker 72

⁵⁸ Ibid., 73

⁵⁹ Ibid., 73

grounds toward the players' bench the howling crowd made him acknowledge applause four times, and then he finally had to walk from third base to the bench with his head uncovered. No play has inspired such as enthusiasm as this.⁶⁰

At the end of the 1887 season, the White Stockings finished with a record of 71 wins and 50 losses. Billy Sunday finished the 1887 season with his highest batting average to date, at .291; in addition, he hit three home runs. Sunday also managed 58 hits in 199 at bats. The White Stockings finished third in the National League and consequently validated Albert Spalding's attempt to create a dry and sober organization. Even the *New York Clipper* recognized that Spalding's attempt to build a sober franchise was successful as they praised his results in their story:

The surprisingly good work accomplished by the "weakened Chicago team"—as it was called—in this year's campaign is a result which calls for the most earnest consideration of the question of insisting upon strict temperance in the ranks for the National League season of 1888... Mr. Spalding's plucky and most successful experiment has conclusively shown that a base-ball team run on temperance principles can successfully compete with teams stronger in other respects, but which are weakened by the toleration of drinking habits in their ranks.⁶¹

Many baseball teams in the National League were looking for players who were sober in order to give their team the best chance to win. Once again, the link between temperance and building a successful professional baseball team was strengthened as many teams were tired of dealing with problems associated with their players drinking. The financial and competitive incentives to encourage sobriety led many managers and owners to forbid their players from drinking.

Finally, the Chicago White Stockings decided that it was time to part ways with Billy Sunday. The White Stockings sold Sunday to the Pittsburgh Alleghenys in January

⁶⁰ Knickerbocker 76

⁶¹ Ibid., 76

of 1888 for \$2000.⁶² In a story on January 18, 1888, the *Pittsburg Dispatch* reported that the Alleghenys had purchased Sunday:

Manager Phillips [of the Alleghanies] is of the opinion that Sunday will be an acquisition to the team, but in such opinion he differs much from many base ball enthusiasts who were canvassing the matter last evening. It is acknowledged that Sunday is a remarkable base runner, but so much cannot be said of his brilliancy in other things.⁶³

The following week Harold Palmer, a writer for *Sporting Life*, gave his opinion about the deal between Chicago and Pittsburgh:

Chicago has lost, and Pittsburg has gained, one of the cleverest young ball players in the country. Billy Sunday, our popular little outfielder was... released to the Pittsburg Club by President Spalding, and I want to say right here that the little \$2,000 which [Pittsburg] paid for Billy's release will prove to them one of the best investments ever made, provided that they give Sunday the opportunity he wants to demonstrate his ability as a player.⁶⁴

The Pittsburgh Alleghenys were one of the original teams from the American Association. The Alleghenys joined the National League in 1887 and so Billy Sunday's first year on the team was their second year in the National League. They managed to finish sixth of eight teams in the National League with a record of 55-69. It seemed that Billy Sunday had left his White Stockings, a team with a long and illustrious history in the National League, for the Pittsburgh Alleghenys, a team of essentially young upstarts in the National League.

At the end of Billy Sunday's tenure in Chicago, it seemed apparent that some people believed that Sunday was kept on the roster for so many years due to the close

⁶² <http://www.baseball-reference.com>

⁶³ During the late nineteenth century Pittsburgh was often spelled without an h. The team Alleghenys was also spelled Alleghanies and sometimes Alleghanys.

⁶⁴ Knickerbocker 92

bond he had formed with Cap Anson. Upon his release to Pittsburgh, White Stockings President, Spalding, commented on the Anson and Sunday situation:

It was declared that Anson had made a “pet” of Sunday, because he (Sunday) happened to hail from Marshalltown—Anson’s home... Sunday was practically retired from the regular and put on the substitute list, we finding his services valuable at the gate when we did not need him in the field. ... He is as honest as a Quaker, and a ball player from his feet up. I never knew any man to do better work in the field than Sunday at times did for us. He is sensitive, however, and does not stand newspaper criticism well. He is one of those men whose best work is secured by a timely bit of praise in the way of encouragement.⁶⁵

There were rumors flying around Chicago that Billy Sunday had only been loaned to Pittsburgh and indeed any time that Cap Anson needed Sunday, the Alleghenys were obligated to return him. The deal between Pittsburgh and Chicago over Sunday received coverage in a story in *Sporting Life*, “Sunday was only loaned to the club for this season, and didn’t cost anything. ... That is common talk, and the story comes from Chicago and apparently has some foundation.” The *Tribune* also made similar assertions:

Pittsburg must surrender Sunday when Anson wants him. [Anson’s] critics here accused him of over partiality for the sprinter, and Anson loaned the lad to Pittsburg to satisfy Chicagoans that Sunday is a great ball player outside of any affiliations with the Chicago Club.⁶⁶

It did not take long at all until Billy Sunday became a favorite of the Pittsburgh press. After an exhibition game on April 11, 1888, the *Pittsburg Dispatch* wrote, “Sunday played in a most creditable manner. His base running is remarkable, and he moves around in the outfield like a deer.” A few days later the *Pittsburg Dispatch* wrote optimistically, “Sunday is another player that the people like to see. He makes the gravel fly when he gets on a base, and it’s worth the price of admission to see him sailing along

⁶⁵ Knickerbocker 92

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 98

from base to base on a steal.”⁶⁷ Of course, not all of the stories featured in the *Pittsburg Dispatch* focused solely on Sunday’s baseball playing. In fact, on April 25, 1888, the *Dispatch* praised Billy Sunday as an all around model citizen:

Sunday is a consistent Christian and a young man of most exemplary habits, whether on or off the ball field. . . . Since his arrival in this city Sunday has made his home with Dalrymple [and his wife. Sunday] has not missed a single Sabbath, and has also attended Sunday-school regularly.⁶⁸

This was an extraordinary occurrence as most of the people in America that were involved in Sunday school during the late nineteenth century were women.

As is apparent in this story about Sunday, the popular press is continuing to reshape the public conception of proper male behavior.

Billy Sunday began attending the First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. The fact that Billy Sunday was attending church regularly and was involved with his church apparently caught the interest of *Sporting Life* as they wrote:

he [Sunday] having received credentials of membership from Chicago. He attended Sabbath school last Sunday and was given charge of a class of young men. One or two of them knowing who he was asked two or three questions regarding base ball. He answered them, and questions became more numerous. He finally said: Young men, I play ball on any day but Sunday and on that day I attend to my church duties. All of you who want to know about base ball come to me during the week!⁶⁹

By the end of the 1888 season, it was a commonly held belief that the acquisition of Billy Sunday by the Pittsburgh Alleghenys was very beneficial to Pittsburgh. Many people believed that Sunday had not been given ample opportunities to excel in Chicago and that the move to Pittsburgh allowed him a chance to showcase his baseball skills. Sunday finished the 1888 season with 119 hits, 15 RBIs, and 71 stolen bases. Even the

⁶⁷ Knickerbocker 95

⁶⁸ Ibid., 95

⁶⁹ Ibid., 95

fickle journalists were praising Sunday. Another *Sporting Life* article stated: “several Allegheny councilmen are seriously considering the advisability of naming a newly opened street after him [Sunday].” The entire city of Pittsburgh seemed to be pleased with Sunday as *Sporting Life* also reported, “Billy Sunday is considered the best centre fielder Pittsburgh ever had. This young man wasn’t appreciated in Chicago.”⁷⁰

The 1889 season was Sunday’s second with the Pittsburgh Alleghenys. On September 5, 1889, Billy Sunday married Nell Thompson at the Thompsons residence in Chicago. The only baseball player in attendance was Sunday’s former teammate from Chicago, second baseman, Fred Pfeffer.⁷¹ Sunday was injured during the final two weeks of the 1889 season but he still managed to accumulate 77 hits, 2 home runs, 25 RBIs, and 47 stolen bases. After the 1889 baseball season was over, several teams in the National League lost their staff to the Players’ League. The Players’ League was one of many rival baseball leagues that existed in the late nineteenth century. The Pittsburgh Alleghenys were only able to retain Billy Sunday and one other player at the end of their 1889 season. The fact that Billy Sunday was one of the few ballplayers who remained in the National League is quite remarkable. Even Sunday’s former teammate Mike “King” Kelly turned down a \$10,000 signing bonus in addition to a generous contract to remain with the Chicago White Stockings opting instead to join the rival Players’ League. The National League did try to get their players back using the courts and lawsuits, but nothing was successful.⁷²

⁷⁰ Knickerbocker 97

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 107

⁷² David Pietrusza. *Major Leagues: The Formation, Sometimes Absorption and Mostly Inevitable Demise of 18 Professional Baseball Organizations, 1871 to Present*. Jefferson, McFarland & Company Inc. 1991. 115

The 1890 Pittsburgh Alleghenys consisted of an entirely different roster than the 1889 team with the exception of Billy Sunday and his teammate Fred Dunlap. By the end of the 1890 season, Sunday finished with a .257 batting average while Dunlap ended with a low .172 batting average. The Alleghenys were completely obliterated during the 1890 season. They only managed to win 23 games while losing 113 earning them the nickname the “Innocents.” Player manager Guy Hecker released Dunlap primarily due to his low batting average and Dunlap responded by Hecker of being a drunkard, “card-shaping” his players, and being such a poor pitcher that his own sister could play better. Billy Sunday supported his teammate Fred “Sure-Shot” Dunlap, but as baseball historian David Pietrusza points out, Sunday was unable to back Dunlap up on his assertion that his sister could play ball better than Hecker.

Things got so bad for the Pittsburgh Alleghenys that the total fans in attendance at one of their home games numbered just 25. The attendance became so consistently awful that by July the Alleghenys began playing both their home and away games on the road. To add insult to injury, at the end of the season, the National League awarded the Pittsburgh Alleghenys the “Booby Pennant” consisting of 113 stars one for each loss. Billy Sunday was fortunate enough not to have been present when his former teammates were awarded the “Booby Pennant” because on August 22, 1890, Sunday was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies for Eddie Burke, Billy Day and \$1,100 and he signed a three year contract with the Phillies.⁷³ The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* gave their opinion of the trade:

This will strengthen the Phillies, because Sunday is a strong centre fielder and quite as good hitter as Burke, who is above par. He is likewise a fast runner and a

⁷³ Knickerbocker 118

successful stealer, besides being a man of high moral principles. His engagement is quite an event.⁷⁴

As happy as the Philadelphia press was that Sunday was acquired by the Phillies, Pittsburgh Press understood why Sunday was leaving the Allegheny's the *Pittsburg Dispatch* reported:

the reason why W.A. Sunday has been transferred from the Pittsburg N.L. Club is because he intends to retire from ball playing at the end of this season. He has been offered the Assistant Secretaryship of the Chicago Y.M.C.A. and has accepted the position. It has been known for some time past that Sunday was about done with baseball, at least his desire has been in another direction for some time.⁷⁵

Sunday completed his 1890 tenure with the Pittsburgh Alleghenys with 92 hits, one home run, 39 RBIs, and 56 stolen bases.

Billy Sunday then spent the remainder of August 1890 until October playing for the Philadelphia Phillies. Sunday energized the Phillies and in less than three months he managed to get 31 hits, 6 RBIs, and 28 stolen bases.

By the end of the 1890 season, Sunday was ready to walk away from professional baseball as he said:

At the close of the first season in Philadelphia I felt I should give up ball playing... [but] I knew it wouldn't be right for me to jump my contract in order to go into Christian work... I was greatly troubled. I felt I was called definitely to enter Christian work, and yet the way was blocked.⁷⁶

The Phillies eventually released Sunday from his contract to play baseball for them in 1891 and although the Cincinnati Reds offered Sunday a lucrative contract to join their franchise, Sunday declined and retired from baseball once and for all.

⁷⁴ Knickerbocker 131

⁷⁵ Ibid., 131

⁷⁶ Ibid., 135-136

Chicago Cubs Historian Larry Names describes Billy Sunday as a “first class baseball player when he was healthy, which wasn’t often enough, Sunday was also a first class person, which was all the time.”⁷⁷ Larry Names was correct in his observation about the injuries that often plagued young Sunday. Billy Sunday was injured numerous times during his major league career and thus spent a good portion of his career recovering from various injuries. While injuries played a role in the decision Billy Sunday made about walking away from baseball, it seems that the driving factor was his desire to serve the Lord and become an evangelist instead. If he would have remained in professional baseball his annual salary would have been greater than his first few years as an evangelist until he became popular on the sawdust trail.

There were disparaging people who believed that there existed similarities between religion and baseball, and so for these people it seemed only natural that Billy Sunday left professional baseball to embark on a career as an evangelist:

Baseball is often likened to religion in its emphasis on ritual and myth. These two areas of human activity provided two careers for Billy Sunday, a fleet outfielder noted for his defensive ability who later became the most famous evangelist in the United States.⁷⁸

There were those that believed that Billy Sunday should have continued playing baseball. Hugh Kerr, the author of *Famous Conversions: The Christian Experience*, said this about the conversion of Billy Sunday: “Some thought he should have stuck to baseball or gone into the circus. But others, maybe as many as one hundred million, listened and watched with rapt attention as Billy Sunday belted out the gospel, punched

⁷⁷ Names 172

⁷⁸ Edward J. Rielly. *Baseball: An Encyclopedia of Popular Culture*. Denver ABC-CLIO. 2000. 292

sin in the nose, and thundered against the saloons.”⁷⁹ This is an example of the potent and virile language that would characterize Billy Sunday’s masculine rhetoric.

On July 23, 1893 in an article featured in the *Young Men’s Era*, the official publication of the YMCA, Billy Sunday gave ten reasons why he left professional baseball:

1. Because it is a life which has an undesirable future.
2. Because it develops a spirit of jealousy and selfishness; one’s whole desires are for personal success regardless of what befalls others.
3. Because it tends to indolence as shown by the fact that few use the five months of unemployed time for study and self-improvement and preparation for future pursuit.
4. Because it is better to benefit mankind than to simply amuse them.
5. Because, after one attains to a certain standard of efficiency, there is no more room for development.
6. Because it does not develop one for future usefulness, as illustrated by the fact that many ex-ball players are engaged in the saloon business.
7. Because it is a life in which morality is not an essential to success; one might be a consummate rogue and a first class ball player.
8. Because reflections in the past “grand stand catches,” “great slides to the plate,” “stolen bases,” and the echo of applauding multitudes are very poor food for consolation.
9. Because I felt called of God to do His service.
10. Because of the anticipated contentment (now realized) which comes to any man who finds himself in the right place.⁸⁰

After seven years of playing in the National League, Billy Sunday decided to stop playing professional baseball. Billy Sunday made a name for himself in baseball for his lightning speed, his exciting base running, and his outstanding behavior. Once Sunday embarked on a fulltime career in the ministry, he traded in his baseball glove for his Bible and he never looked back.

⁷⁹ Hugh T. Kerr. *Famous Conversions: The Christian Experience*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1983. 160

⁸⁰ Tony Ladd and James A. Mathisen. *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books. 1999. 80

The baseball career of Billy Sunday helped prepare him to become a celebrity in the eye of the public. During his years in the majors, Sunday learned how to excite his audiences and how to gain positive publicity and press coverage. These skills would later be useful as his evangelistic crusades would become famous across the country. These crusades capitalized on Sunday's well publicized success of redefining manhood in modern, competitive America. It is that transformation and the masculine methods that Sunday employed that I will now analyze.

Chapter Two: The Baseball Evangelist's Masculine Method

Billy Sunday was certainly not the first man to promote either “Christian manliness” or “muscular Christianity.” In fact, as Historian Clifford Putney observes, the origins of “muscular Christianity” can be traced to the New Testament which sanctions “manly” exertion (Mark 11:15) and physical health (1 Cor 6:19-20). Putney defines muscular Christianity as a Christian commitment to health and manliness, and he further asserts that Christian men should exhibit strength, endurance, and other stereotypically male attributes. However, Putney notes that although “muscular Christianity” has always been an element in Christianity, it has not always been a major element.¹

It was during the middle of the nineteenth century that English novelist Charles Kingsley promoted and advanced the “muscular Christianity” movement. It was Kingsley who declared men had every right to declare their maleness and not to be ashamed or apologetic about it by religious scruples. In a letter, Kingsley writes, “I have to preach the divineness of the whole manhood, and am content to be called a Muscular Christian, or any other impertinent name.”² Kingsley and fellow English novelist Thomas Hughes both believed that the Anglican Church had become too tolerant of weakness and effeminacy. Kingsley and Hughes were not alone in their criticism of the lack of manliness of many Christian men.

In America, their message of the need for Christian men to assert their masculinity reached Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Unitarian Minister who highly appreciative of their expansive preaching to males. He was so inspired by what Hughes

¹ Clifford Putney. *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports In Protestant America, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 2001. 11

² Donald E. Hall. *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*. Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press. 1994. 27-28

and Kingsley were talking about in Britain that he wanted to promote similar masculine ideals in America. In order to promote his ideas, he published an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1858 entitled *Saints and Their Bodies*. It was through this popular, serialized medium that Higginson applauded Hughes and Kingsley for their dedication to male Christian health and robust assertion of male virtues. Higginson also made known his desire to see health and manliness more evident in Protestant churches in America because he believed that they had become too unhealthy and unmanly.³

Historian Robert Higgs believes that the development of ‘muscular Christianity’ has developed over hundreds of years in the European tradition. Higgs also uses the concept of “Sportianity” to promote the concept of the knight as a supremely masculine figure. And so for Higgs it was “Sportianity” that lumped together three well known men of their time, namely Andrew Carnegie, Billy Sunday, and Teddy Roosevelt. Andrew Carnegie represented the knight as banker, as he preached a racist mercantile noblesse oblige. Billy Sunday represented the knight as priest, as he taught muscular Christianity and evangelism. Roosevelt represented the knight as professional patriot, as he touted robust, even violent chivalry and nationalism.⁴ In 1918, one of Sunday’s contemporaries, the President of Cadillac, John Leland, referred to Billy Sunday as, “this great plumed knight clothed in the armor of God.”⁵ The notion that Billy Sunday was a noble Christian knight was a commonly promoted public image during his lifetime.

Since “muscular Christianity” did not develop over night, Higgs decided to create a timeline that consisted of ten events that happened in America which directly

³ Putney 1

⁴ Robert J. Higgs. *God in the Stadium: Sports and Religion in America*. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press. 1995. 187

⁵ *Ibid.*, 255

contributed to the Christianization, muscularization, and militarization including internal armament of American culture. It can be delineated as follows:

1. The passing of knighthood from the Old World to the New, as seen in John Smith and Miles Standish.
2. The glorification of home-grown military and athletic heroes such as Nathan Hale and Light Horse Harry Lee.
3. The spread of organized religion through the Second Great Awakening (1787-1805) and the evangelism it engendered.
4. The establishment of schools in the early nineteenth century under the auspices of such Ivy League Calvinist educators as Samuel Doak.
5. The championing of physical education, military training, and engineering in the second quarter of the nineteenth century by Ivy League educators such as Philip Lindsley.
6. The rise of the influence of West Point and the proliferation of military schools and seminaries throughout the land, including the land grant colleges created by the Morrill Acts in the second half of the century.
7. The advent of the YMCA, especially in the colleges, and the spread of the “gridiron gospel,” also in the second half of the nineteenth century.
8. The decline of the Y and the reemergence of the bee-fighting frontier ministers such as Billy Sunday, who, ironically, was also undone by the media that made him.
9. The emergence of sporting television ministers such as Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell.
10. The reemergence of the old organizational spirit of the Y as seen in the scores of ministries using sports, especially televised sports, as a form of witnessing, with emphasis still upon salvation and success in contrast to a social gospel of justice.⁶

Higgs contends that, “The all-around man began to yield the field to specialists and celebrities—Red Grange in sports, for example, and Billy Sunday in religion.”⁷

Higgs further argues that, “with Moody and Sunday the emphasis in muscular Christianity shifted away from recapitulation and acculturation theories to triumphalism, from building character to saving souls.”⁸

Higgs also compiled a list of ten characteristics that he believed were crucial in understanding the concept of “muscular Christianity.” It should be stressed that while

⁶ Higgs 306

⁷ Ibid., 117

⁸ Ibid., 254

Billy Sunday did not embody all ten points that Higgs listed, he did actively promote several of them:

1. The theory that sports build character (recapitulation).
2. The theory that sports provide a means of venting aggression (catharsis).
3. The confusion of spiritual grace with material success, of which the athlete is the visible symbol.
4. The cult of manliness and the principle of male bonding.
5. The segregation of the sexes and discrimination against women.
6. The certainty that Jesus was as perfect in body as in spirit.
7. An anti-intellectualism manifested in emphasis upon physical development, a skepticism of (or even hatred of) the arts and sciences, and a theology reduced to win-lose categories, salvation or damnation.
8. The equation of Christianity with Americanism or patriotism by means of athletics.
9. An almost passionate interest in statistics, win-loss records, power for living, and souls saved.
10. A self-righteousness that rejects alternatives to sports or religious belief.⁹

As historian Clifford Putney points out, though from the 1880-1920, American Protestants in many denominations were witnesses to the rise of a “muscular Christianity.” Some of the men who embodied and promoted the notion of “muscular Christianity” in America included psychologist G. Stanley Hall, Minister Josiah Strong, and President Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁰ Another American who embodied the spirit of “muscular Christianity” was certainly Billy Sunday.

Billy Sunday began his Christian work in the 1880s shortly after his conversion. It was during this time that Billy Sunday participated in New York City with Yale Student A.A. Stagg and the Princeton football team in providing men with an “Athletic Sunday” service. These events focused on developing a clear engagement between

⁹ Higgs 306-307

¹⁰ Putney 1

evangelical Christians and sportsmen. The goal was to attract and evangelize men who did not regularly attend church.¹¹

After he quit professional baseball, Sunday initially began working for the YMCA. During the first few years of Billy Sunday's ministry, he gave talks to young boys at the local YMCA with special focus on sport and military exercises.¹² Even though Billy Sunday focused primarily on discussing sport and military drill, there was always an Evangelistic Christian theme associated with his messages. In 1902, psychologist, G. Stanley Hall made the following assessment about what he perceived as the evangelical nature of the YMCA:

Among all the marvelous advances of Christianity either within this organization [the YMCA] or without it, in this land and century or any other lands and ages, the future historian of the church of Christ will place this movement of carrying the gospel to the body as one of the most epoch making.¹³

It was in January 1896, when Billy Sunday preached his first tent revival in Garner, Iowa, that the era of Billy Sunday as a baseball evangelist officially began. It was then that Billy Sunday introduced to America an unprecedented new style of evangelism. As Hugh Kerr keenly observes, "In an age of famous revivalists and mass evangelism in tents and tabernacles, Billy Sunday developed his own distinctive style."¹⁴ Sunday biographer, William McLoughlin, said that, "As an evangelist, Sunday was a success from the start."¹⁵

¹¹ Tony Ladd. *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books. 1999. 42

¹² *Ibid.*, 79

¹³ Putney 1

¹⁴ Kerr 160

¹⁵ William Glyn Evans. *Profiles of Revival Leaders*. Nashville, Broadman Press. 1976. 80

Billy Sunday preached often about the importance of Christian manhood and he helped promote and advance the cause of “muscular Christianity.” During one of his large meetings in New York City, an afternoon service on June 17, 1917, Sunday preached a sermon titled *Show Thyself A Man*. Once he was in New York City, Billy Sunday turned to his friend John D. Rockefeller who helped finance and promote Billy Sunday’s revival meetings in New York. John D. Rockefeller had a high opinion of Billy Sunday and once said of him, “Mr. Sunday is a rallying center around which all good people interested in good things may gather.”¹⁶ It was the assistance and support of his immensely wealthy associate John D. Rockefeller that ensured that Sunday’s sermon on manhood would be heard by thousands.

Billy Sunday began his sermon by reading from First Kings 2:2 where it was written, “Be thou strong and shew thyself a man.” Sunday emphasized the need for members of the audience to endeavor to be bold, strong, and Godly men. To provide some biblical illustrations for his sermon, Sunday mentions numerous men of the Holy Bible (such as, Abraham, Moses, Job, Daniel, Joseph, David, and Solomon) as strong, robust exemplary men. Although they went through difficulties, they nevertheless remained strong, resolute and thus proved that they were real men. Billy Sunday also made it a point in this sermon to define exactly what he meant by the word “manhood” when he forcefully declared:

Your manhood depends upon the size of your soul and not that of your body. There are men who are small in stature, but they are noble in manhood, men like Paul, men like Julius Caesar, a little, sawed-off, red-headed, freckle faced fellow and yet, he could run so fast you couldn’t see him for dust. Men like Napoleon, only five feet, four inches high and yet every time his old heart beat and his temples throbbed, the old moss-covered thrones in Europe trembled. Shakespeare, General Grant, who

¹⁶ Higgs 254-255

sleeps yonder in that tomb, my friends, they were men of small stature. They tower up like mountains, my friends, above a mole hill. There are physical giants who are midgets in manhood and womanhood on every street corner you can find a bunch sort of fellows.¹⁷

Billy Sunday also would issue challenges to his audiences. Billy Sunday encouraged his audiences to try to reach to a higher ideal by always being a stronger man or woman. He issued a challenge to them bravely, to strongly live their lives in the face of all opposition:

Dare to be a man or woman of courage. If you are the right kind of man or woman you will fight your way to victory. Oh, do your duty no matter where it takes you. I do not say you must never fear, but I do say, Go on! Go on!¹⁸

As such sermons drew to a close, Billy Sunday urged his audiences to be brave and strong. He reassures them that, although they might not be as strong as they like right now, with the help of Jesus Christ they can become the strong Christians that they admire in others:

Come on! Be Strong! Be Strong! When a tadpole sees a frog he is ashamed of his size and crawls out of the tadpole into a frog. So, if you get your eye on somebody that is bigger than you, when you see what it is to be a real man or woman, you need something I want to tell you about, in closing, and that is Jesus Christ.¹⁹

Here Sunday argues that Jesus Christ is a catalyst of strength and for men he is someone who they can aspire to emulate in achieving Christian manhood.

Sunday was very critical of men who failed to demonstrate their manhood, but he also preached about how men could reassert or reestablish their manhood if they had lost it. Billy Sunday had a remedy for men suffering from a lack of manhood:

¹⁷ *The Papers of William and Helen Sunday: 1888-1957*. Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College. Box 8

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

If your manhood is buried in doubt and cheap booze, dig it out. You will have to sign your own Declaration of Independence and fight your own revolutionary war before you can celebrate the Fourth of July over the things that try to keep you down. The best time for a man to sow his wild oats is between the age of eighty five and ninety years.²⁰

Here Sunday uses patriotic and masculine language in order to instruct his audience that real men are always abstemious in body.

On February 12, 1923 in Knoxville, Tennessee, Sunday spoke to almost 10,000 men on the need to follow Jesus Christ in order to really be men. Billy Sunday once again emphasized that the physical size does not make the man:

Some of the finest specimens of Christian manhood it has ever been my privilege to associate with have been men of frail stature, on the other hand some of the most mendacious, rapacious, buffoons, poltroons, and moral and sexual perverts and rotten degenerates I have ever met have been men of great build.²¹

Billy Sunday then proclaimed to his audience that the reason that many of them were not Christians was that they were not man enough to be Christians. He told them that:

You haven't manhood enough to get up and walk down the aisle and take me by the hand and say, I give my heart to Christ... Oh you aren't man enough to be a Christian! It takes manhood to be a Christian, my friends, in this old world! No man can be a man without being a Christian and no man is a man unless he is a Christian. Therefore, if you want to be a man, be a Christian; if you want to be less than a man, serve the devil and go to hell!²²

Sunday also dealt with the fear that many men had that they would be laughed at or ridiculed for becoming a Christian. Billy was insistent that there was no reason for a man to be ashamed about becoming a Christian. He then went on to attack those who would ridicule them:

²⁰ Lee Thomas. *The Billy Sunday Story: The Life and Times of William Ashley Sunday, an authorized biography*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House. 1961. 233

²¹ James Lutzweiler. *The Roots of Billy Graham: Billy Sunday in Knoxville, Tennessee January 7-February 18, 1923*. Jamestown, Schnappsburg University Press. 2000. 102

²² *Ibid.*, 102

Any man that would laugh at you for taking a stand for Jesus Christ hasn't the first principle of manhood in him. Any man that would laugh at you and make you ashamed of yourself that you had done this is so low down my friend, that I wouldn't disgrace this pulpit by comparing him with anything, I wouldn't spit on him or wipe my feet on him. The man who is brave enough to look his enemy in the face ought to be brave enough to take his stand on the side of Jesus Christ and for his truth, for there is no place on God's earth where you have a better opportunity to show your true manhood than when you stand up and openly and bravely and truly acknowledge God and his truth.²³

Sunday insisted that the common characteristics that were often associated with manhood such as being a heavy drinker had absolutely nothing to do with true manhood:

Fast living is not test of manhood. You are not a man because you can drink more than the rest of the bunch, because you can drink twenty mugs of booze and then walk home straight. That doesn't constitute manhood! You're not a man because some fellow hits you on the back and calls you a dead game sport. That's no compliment. That's no ideal of manhood in this old world. I think most men expect to be Christians, but they seem to imagine it is manly to put off the claims of religion and squeeze this old world like you would a lemon and then at the end of a misspent life just before they phone for the undertaker, call for the preacher and pray and creep into the kingdom of God because of His long suffering and mercy!²⁴

Here it is clear that Sunday's evangelism was focused on altering how average parishioners defined and practiced masculinity.

On his last day in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1923, Billy Sunday once again preached about just how important embodying the spirit of Christian manhood was for men. Billy Sunday gave the audience a test to determine true manhood, "The real test of a man is the way that he treats the enemy he holds within his power. Show yourself to be a man—you never had a better chance than you have right here." Sunday again quotes First Kings 2:2 and encouraged his male listeners to demonstrate to the world that they

²³ Lutzweiler 102

²⁴ Ibid., 102

were real Christian men. He then further elaborates on the additional significance of this particular verse:

It exalts and emphasizes and shows what real true manhood is. There are 50 chapters in the book of Genesis, and they cover 2,300 years of human history; half of the chapters tell of colossal manhood of Abraham, one third tells the story of Joseph, while God dismisses the account of creation in the world in just 800 words. More space is given to an account of the rugged manhood of Caleb than to the creation of the world, while whole books tell the story of Job.²⁵

It was Sunday's constant emphasis during his sermons on Christian manhood and muscular Christian themes that led Robert Higgs to describe Sunday's brand of Christianity as "a masculine, aggressive muscular Christianity."²⁶ Sunday was allegedly able to match Teddy Roosevelt in his insistence "on his personal, militant masculinity." Sunday expressed admiration for "the man who has real, rich, red blood in his veins instead of pink tea and ice water."²⁷ Sunday would often tell his audiences that "I'm still pretty handy with my dukes" and then declare that Jesus "was no dough-faced, lick-spittle proposition. Jesus was the greatest scrapper that ever lived."²⁸ It is precisely the scrappy, audacious Christianity Sunday prescribed that emerges from his sporting experiences and fame.

Many of the people who attended Billy Sunday's services still remembered him as a former baseball player. It was his athletic prowess that won him many supporters while he was a ball player and his masculine demeanor that attracted many men to hear Billy Sunday preach. Bruce Lockerbie, a Billy Sunday biographer, describes Sunday as:

a "man's man." He caught the spirit of every man's need—for fun, for security, for love, for God. Here was no pious parson, prissy in his

²⁵ Lutzweiler 122

²⁶ Higgs 255-256

²⁷ Ibid., 255-256

²⁸ Ibid., 255-256

associations with mankind, he was no egghead, no Pharisee, no do-gooder. Billy Sunday brought to his preaching the fullness of his own experience—as an orphan; as a working man in a store, factory, and on the railroad; as a professional athlete; as a husband and a father; as a sinner who had come to know God’s saving grace. . . . This was what men saw in Billy Sunday—a real man who believed the faith he preached and lived by its principles.²⁹

Sunday recognized the fact that men were less likely to attend church than women and during a meeting in Boston he said that there needed to be more “orthodox preaching” from the pulpit. Sunday felt that the lack of orthodox preaching was due to the effeminate preachers whom Sunday described as, “. . . off-handed, flabby-cheeked, brittle-boned, weak-kneed, thin-skinned, pliable, plastic, spineless, effeminate, ossified, three-carat Christianity.”³⁰ The influence that Sunday had during his lifetime cannot be overstated as one Boston journalist noted, “There is no speaker in the United States political or religious whose distinct oratorical style is as much a matter of common knowledge as Billy Sunday’s.”³¹ Sunday used his popularity and fame to gain converts to his unique brand of muscular Christianity.

Billy Sunday repeatedly demonstrated his belief in muscular Christianity, his desire to make true Christian men more masculine and his willingness to fight in defense of his faith. Sunday frequently asserted: “I’d like to put my fist on the nose of the man who hasn’t got enough grits to be a Christian.”³² Billy Sunday benefited enormously from his previous experience as a professional baseball player. Sunday constantly incorporated baseball and sports imagery into his sermons.

²⁹ D. Bruce Lockerbie. *Billy Sunday*. Waco, Word Books. 1965. 42

³⁰ Margaret Bendroth. *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Volume 14, No. 2. *Why Women Loved Billy Sunday*. 251

³¹ *Ibid.*, 256

³² Ladd 79

Glyn Evans describes Billy Sunday's style as "plainspoken, colorful, and vivid."³³

Evans asserts that every single movement that Billy Sunday made while he was on the platform had a specific purpose. Every single gesture and word Sunday spoke was carefully calculated before he delivered each sermon. Evans also claims that Billy Sunday did his best to cater his sermons to his audience as can be found in the following piece of Evan's analysis of Sunday:

Sunday learned that people listened better when they could visualize what they were hearing. So he became active, dramatic, and acrobatic, and the crowds were delighted. He was purposely sensational, his language purposely extravagant, his delivery purposely accentuated, because he wanted to make the gospel interesting to hear. Also, Sunday embodied the masculine approach to preaching. His athletic career, his vast energy, his taut nervous system, and his sheer animal display drew men of all sorts into his tabernacles. He presented himself as a lone, courageous battler against the overwhelming forces of evil—the devil, liquor, sin, vice, and corruption.³⁴

Bernard Weisberger characterized Billy Sunday's use of action and movement as tools that he used to gain and maintain the attention span of his audiences:

Sunday skipped, ran, walked, bounced, slid, and gyrated on the platform. He would pound the pulpit with his fists until nervous listeners expected to hear crunching bones. He would, in a rage against "the Devil," pick up the single kitchen chair which stood behind the reading desk and smash it into kindling; once it slipped away from him and nearly brained a few people in the front rows. As he gesticulated and shook his head, he would shed his coat, then his vest, then his tie, and finally roll up his sleeves as he whipped back and forth, crouching, shaking his fist, springing, leaping, and falling in an endless series of imitations.³⁵

The entire staged performance Sunday provided was steeped in masculine sporting bravado.

³³ Evans 80

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 85

³⁵ Bernard A. Weisberger. *They Gathered at the River*. Boston, Little, Brown. 1958. 248

Elijah Brown, one of the first biographers of Billy Sunday, detailed in his book the specific method that Billy Sunday used in delivering his sermons:

There is but one word at your command that will even remotely indicate his manner... action! At one moment he is at one end of his long platform, and before you become used to seeing him there he is at the other, and then quicker than thought he bounds back to the center, giving the desk a solar plexus blow that would knock out a giant. Ever and anon he makes long rapid strides to give it more whacks, until at last a big piece splits off and bounds to the sawdust floor below.³⁶

Historian Clifford Putney describes the preaching style of Billy Sunday. “As a preacher, Sunday was very physical, doffing his coat, breaking furniture, and employing sports metaphors whenever possible. A few found such antics distasteful, not the least of whom was historian Richard Hofstadter, who blamed Sunday for ending the New England tradition of preacher-as-scholar. But others welcomed Sunday’s claim that one could be both a Christian and a “real man.”³⁷ Grover C. Loud describes the sermon of Billy Sunday as follows:

Billy crouches on the platform, knocks on the floor and shouts an invitation for the Devil to come up and take his medicine. Billy admits his own fearlessness and when the bid to Beelzebub is not accepted the audience shares with the champion the delight and conquering pose. Cheers ring for the tower of physical strength and spiritual righteousness whom the Boss of Hell dares not meet in combat.³⁸

Billy Sunday’s style and movements were unlike any preacher during his day although his message of fire and brimstone was quite common among many of the small town preachers across America:

Billy Sunday, “the baseball evangelist,” is more than a preacher of the Gospel to Americans of the twentieth century. He is a legend, embodying in himself the spirit of mass evangelism. The man who galvanized religion into an active force against social evils; the man who, if he could

³⁶ Evans 89

³⁷ Putney 59

³⁸ Higgs 256

not shut down Chicago, was responsible for the closing of 200 saloons in one city alone; the man who brought to preaching a strange mixture of humor and hellfire that made his listeners take notice. This was Billy Sunday.³⁹

The way that Billy Sunday spoke has also been scrutinized. Dr. Robert Edward Davis, a speech professor at Arizona State University, has carefully analyzed the speech of Billy Sunday. Dr. Davis describes Sunday's voice as a 'husky baritone' that carried power with his audiences. Sometimes during his services Sunday would use a falsetto quality in his sermons. Billy often did his falsetto voices to decry and mock other Protestant ministers who he viewed as too effeminate or weak. In addition to the change from baritone to falsetto, Sunday would also incorporate a full array of groans, shrieks, and shouts into his sermons. Billy Sunday spoke very fast during his sermons and Davis describes his speech as 'excessive rapidity' by verbally and audaciously running the bases and stealing home plate.⁴⁰

Dr. Davis also points out that Billy Sunday used a striking, combative, extemporaneous method of delivering his sermons. Billy Sunday had several sermon outlines, but he often added hand written notes containing new information or statistics that would help him further illuminate his sermon topic. Billy Sunday often rehearsed his sermons and this allowed him to have freedom of movement for his sensational sporting delivery.⁴¹ Dr. Davis sums up Billy Sunday's sermons as a conglomerate of fundamentalist theology, conservative economic dogma, patriotism, and rural, homespun

³⁹ Lockerbie 1

⁴⁰ Robert Edward Davis. *Billy Sunday: Preacher-showman*. 85-87

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 85-87

philosophy. The assessment of Billy Sunday's sermons made by Dr. Davis is quite complete as Billy Sunday often took various themes and rolled them into one sermon.⁴²

Billy Sunday had many supporters, but he was not without his critics. One of his critics of his own day was Dr. Joseph Collins, a psychologist from New York. Collins analyzed Billy Sunday and his sermons when he came to New York in 1917. Dr. Collins was not impressed by Billy Sunday and described him as a great actor and a natural mimic. Dr. Collins argues that Sunday was primarily concerned with entertaining his audiences:

Mr. Sunday amuses his audiences. They like to see him crouch on the platform, knock on the floor and shout to the devil to come up and take his medicine the evangelist has ready for him. When the invitation is not accepted the audience shares with Mr. Sunday the delight and satisfaction that is manifest in his victorious smile and conquering pose.⁴³

Collins' views testify to the antipathy a growing disdain that many American intellectuals held towards religious fundamentalists by dismissing their religious sermons as mere entertainment.

Another critic of Billy Sunday's was Charles A. Windle the editor of *Iconclast*. On March 5, 1916, Windle gave a very critical lecture of Sunday at the Maryland Theatre in Baltimore. Windle accused Sunday of "shadow fighting" and he also declared that Billy Sunday came to Baltimore to "cuss everybody who dares to differ from him."⁴⁴ Windle also strongly criticized Sunday's views of God as being insane and he also accused Billy Sunday of talking like a mad man.⁴⁵ To support his assertion Windle provides the following example of quotes taken from Billy Sunday's sermons, "It is a

⁴² Ibid., 91

⁴³ Evans 89-90

⁴⁴ Charles A. Windle. *The Menace of Billy Sundayism: lecture delivered at the Maryland Theatre, Baltimore Maryland., Sunday March 5, 1916*. Chicago, Allied Printing. 1916. 3

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3

good thing that I am not God for 15 minutes. If I were I would fill your newspapers with obituaries and fill freight cars with the dead.”⁴⁶

Windle also states that in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, the former mayor of the city became so excited at one of Billy Sunday’s meetings that he died from heart failure. And in Lima Ohio, an elder of the Methodist Church also died due to the excitement. Mr. Windle says that:

If any other man in America dared to engage in a hysterical crusade resulting in the evils that follow in the wake of a Bill Sunday circus leaving insanity, bigotry and fanaticism rampant he would be denounced by every publication in the land.⁴⁷

In a pamphlet titled *What Jesus Taught and What Billy Sunday Preaches: A Contrast and a Lesson*, Charles William Wendte also heavily criticized Billy Sunday for his methods and comments. Mr. Wendte also criticizes Sunday for his alleged mean-spirited comments that he made when he was doing a revival meeting in Philadelphia:

To hell with all hiding under the name of religion who mock at the Bible and sneer at your Divinity! O Jesus, I stagger back at your love and mercy. If I was God for about fifteen minutes, I guess I’d strike `em dead, Jesus.⁴⁸

Billy Sunday could be very confrontational when it came to dealing with his critics. One such example took place when a Rev. Dr. Wallace who happened to be a modernist, remonstrated in private with Sunday for being so intolerant on the subject of evolution, Sunday retaliated violently the next day by confronting Wallace from the stage: “Stand up you there you bastard evolutionist! Stand up with the atheists and the infidels and the whoremongers and the adulterers and go to hell!”⁴⁹ Dr. Wallace was not

⁴⁶ Windle 3

⁴⁷ Ibid., 14

⁴⁸ Charles William Wendte. *What Jesus Taught and What Sunday Preaches: A Contrast and A Lesson*.

⁴⁹ Higgs 255

the only evolutionist who Billy Sunday attacked. Another example of Sunday's criticism of evolutionists can be found in one of his sermons when he asserted:

There goes old Darwin; he's in hell sure! Tom Paine, the old drunken, Infidel. I don't believe your old bastard theory of evolution either; I believe it's pure jackass nonsense. When the consensus of scholarship says one thing and the Word of God another, the consensus of scholarship can go plumb to hell for all I care.⁵⁰

This is further evidence of the growing animus between the American educated elites and the popular ranks of church evangelists including Sunday.

In 1924 while Billy Sunday was in Elmira, New York, he once again reiterated his feelings about the teaching of evolution in public schools:

If anyone wants to teach that God-forsaken, hell-born, bastard theory of evolution, then let him go out and let him be supported by men who believe that blasted theory and not expect the Christian people of this country to pay for the teaching of a rotten, stinking professor who gets up there and teaches our children to forsake God and makes our schools a clearing-house for their God-forsaken dirty politics.⁵¹

Sunday's verbal violence launched a full-bore, manly Christian assault on presumed, native U.S. intellectual elites who Sunday viewed as also being effeminate, but more insidious than the weak ministers that Sunday often lambasted.

During his ministry, Billy Sunday was accused of being all sorts of things. Some people accused Sunday of being a grafter. Sunday resented this accusation and responded by saying, "They say I am a grafter, but by God they better not come up here and say it to my face. If you do come up here, you had better have your picture taken—your wife won't know you when you get home."⁵²

⁵⁰ The Case of Billy Sunday: his arraignment on serious charges and self-conviction of guilt. 6

⁵¹ Daniel L. Turner. *Standing Without Apology: The History of Bob Jones University*. Greenville, Bob Jones University Press. 1997. 19

⁵² The Case of Billy Sunday: his arraignment on serious charges and self-conviction of guilt. 11

Joseph H. Oddell discussed the controversy associated with the methods and beliefs of Billy Sunday in a work called *The Mechanics of Revivalism*. Oddell summarizes the message and impact of Billy Sunday:

Men who repudiate his creed and abhor his methods nevertheless admit his sincerity, his transparency, his convictions. And this is one of the chief reasons of his tremendous power over men. Every one feels his reality; he may be crude and cruel, ignorant and narrow, dogmatic and archaic, or any one of a score of other things that are said about him, but he is real. His faith triumphs over the reluctance of many a man who rejects his belief. For example, he denounces the higher criticism in the most volcanic language, but many cultivated and learned clergymen who accept the findings of the higher critics smile and continue to work with him; he ridicules and misrepresents evolution, and consigns it to hell, but scores of men who are thoroughly trained scientists and accept the hypothesis of evolution as they do that of gravitation nevertheless go on with the campaign and cooperate in the mission. And the reason is that they care about absolutely nothing for Sunday's second-hand opinions on such questions of scholarship, but they are certain that he is a man who is whole-heartedly, passionately stands for God and for righteousness, and does it with a measure of effectiveness that is beyond question.⁵³

One of the famous poets of Sunday's day, Carl Sandburg intensely disliked Billy Sunday and wrote several poems about him. Carl Sandburg said of Sunday, "He is the most conspicuous single embodiment in this country of the crowd leader or crowd operative who uses jungle methods, stark voodoo stage effects, to play hell with democracy."⁵⁴ Carl Sandburg's most controversial poem was named *Billy Sunday* and many of Sunday's supporters were outraged by it:

You come along—tearing your shirt—yelling about Jesus.
I want to know what the hell you know about Jesus?

Jesus had a way of talking soft, and everybody except a few bankers and higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem liked to have this Jesus

⁵³ Theodore T. Frankenberg. *Billy Sunday: His Tabernacles and Sawdust Trails*. Columbus, The F. J. Heer Printing Co. Publishers. 1917. 18

⁵⁴ Carl Sandburg. *Billy Sunday and Other Poems*. New York, Harcourt Brace & Company. 1993. xii

around because he never made any fake passes, and everything he said went and he helped the sick and gave the people hope.⁵⁵

Here Sandburg contrasts the style of Sunday and Jesus and argues that the Sunday's approach to evangelism is very different than that of Jesus. Sandburg goes on to describe Sunday's style:

You come along squirting words at us, shaking your fist and calling us all dam fools—so fierce the froth of your own spit slobbers over your lips—always blabbering we're all going to hell straight off and you know all about it.

I've read Jesus' words. I know what he said. You don't throw any scare into me. I've got your number. I know how much you know about Jesus.⁵⁶

Sandburg condescendingly asserts that Sunday talks about matters that he knows very little about. Sandburg once again draws a sharp contrast between Jesus Christ and Billy Sunday:

You, Billy Sunday, put a smut on every human blossom that comes in reach of your rotten breath belching about hell-fire and hiccupping about this man who lived a clean life in Galilee.

When are you going to quit making the carpenters build emergency hospitals for women and girls driven crazy with wrecked nerves from your goddam gibberish about Jesus? I put it to you again: What the hell do you know about Jesus?⁵⁷

Once again Sandburg contends that Billy Sunday knows nothing about Jesus and in addition, Sandburg claims Sunday also scares young women and girls with his sermons. Sandburg continues his poem with additional criticism of Sunday's sermonic style:

Go ahead and bust all the chairs you want to. Smash a wagon load of furniture at every performance. Turn sixty somersaults and stand on your nutty head. If it wasn't for the way you scare the women and kids, I'd feel sorry for you and pass the hat

⁵⁵ Sandburg 3

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3

⁵⁷ Ibid., 4

I like to watch a good four-flusher work, but not when he starts people puking and calling for the doctor.

I like the man that's got guts and can pull off a great, original performance; but you—hell, you're only a bughouse peddler of second-hand gospel—you're only shoving out a phoney [sic] imitation of the goods this Jesus guy told us ought to be free as air and sunlight.⁵⁸

Sandburg asserts that Sunday is simply an entertainer and a cheap imitation of a preacher.

He also mockingly encourages Sunday to continue his performance because he likes a good show.

It is evident that Sandburg holds Sunday in contempt. Sandburg also attacks Sunday at the heart of his ministry by alleging that the only work that Sunday does it by using his mouth. This criticism can be seen as a direct assault on the masculinity of Sunday as the correlation between manliness and work was so strongly emphasized by Sunday in his sermons:

I don't want a lot of garb from a bunkshooter in my religion.

I won't take my religion from a man who never works except with his mouth and never cherishes a memory except the face of the woman on the American silver dollar.

I ask you to come through and show me where you're pouring out the blood of your life.

I've been out to this suburb of Jerusalem they call Golgotha, where they nailed Him, and I know if the story is straight it was real blood ran from his hands, and the nail-holes, and it was real blood spurted out where the spears of the Roman soldier rammed in between the ribs of this Jesus of Nazareth.⁵⁹

Sandburg further alleges that it is Jesus Christ and not Billy Sunday who embody true masculinity as he endured the pain inflicted upon him by the Roman soldiers who pierced

⁵⁸ Sandburg 5

⁵⁹ Ibid., 6

his side with his spear. However, an anonymous poet wrote a poem in response to Sandburg's poem:

His ethics may not suit some prudes
But, in his preaching, Bill includes
The stuff that reaches plebes and dudes.⁶⁰

It is evident that Sunday's style was controversial and divisive but Sunday never altered his preaching style for anyone and despite his critics he continued giving his dynamic sermons with his colloquial vocabulary.

Sunday never tried to hide the fact that he did not speak eloquently as he once said, "If the English language gets in my way, I tramp all over it." As for his many more erudite critics, Sunday tried never to allow their opinions of him or his ministry to affect him. He replied to his critics with scathing belittlement, "What do I care, if some puff-eyed little dibly-dibly preacher goes tibly-tibbling around because I use plain Anglo-Saxon words?"⁶¹ Billy Sunday was not receptive to advice from his fellow ministers. On one specific occasion when another minister criticized Sunday for his methods, Sunday replied, "To perdition with such fools! They make me sick!"⁶²

Many people were quite critical of the slang that Billy Sunday used regularly. However, Oddell made the argument in defense of Billy Sunday's slang arguing it was necessary to reach the people to whom Sunday preached:

For the same reason Sunday's use of slang is pardoned. And he is the supreme artist in American slang; Chimmie Fadden was a novice and a purist beside him. At first it seems irreverent, and there are many who never cease to shudder; but they tolerate it because it is the language Billy Sunday speaks naturally, and it is the language that the men of the shops and foundries hear every day and readily grasp. It is slang only to the educated, and if they are truly educated they have learned the meaning of

⁶⁰ Bendroth 261

⁶¹ Putney 60

⁶² The Case of Billy Sunday: his arraignment on serious charges and self-conviction of guilt. 7

toleration in unessentials. There is no doubt that it is effective; by its use Sunday gains the ear of thousands who would turn away from pure English. And it serves the purpose of showing to the mass of men that the evangelist is of them and understands them. There are refined people in the audience who know that the prologue to the Gospel of Luke is the only pure Greek of the New Testament, and that Jesus taught, even in his sublimest and loftiest parables, in the patois of the mean streets and the common people.⁶³

Sunday pursued his efforts to masculinize Christianity with a calculated “coarse” or “crude” rhetorical strategy.

Despite his lack of eloquent manner and speech, it was his plain and simple speech that made him so likeable to his audiences across the country. So despite his inability to impress the higher educated elites, it was the common people that found Billy Sunday’s services and message so appealing. Kerr describes Sunday as, “a colorful figure, he made people laugh, and when he did, he said, he shoved the gospel down their throats when their mouths were open. If for some it seemed an unconventional method, for hundreds of others it worked.”⁶⁴ Masculinizing Christianity through Sunday’s methods came at the expense of more starkly dividing American congregations along intellectual lines.

At the height of his career, Sunday received the public praise of such figures as Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson, and John D. Rockefeller. He travelled all over the country and his colloquial speech met with more support than criticism everywhere he went. As for the impact of Billy Sunday, E.Y.Mullins, the President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said the following of Sunday’s techniques:

⁶³ Frankenberg 18-19

⁶⁴ Kerr 160

If a preacher can induce the liar to quit lying, and the drunkard to quite drinking, and the thief to quit stealing, and the adulterer to become clean, and the grafter to reform, he is a fine asset for civilization, whatever be his manner of speech. At the judgment day, I don't believe God will ask Billy Sunday to pass an examination on literary style or rhetorical correctness in the use of metaphors, but on his fidelity to the souls of men.⁶⁵

President Mullins, like many of Billy Sunday's contemporaries, recognized Sunday's influence over the lives of those who heard him speak. Mullins like many other Christian leaders of his day believed that Sunday was beneficial and so his combative uncouth rants were to be tolerated as effective tools for saving souls.

Sunday was supported by many of his fellow ministers of the gospel, but he was also criticized by other preachers as well. He was antagonistic, bold, aggressive, and he was a fire and brimstone preacher. While there were many people who believed that he was mean spirited and cruel, others saw him as heroic for standing up against the devil and the sins of the world. As a former baseball player, Sunday never left the spotlight for long. While he was playing baseball he was applauded for his athletic performances, and once he became a travelling evangelist he was supported and applauded for his sporting sermons against the evils of the day. One may love Sunday or hate him, however with a critical eye, anyone can recognize that Sunday led the fight to enact the Eighteenth Amendment, he helped to masculinize the Protestant Churches across the country, and using his athletic prowess to his advantage, he filled his sermons with athletic gestures and movements reminiscent of his ball playing days. Sunday's career thus neatly joins and catalyzes two vital aspects of modernizing twentieth-century American society: the rise of professional sports and the persistent factionalization, often on grounds of class, intellect, within Protestantism.

⁶⁵ Evans 90

Chapter Three: Billy Sunday and his War Against Alcohol

Billy Sunday was not the first man to preach against the dangers of alcohol, but he certainly was one of the most famous and effective, capitalizing on his sporting popularity and repute as a sober man to advance U.S. Temperance in its appeal to men. His nationwide crusades helped lead to the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. The Eighteenth Amendment was ratified on January 29, 1919 and became law on January 29, 1920. Sunday always argued that he had played a crucial role in helping to bring about national Prohibition. Even though Sunday was one of many other people who fought to bring about Prohibition, Sunday argued, “I claim the distinction of being the only man in America who has been able to make the liquor people quote scripture.”¹ He was confident that it was his ministry that was the most effective in combating the saloons and the liquor industry. His success here dramatically altered how Americans viewed temperance and masculinity.

Among those who opposed alcohol in America, there were two major groups. The first group consisted of those people who felt that individuals should voluntarily make Temperance pledges not to consume alcohol, but the second group believed that national legislation such as Prohibition was necessary to eradicate the evils of alcohol.

The first recorded American Temperance Society began in Saratoga County, New York, in 1808 and was lead by Dr. Billy F. Clark.² The creation of an official temperance organization was the first indication that some Americans were concerned enough about what they perceived as an alcohol problem to organize and do something to fight it. This simple division, between those who were drinkers and those who did not drink began

¹ Frankenberg 177

² Henry Lee. *How Dry We Were: Prohibition Revisited*. Englewood, Prentice-Hall Inc. 1963. x

creating the dry identity that moved to the forefront of the American political landscape during the years leading up to Prohibition. The formal emergence of this issue on the national stage is marked by the first National Temperance Convention held in Philadelphia in 1833 and the Second National Convention in 1836.

In American history it becomes clear that a link developed between various xenophobic organizations and the temperance movement. One of the first examples of this connection took place in the 1850s as America witnessed the growth of the American Party also known as the Know-Nothing Party. They were a very secretive organization and the members became known as Know-Nothings because when they were asked about their organization they replied, I know nothing. The American Party helped bring about the passage of dry laws in 13 states. In every state where they were able to win power, the Know Nothings passed dry laws.³ The Know-Nothing Party was vehemently anti-Catholic, paying special attention to the perceived threat that the increase in Irish immigration was doing to America.

In 1869 the National Prohibition Party was formed in Chicago and today is America's oldest active third party.⁴ Sunday thus matured as a sober ball player in a town already marked by a strong temperance movement. Nationwide however, the Prohibition Party never became one of the major parties in America. Nevertheless, the Prohibition Party did succeed in bringing attention to the issue, and eventually the Republican Party decided to support a Constitutional Amendment that would establish national Prohibition. By adopting parts of the Prohibition Party platform, the Republican

³ Robert A. Hohner. *Prohibition and Politics: The Life of Bishop James Cannon Jr.* Columbia, The University of South Carolina Press. 1999. 285

⁴ The Prohibition Party: The Official Website of The Prohibition National Committee.
<http://www.Prohibition.org>

Party was able to gain more support and render the Prohibition Party meaningless within American politics.

One temperance organization that was directed, operated, and governed by women was the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In 1874, the Women's Christian Temperance Union held their first national convention in Cleveland, Ohio. WCTU members affirmed that "real men" were family men, who were sober individuals, staying at home and providing for their families instead of wasting their money in the saloons. The WCTU wives were opposed to their husbands being served alcohol at the saloons. Moreover, against the alcohol industry's push to equate masculinity with drinking through their advertising campaigns, the WCTU wives offered a countervailing masculine identity: the good, domesticated provider, adept at survival in a sharply competitive, dynamic U.S. economy.

Many members of the WCTU, like members of the American Party, also held strong anti-Catholic feelings and attitudes. During the early years of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, many of the members refused to work alongside fellow temperance supporters who were Catholics.⁵ The WCTU took part in many activities including building and financing water fountains across the country to encourage people to drink water rather than alcohol.⁶ The WCTU also encouraged members voluntarily to abstain from alcohol and their members worked in public to encourage others to do the same. One way the Women's Christian Temperance Union influenced people to abstain from alcohol was through their many press advertisements, such as the following pledge written by Frances Willard, a prominent leader of the WCTU:

⁵ Ruth Bordin. *Frances Willard: A Biography*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press. 1986. 168

⁶ *Ibid.*, 149

I promise not to buy, sell or give
Alcoholic liquors while I live;
From all tobacco I'll abstain
And never take God's name in vain.⁷

The second group of activists believed that the solution to the alcohol problem was government intervention through the passage of legislation that would enact national Prohibition. National Prohibition would criminalize all buying and selling of alcohol in the United States. A voluntary pledge allowed each individual to make the personal choice to abstain from alcohol rather than grant the government authority to regulate the liquor industry.

Another organization that joined the fight against alcohol was the Anti-Saloon League. The League was formed in 1893 in Oberlin, Ohio, coincidentally, Billy Sunday's rookie season in the National League.⁸ Howard Hyde Russell was unsatisfied with the organizations at the time that were fighting against "demon rum" and so he formed the Ohio Anti-Saloon League. Then, in 1895, it became a national organization. Unlike the WCTU and Prohibition Party, the Anti-Saloon League was less democratic, more bureaucratic, and much more secretive. The Anti-Saloon League also earned a reputation for taking credit for any victory against the liquor interests regardless if they had helped create the new laws against demon drink or not. However, all of these organizations were adamantly opposed to alcohol and supported national Prohibition, but there was a great deal of rivalry between the various groups. It was not until the first

⁷ Charles E. Goshen. *Drinks, Drugs, And Do-Gooders*. New York City, The Free Press. 1973. 3

⁸ Lee x

decade of the twentieth century that the Anti-Saloon League gained prominence in the United States.⁹

The “drys” used many tactics to eliminate drinking in America altogether. There were many songs written about drinking and drinkers that attacked the very masculinity and identity of the drinker. Catherine Murdock states, “alcohol use was a male attribute that destroyed masculinity.”¹⁰ Through advertising and other media the alcohol industry, saloons, and bars have always promoted the idea that “real men” drink and often drink heavily. The first example of such a popular counter-attack on this view can be seen in the lyrics of the following song written in the 1880s called *The Old Man’s Drunk Again*:

*Oh father, dear, come home.
Quit drinking like a sow.
You’ve drank away the bed and stove,
Don’t swallow up the cow.
Why must you be a bum,
And sleep out in the rain?
The neighbors sigh as they pass by
The old man’s drunk again¹¹*

This short song is a perfect example of arguments that drink destroyed the manhood of the drinker, impairing his manly ability to be a material provider for wives and children. In this song the alcoholic father has allegedly wasted the family’s money and goods in order to support his drinking habit. The cost for the family is high. Not only was his family forced to go without heat and warmth, but also they were forced to suffer humiliation and shame, as all the neighbors were made aware that their father was a bum. There is little sympathy in this song for the father as he was believed to be fully responsible for the wider, pathetic consequences of his own actions. Throughout

⁹ Richard F. Hamm. *Shaping the Eighteenth Amendment: Temperance Reform, Legal Culture, and the Polity, 1880-1920*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press. 1995. 129-130

¹⁰ Parsons 58

¹¹ Lee 19

Temperance literature, whenever there was an alcoholic father, the suffering of women and children was always emphasized, as was the apparent loss of masculinity of the father or husband. The belief that alcohol stripped away the masculinity of the drinker was commonly held by temperance supporters. The belief was simple that a failure of volition caused a failure of masculinity. Because the drunkard was unable to exert his own will over his own body and own interests, the drunkard was not a true man.¹² An essence of vital male self-discipline was that main contention of female temperance leaders.

There were certainly many established organizations operating throughout the country when Billy Sunday decided to join the fight against alcohol. However, Sunday was unique as being the only former major league baseball player to come out so strongly against the saloons. Sunday soon became famous for his booze sermon and became well known across the country for preaching against the saloons and in favor of the Eighteenth Amendment. Since Sunday was a former baseball player, he used his crowd pleasing skills in order to mesmerize his audiences and encourage them to support national Prohibition. Sunday was not alone in his crusade against alcohol, several of Sunday's contemporaries including, Bishop James Canon and the Rev. Bob Jones also preached staunchly against alcohol in predominately southern states. A key Prohibition historian, James Timberlake, also lists several other influential evangelists who preached fervently to help curtail the reign of alcohol in America. His list which includes Rev. R.A. Torrey, Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, Rev. W.J. Dawson, Rev. Rodney Smith, and the Rev. William A. Sunday. Timberlake contends that of these men, Sunday was the most famous and the

¹² Elaine F. Parsons. *Manhood Lost: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2003. 55

most effective in the virile crusade against liquor.¹³ Authorized Sunday biographer, Elijah Brown, agrees with Timberlake and he adds: “it is doubtful if any man in modern times had done more than Billy Sunday to help the cause of temperance.”¹⁴

Billy Sunday was fairly well known especially amongst baseball fans and his previous experience as a baseball player helped lend vital credibility to his anti-alcohol sermons among men. Many of Sunday’s contemporaries who were speaking out against alcohol were women, pointing to a serious gender gap in the alcohol wars. As a former athlete, Sunday could capitalize on his sporting prowess and use that manly renown to win over new converts to abstinence. He could coax out a public who viewed Sunday as being more masculine than the average minister. Sunday clearly worked hard to make his sermons more appealing to men. It was his previous experience as a virile ballplayer that gave Sunday credibility in the eyes of millions of American men across the country. He successfully capitalized on his credibility by ensuring that his sermons were not only full of manly terms of phrase, but also animated by the masculine, impressive physical moves for which professional baseball players were renowned.

Billy Sunday intentionally used baseball gestures during his sermons in order to peak the interest and gain the attention of his male audience. Sometimes Sunday would behave as if he was pitching a ball to a batter and then other times he was sliding into home. Billy Sunday was constantly in action and his kinetic sermons reinforced the masculine message that he constantly reiterated. Billy Sunday was so effective at preaching against the saloons that on several occasions after he finished his preaching in a town the local saloon would go out of business. The liquor industry despised Billy

¹³ James H. Timberlake. *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement 1900-1920*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1963. 17

¹⁴Elijah P. Brown. *The Real Billy Sunday*. Dayton, The Otterbein Press. 1914. 208

Sunday and his attempt to make America dry. Billy Sunday threatened their business, by convincing some of their most loyal customers that a drinker could not be a real man.

In addition to focusing on drinking, Sunday also preached a unique, hyper-masculine style on various topics including patriotism, conservatism, and fundamentalism. Sunday's message was patriotic, pro-family, militantly Protestant, and anti-alcohol. In an age before most households in America owned a personal radio, Billy Sunday became the mouthpiece for spreading the word about the degrading, enervating evils of alcohol. Sunday was also able to assist organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Anti-Saloon League, and Ku Klux Klan. Sunday successfully masculinized their message and was able to take their propaganda to larger audiences every time he preached against the liquor industry. While these other organizations certainly had members and supporters, none of them were able to draw crowds as large as Sunday could attract. In exchange for his vocal support of the cause, the WCTU, Anti-Saloon League, and Klan contributed financially to Sunday's ministry. These donations in return went for his assistance in promoting national Prohibition. Billy Sunday played a major role in the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment and, once it was passed, he became one of the staunchest supporters of Prohibition.

Sunday made it abundantly clear that he was on a crusade to drive the saloons out of business. One of the most famous sermons that he repeatedly preached was known as the *Booze* sermon. In it, Sunday attacked the liquor industry, rebuked Christians who voted for saloons, and warned that hell awaited those who supported saloons:

There will be so many church members in hell for voting in favor of the saloon that their feet will be sticking out the windows. If to kill the saloon would mean to kill business, then I say, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. I hope in the wise providence of God that I may be permitted to

preach the funeral service of the liquor traffic. You might as well try to run a powder mill in hell as to regulate the liquor business with high license. If the church isn't against the saloon, then to hell with the church; and if the preachers and priests are not against the saloon, then to hell with them. Say, if the man that drinks the whiskey goes to Hell, the man that votes for the saloon that sold the whiskey to him will go to Hell. If the man that drinks the whiskey goes to Hell, and the man that sold the whiskey to the men that drank it goes to Heaven, then that poor drunkard will have the right to stand on the brink of eternal damnation and put his arms around the pillar of justice, shake his fist in the face of the Almighty and say, "Unjust! Unjust!" If you vote for the dirty business you ought to go to Hell sure as you live, and I would like to fire the furnace while you are there.¹⁵

Sunday once again demonstrates his willingness to use extremely harsh and masculine rhetoric. His willingness to stoke the furnace against those who would vote in favor of the saloon makes him appear to be a tough guy who is willing to use violent punishment against those individuals standing effeminately against Prohibition.

As a Christian Fundamentalist, Sunday often preached against sin. One of the constant themes Sunday used to reinforce the sinful nature of alcohol was his claim that God disapproved of all drinking. As an example of his disapproval Sunday said, "I tell you that the curse of God Almighty is on the saloon." Some of the Christian Fundamentalist preachers were often referred to as 'fire and brimstone' preachers as they preached about hell often. Sunday was certainly no exception and he boldly stated that, "Whiskey and beer are all right in their place, but their place is hell." Billy Sunday was absolutely convinced that the saloons and the devil were working hand in hand in bringing Americans down and once dead sending them to an eternal hell:

The saloon comes as near being a rat hole for the working man to dump his wages in as any thing I know of. To know what the devil will do, find out what the saloon is doing. The man who votes for the saloon, helps the devil get his boy. The man who doesn't believe in hell, has never seen a

¹⁵ Lyle W. Dorsett. *Billy Sunday and The Redemption of Urban America*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1991. *Get on the Water Wagon Sermon*. 202

drunkard's home. The devil and the saloon-keeper are always pulling on the same rope.¹⁶

Here we see Sunday focusing on the damage that the drinker does not only to himself but also to his son which is an indicator that there would be a multi-generational masculine crisis.

Sunday believed that he was engaged in a war with the saloons and the liquor industry. The militaristic language that Sunday used in his sermons demonstrates his masculine approach so that it would appeal especially to men and help them stop drinking. In a sermon that he gave to an audience in Boston Massachusetts, Sunday bluntly said:

I am the sworn, eternal and uncompromising enemy of the liquor traffic. I have been, and will go on, fighting that damnable, dirty, rotten business with all the power at my command. I shall ask no quarter from that gang, and they shall get none from me.¹⁷

Sunday did not mince any words and this is just another example of his commitment to a masculine and audacious rhetorical style.

As far as Billy Sunday was concerned, he was engaged in a war against alcohol and he never planned to surrender. His absolute disgust and hatred towards alcohol and the liquor industry comes across strongly as he describes alcohol as worse than war:

The saloon is the sum of all villainies. It is worse than war or pestilence. It is the crime of crimes. It is parent of crimes and the mother of sins. It is the appalling source of misery and crime in the land and the principal cause of crime. It is the source of three-fourths of the taxes to support that crime. And to license such an incarnate fiend of hell is the dirtiest, low-down, damnable business on top of this old earth. There is nothing to be compared to it. It is an infidel. It has no faith in God, has no religion. It would close every church in the land. It would hang its beer signs on the abandoned altars. It would close every public school. It respects the thief and it esteems the blasphemer. It fills the prisons and the penitentiaries. It

¹⁶ Dorsett 192

¹⁷ Ibid.,181

despises Heaven, hates love, scorns virtue. It tempts the passions. Its music is the song of a siren. Its sermons are a collection of lewd, vile stories. It wraps a mantle about the hope of this world and that to come. Its tables are full of the vilest literature. It is the moral clearing house for rot, and damnation, and poverty, and insanity, and it wrecks homes and blights lives today.¹⁸

For Billy Sunday, America would either be a wet, sinful, and wicked country or it would be dry, strong, and virtuous. There could be no middle ground when the stakes were the lives and souls of millions of American men. Sunday ended his sermon by once again appealing to the very masculinity of the men in his audience. Billy Sunday said to them, “Say, will you line up for the Prohibition? Men of Boston, Massachusetts and our nation, how many of you will promise that by the help of God you will vote against it? Stand up. Let me have a look at you!”¹⁹ The men were then forced to make a choice. The choice was simple. They could either stand up as Godly men or they could remain seated and be portrayed as cowardly drunks.

The saloons were in a constant battle with Billy Sunday. The saloons even offered Billy Sunday one million dollars if he would quit his crusade against the alcohol industry. Authorized Sunday biographer Elijah Brown wrote of Sunday, “The liquor men seem to know his engagements almost as soon as he makes them, and weeks ahead of his meetings they begin to circulate all manner of lying slanders against him. It is well documented that they spend thousands of dollars every year in doing this.”²⁰ For Billy Sunday, the answer to what he believed to be the alcohol problem in America was simple, national Prohibition. The war Sunday was fighting was both spiritual and political.

¹⁸ Dorsett 194-195

¹⁹ Ibid., 194-195

²⁰ Brown 208

Billy Sunday believed that a righteous and moral government would be unable to coexist alongside the saloon:

The saloon is usually found in partnership with the foes of good Government. It supports the boodle alderman, corrupt law maker, the political boss and machine. It only asks to be let alone in its law nullifying, vice and crime producing work. I have never known of a movement for good government that was not opposed to the saloon. If you believe in better civic conditions, if you believe in a greater and better city, if you believe in men going home sober, if you believe in men going to heaven instead of hell, then down with the saloon. The liquor interests are still fat—sleek—smug and powerful with many city, state, and national governments at their feet; and they are reaching out with their slimy hands to choke throttle and assassinate the character of those whom it cannot debauch, and who dare attack their hellish business. But their doom is sealed. If the people are fit for self government, if the people are fit for liberty, the wrath of an outraged public will never be quenched until the putrid corpse of the saloon is hanging from the gibbet of shame; praise God from whom all blessings flow.²¹

Sunday was very critical of the owners of the saloon and attempted to portray them as being less than manly. Sunday never held back his contempt and anger he felt towards the alcohol industry, “The normal way to get rid of drunkards is to quit raising drunkards, to put the business that makes drunkards out of business.”²²

One argument that Sunday made in favor of Prohibition was the argument that the American farmer would benefit from the stoppage of alcohol production:

Last year the farm products were valued at about \$5,073,997, 594. The brewers used 38/100 of one percent. The corn crop was 2,463,017,000 bushels. At 70 cents per bushel, it would make \$1,724,111,900. The brewers and distillers used less than 2 per cent; I will say 2 per cent, so my figures will run even. 2 per cent of 2,463,017,000 would be 49,260,340 bushels, at 70 cents a bushel would be \$34,482,238. The saloon advocate cried, if you vote out the saloons there will be a panic, the farmer will get nothing for his corn. In the past three years we have voted out of business 24,000 booze joints and the farmer receives more for his corn than ever. I believe if every saloon were voted out, it would not affect the price of corn 2 cents a bushel; furthermore, the hungry women and children of the

²¹ Dorsett 187

²² Ibid., 187

drunkards, who have not had a square meal for years would eat up in one week the 2 per cent of corn used by the brewers and distillers in the manufacturing the double distilled liquid damnation.²³

Those who chose to drink alcohol were not always spared the criticism that Sunday delivered. According to Billy Sunday alcohol was one of the main causes, if not the main cause of social ills:

Seventy-five percent of our idiots came from intemperate parents. There are more insane people in the United States than students in the universities and colleges. In Kansas there are eighty-one counties without an insane man or woman. There are fifty-four counties that have no feeble-minded. Eighty per cent of the paupers are whiskey-made paupers. In Kansas there is only one pauper to every three thousand of the population. There are thirty-eight counties without a pauper; there are eighteen counties, which do not even own a farm for the poor; there are only six hundred paupers in the state. Ninety per cent of our adult criminals are drinking men, and committed their crimes while under the influence of Booze. In 1914 there were sixty-five counties in Kansas, with no prisoners in their jails. In some counties they have not called a Grand Jury to try a charge in ten years. The people have \$200,000,000 on deposit in the banks. The death rate is the smallest in the world—seven out of every one thousand of the population. In the state of Massachusetts in ten years, the yearly average of crime has been 32,639 cases, and 31,978 have been caused by drink. The *Chicago Tribune* kept track of the number of murders committed in the saloons in ten years and the number was 53,436.²⁴

Sunday argues that the saloons are directly connected to the increase in crime and that by eliminating the saloons, the nation would reduce the crime rate. He uses every statistic at his disposal to prove that wherever alcohol is present, there one can also find societal degeneration.

In addition to the correlation that Sunday believed existed between crime and alcohol, Sunday also argued that alcohol and the saloons had a detrimental effect on the economy. To support his claim Sunday argued, “For every \$800.00 spent in producing

²³ Dorsett 184-185

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 182

useful and necessary commodities, the working man receives \$143.50 in wages. For every \$800.00 spent in producing booze, the working man receives \$9.85 in wages.”²⁵

For Billy Sunday the fight against alcohol and the saloons was an eternal fight. Sunday constantly pledged that he would continue the fight against the liquor traffic until the day that he died. He believed that he was taking part in an actual war against the evils of alcohol and its supporters and so his militaristic language is to be expected as Sunday said:

I have drawn the sword in defense of God, home, wife, children, and native land, and I will never sheathe it until the undertaker pumps me full of embalming fluid, and if my wife is alive, I think I shall call her to my bedside and say, Nell, when I am dead, send for the butcher and skin me, and have my hide tanned and made into drum heads, and hire men to go up and down the land and beat the drums and say, My husband, Bill Sunday still lives and gives the whiskey gang a run for its money.²⁶

Sunday used crude language to discuss his death, but he also portrayed himself as standing up for the family and defending those who are unable to defend themselves, namely women and children. Here Sunday portrays himself as a hyper-masculine, chivalrous knight, who is able and willing to stand up as a protector for the weak.

Billy Sunday also believed that the manhood of men who drank or wasted their money at the saloons was threatened. When a criminal was about to be executed for a crime that he had committed under the influence of alcohol, he was about to lose his life, but perhaps more importantly he was losing his manhood since he would no longer be able to provide for his family. For Billy Sunday the fight for men to preserve their manhood was a serious fight and one that American men could not afford to lose.

Sunday challenged men to stand up and defend their very manhood as he cried:

²⁵ Dorsett 184

²⁶ Ibid., 181

You men now have the chance to show your manhood. Then in the name of your pure mother, in the name of your manhood, in the name of your wife and the pure, innocent children that climb up in your lap and put their arms around your neck, in the name of all that is good and noble, fight the curse. Shall you men, who hold in your hands the ballot, and in that ballot hold the destiny of womanhood, and children and manhood, shall you, the sovereign power, refuse to rally in the name of defenseless men and women and native land? No! I want every man to say: God you can count on me to protect my life, my home, my mother and my children and the manhood of America. By the mercy of God, which has given to you the unshaken and unshakable confidence of her you love, I beseech you make a fight for the women who wait tonight until the saloons spew out their husbands and their sons, and send them home maudlin, brutish, devilish, vomiting, stinking, blear-eyed, bloated-faced drunkards.²⁷

There was little doubt that Billy Sunday was diametrically opposed to the liquor industry and the saloons. However, the question arises just how successful was Billy Sunday in helping to shut down the liquor industry with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment.

In 1915, Billy Sunday preached two consecutive sermons against the wickedness of alcohol and after each sermon nearly 15,000 men promised with the help of God to vote in favor of Prohibition.²⁸ In 1916, Sunday preached a sermon to a large gathering of men in Detroit. There he asked those attending his camp meeting how many of them were going to vote for Prohibition. Ten thousand men rose to their feet with a mighty shout. Shortly after his Detroit sermon, he went to Grand Rapids where he stood on the pulpit waving the American flag while 7,000 men yelled that they would vote for Prohibition the following day. On November 7, 1916, voters in Michigan passed a Prohibition bill by a tally of 353,378 to 284, 754.²⁹ Billy Sunday helped rally the troops in favor of Prohibition. There are countless other examples of Billy Sunday going into a

²⁷ Dorsett 206

²⁸ Timberlake 18

²⁹ Anne-Marie E. Szymanski. *Pathways To Prohibition: Radicals, Moderates, and Social Movement Outcomes*. Durham, Duke University Press. 2003. 178

town or a city where the alcohol industry was virtually shut down overnight by politically active males due to his effective preaching style and the content of his sermons.

On January 16, 1920 Billy Sunday and his supporters gathered together in Atlanta, Georgia to stage a mock funeral for John Barleycorn.³⁰ John Barleycorn was a symbol for the use of the cereal crop barley in producing whiskey and beer. For those who supported the Eighteenth Amendment, it was a glorious evening indeed. Once again, Billy Sunday was front and center leading the celebrations. All night long they celebrated on the sixteenth and into the early morning of the seventeenth as this event was a long time coming as many of the leading temperance organizations were over fifty years old. Some of the supporters had brought a twenty foot effigy of John Barleycorn and it was his death that allowed the birth of the Eighteenth Amendment to take place.³¹ Sunday, never missing an opportunity to voice his opinion, said the following to John Barleycorn at his mock funeral:

Good-bye John, You were God's worst enemy. You were Hell's best friend. I hate you with a perfect hatred.³² The reign of tears is over! The slums will soon be only a memory. We will turn our prisons into factories and our jails into storehouses and corncribs. Men will walk upright now, women will smile and the children will laugh. Hell will be forever for rent!³³

The end of the service was marked with a horse drawn carriage that carried away the twenty foot coffin while 10,000 people cheered as the hearse was driven away.³⁴ Sunday

³⁰ Timberlake 183

³¹ J.C. Furnas. *The Life and Times of The Late Demon Rum*. New York City, G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1965. 337

³² Charles Merz. *The Dry Decade*. Seattle, University of Washington Press. 1969. 1

³³ Henry Lee. *How Dry We Were: Prohibition Revisited*. Englewood, Prentice-Hall Inc. 1963. 193

³⁴ Paul Sann. *The Lawless Decade: A Pictorial History Of A Great American Transition: From the World War I Armistice And Prohibition To Repeal And The New Deal*. New York City, Crown Publishers Inc. 1962. 21

calls upon these men to walk upright because those who were addicted to alcohol were weakened and debilitated.

On January 29, 1919 the Eighteenth Amendment was officially adopted as law once the Secretary of State certified that U.S. Constitution had been ratified. In the eyes of Prohibition's supporters, America was finally delivered from the evil sin of alcohol, often referred to by drys as "demon rum". The passing of the Eighteenth Amendment was a major victory for the Anti-Saloon League, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Ku Klux Klan, other Prohibitionists, and Fundamentalist Christians. Billy Sunday was very proud of the Eighteenth Amendment that he had supported for most of his ministry:

Section 1: After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxication liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2: The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3: This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress³⁵

For Prohibitionists the emphasis was on the moral good that was brought about by outlawing alcohol and thus the unintended consequences of the Eighteenth Amendment are often minimized, dismissed, or completely ignored by supporters of Prohibition. Although it became illegal to produce or distribute alcohol, bootleggers and organized crime increased significantly during the years of Prohibition.

The great devil's rum had finally been defeated and men could now be men again. America was dry and a moral awakening and revival was believed to be underway. As

³⁵ United States Constitution. Eighteenth Amendment. The Eighteenth Amendment became law on January 17, 1919.

evidence of the great moral success of Prohibition, they pointed to the reduction in the numbers of diseases that were closely associated with alcohol. There was also a significant reduction in the numbers of certain crimes that often were alcohol related.

However there has always been a small group of Americans who have been adamantly opposed to the consumption of alcohol in America. These people preached that the consumption of alcohol was sin and those who drank were sinners. Those who abstained from alcohol were “dry” and those who consumed alcohol were known as “wets”. People who did not drink themselves but voted in opposition to Prohibition were often lumped into the wet category as well since they were opposed to National Prohibition. Prohibitionists have always made many arguments in favor of outlawing alcohol. The safety issue revolves around the fact that when crimes are committed more often than not alcohol is often involved in some way. Another issue is health concerns. Drinking alcohol and especially excessive drinking were thought to be bad for the health of the drinker. Excessive drinking impacted men on a larger scale as they were more likely to drink themselves into a stupor. The moral argument against alcohol was also very convincing for many Americans, especially those with a strong religious background. Over the years many preachers preached that the consumption of alcohol was a sin and that those who participated in this sinful activity were going to hell. These were some of the most common arguments against alcohol and in favor of Prohibition that were used in order to help bring about the Eighteenth Amendment.

As the 1930s began, it seemed likely that Prohibition would be repealed and this outraged Sunday. While he was delivering a sermon to thousands of people in Tucson, Arizona, he railed against the United States Congress and the saloons, “Someone should

smash half the noses of our Congressman! They are trying to give us beer. It's an insult to America! We don't want beer and the saloons ought to know it."³⁶ Once again Sunday used violent, masculine, and even threatening language against his opponents. There was no room for compromise and you were either with the decent Americans that supported Prohibition or you were with the saloons and their cronies.

Since Sunday was so critical of those with whom he disagreed it was not surprising that the vitriol of his critics was comparable. While many of his critics were a direct result of his push for Prohibition, many others objected to his hyper-masculine rhetoric and his aggressive behavior. The liquor industry worked long hours and spent a great deal of money trying to discredit Sunday and preserve their business. One such critical commentary was written by a Chicago brewery union. "The notorious Billy Sunday is probably the most profane, sacrilegious and hypocritical charlatan who has ever taken money from a foolish people professing to preach the Word of God, and the sooner that this man's personality is blotted out, the better it will be for the community at large... we propose to tell the plain, unvarnished truth about a man who has been living on his wits for many years."³⁷ Even his opponents resorted to attacking the masculinity of Sunday by accusing him of being little more than an entertainer. Billy Sunday also met with opposition among fellow clergy. The Reverend Guy Shipler, rector of the Church of the Epiphany in Cincinnati said this in reference to Sunday and his preaching style, "we should all like to see crowds in our churches, but we should consider what we must give up to get them by the Billy Sunday method."³⁸ Rev. Shipler correctly noted

³⁶ Lee 231

³⁷ Timothy J. Holian. *Over The Barrel: The Brewing History and Beer Culture of Cincinnati, Volume 1, 1800 to the Present*. St. Joseph, Sudhaus Press. 2000. 290-291

³⁸ Holian 291

that there was a lack of orthodoxy involved with Sunday's services. The somber nature of a typical Protestant service had been replaced by the theatrics of Sunday and many of the older Protestants were not pleased by this change.

Although most of the efforts of Prohibitionists were done at the local and state level of government, on occasion they were still able to impact the national political scene. For example, during the United States presidential election of 1884 at a rally supporting Republican Presidential Candidate James G. Blaine, the Rev. Samuel Burchard referred to the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion." This comment helped ensure that Democrat Grover Cleveland would win the Presidency of the United States as many Roman Catholic voters took offense to this statement and voted for Cleveland instead of Blaine. Grover Cleveland won the election by 23,005 total votes.³⁹ Even though Cleveland was victorious, Rev. Burchard successfully linked the Catholic Church and the liquor question together in the minds of many Republicans.

Prohibition and the issue of alcohol also played a large role in deciding the outcome of the 1928 Presidential Election. The election between Republican Herbert Hoover, and Democrat Al Smith crystallized the differences that characterized the American people over alcohol. Kansas newspaper editor, William Allen White clearly observes this: "It is not that Governor Smith is a Catholic and a wet which makes him an offense to the villagers and the town dwellers. The whole Puritan Civilization which has built, a sturdy orderly nation is threatened by Smith."⁴⁰ Billy Sunday also felt that Smith threatened his beloved Eighteenth Amendment and so he worked diligently to help elect Herbert Hoover.

³⁹ Lee 29-30

⁴⁰ Edmund A. Moore. *A Catholic Runs for President: The Campaign of 1928*. Gloucester: The Ronald Press Company. 1968. 107

It was true that Smith, as a Roman Catholic and wet New Yorker would face a tough challenge from the old stock Protestant Americans who opposed everything he stood for. As a Democrat, one would expect that Smith should do well in the heavily Democratic South. However, many Protestant Ministers and other nativists did their best to make sure that Smith's drinking and Catholic religion kept him out of the White House. Bishop James Cannon, a Democrat, was one of the most outspoken critics of Al Smith. As a Southern Democrat and a dry, Canon believed that Smith would repeal the Eighteenth Amendment, effectively ending Prohibition.

Bishop Canon was a member of the Anti-Saloon League and took an active leadership role in both creating and maintaining a dry America.⁴¹ There were many attacks on the character of Al Smith. Many Protestants simply were not going to accept a Roman Catholic as President of the United States. The 1920s Ku Klux Klan, nativists, and Prohibitionists found a common enemy in the person of Al Smith. Smith helped lead to an increase in membership in many of these organizations as his candidacy marked a threat to the Protestant status quo and domination on American politics. Al Smith did not help his chances of winning the presidency by becoming closely aligned with Democratic National Committee Chairman, John J. Raskob. Raskob, like Smith, was wet and Catholic and their close association was considered a slap in the face to many dry Democrats primarily in the Protestant South. Bishop Cannon frequently criticized Al Smith, it was Raskob that came to his defense when he said this of Bishop Cannon, "Bishop Cannon was using Prohibition as a cloak for religious bigotry."⁴² Canon vehemently denied these allegations and responded by saying, "Why should I have any

⁴¹ Robert A. Hohner. *Prohibition and Politics: The Life of Bishop James Cannon Jr.* Columbia, The University of South Carolina Press. 1999. 215

⁴² Hohner 215

other reason to oppose Al Smith? Wasn't that enough? What did his religion have to do with it? He was a wet Tammany Democrat and I was going to fight him on that ground. And religion had nothing to do with it."⁴³ It was apparent that while Sunday preached Prohibition throughout many of the northern and Midwestern states, Bishop Cannon and Bob Jones, Sunday's southern contemporaries, were waging the same fight internally in the south against fellow Democrat Al Smith.

Although they were in the minority, there were dry Roman Catholics who supported Prohibition. There were also many wet Protestants. But for many people during the 1920s, alcohol and Roman Catholicism were synonymous. The anti-wet campaigning of Southern Democrats and Hoover's support of dry policies was too much for Al Smith to handle in the 1928 Presidential Election, as Hoover defeated Smith in the election. After the defeat of Al Smith, Billy Sunday said, "They wouldn't let a man roll into the White House on a wine and beer keg."⁴⁴ After Hoover became President, he referred to Prohibition, as "A great social and economic experiment, noble in motive and far reaching in purpose."⁴⁵ Sunday was quite satisfied that Smith was defeated in the 1928 Presidential Election and that the Eighteenth Amendment had once again been preserved.

At the end of his career, Billy Sunday would not simply be another preacher who happened to fulminate against alcohol. Sunday instead was a man who dedicated virtually his entire ministry to taking on the liquor industry and the saloons and he even self-labeled himself as the eternal enemy of the liquor industry. Billy Sunday had

⁴³ Ibid., 229

⁴⁴ Lee 213

⁴⁵ James A. Monroe. *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*. New Haven, Yale University Press. 2003. 281

declared war on the liquor interests and he had spent virtually his entire ministry speaking out against the saloons. For all dries, but especially for Billy Sunday, the Eighteenth Amendment was his greatest accomplishment. He helped dictate and shape the political laws that governed America by making it a more moral, virile nation and prohibiting the demon rum. The “noble experiment”, as Prohibition was often referenced, came to an end on December 5, 1933 when the Twenty First Amendment repealed the Eighteenth Amendment.

It must have been very disheartening for Billy Sunday to continue preaching after Prohibition was repealed, but Sunday continued preaching right up until his death in 1935. In fact one of his last sermons was in New York City in 1934 that was described by the *Times* as being about the tenth of the size that he drew during the Prohibition days. There were no “amens” sounded from the rafters, and almost no one bothered to go forward and shake hands with the old, gray preacher. Evangelical hellfire had become embarrassing. A new age pushed aside biblical inerrancy, Catholic-bashing, Puritan thou-shalt-nots, and the very idea (at the heart of Evangelical faith) that salvation turned entirely on repenting sin and relying on grace.⁴⁶ In the end it seems that the man who led the crusade to bury John Barleycorn was buried by a changing society in the 1920s and 1930s. As America became more modernized and diversified, there was less interest in his formerly potent masculine and masculinizing rhetoric.

⁴⁶ Monroe 348

Chapter Four: Billy Sunday and the Ku Klux Klan together as Masculine Defenders of American Protestantism

Billy Sunday was not alone in his desire to masculinize the Protestant churches in America. Many of the well-known fraternal organizations across the United States also eventually shared this goal.¹ While many fraternal organizations talked about masculinization, there was one organization in the early twentieth century that took the leading role in the masculinization of Protestant Christianity in concert with Sunday. That group was the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s.

The second era Ku Klux Klan was a distinctively different organization than the original anti-Reconstruction Klan that was primarily based in the South. In November of 1915, William Joseph Simmons and fifteen other Klansmen joined together to bring back the Ku Klux Klan on Stone Mountain in Atlanta Georgia. During their ceremony, these Klansmen built a stone altar and placed upon it an American Flag, the Holy Bible, and a sword and they pledged that, as Klansmen, they:

solemnly dedicated themselves as Americans, to those principles of Americanism embodied in the Constitution of the United States, consecrated themselves, as Protestants, to the tenets of the Christian religion, and pledged themselves, as white men, to the eternal maintenance of white supremacy.²

Simmons was not alone in organizing the Ku Klux Klan into a potent fraternal organization. By end of the nineteenth century, many fraternal organizations were being created all across the country. Sociologist Mary Ann Clawson describes William J. Simmons as a mere traveling salesman who went around the country selling his product which was membership into the Klan. Fraternal organizations such as the Klan with

¹ Mark C. Carnes. *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*. New Haven: Yale Press. 1989. 6-9

² Robert P. Ingalls. *Hoods: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan*. New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons. 1979. 16

large membership rosters were very lucrative as a business endeavor.³ Simmons later teamed up with Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Young Clarke, and the three of them worked out an arrangement to distribute the ten dollar fee that new Klan members paid to join the organization:

Of every ten-dollar initiation fee (Klectoken), four dollars went to the Kleagle (fraternal agent) responsible. The King Kleagle of the state realm got one dollar. The Grand Goblin got fifty cents and the rest went back to Atlanta: two dollars and fifty cents for Clarke and Mrs. Tyler, and two dollars for Simmons.⁴

The Ku Klux Klan was one of the most popular fraternal organizations in America during the 1920s. Some historians and sociologists have argued that the Klan was un-American, but, as Klan historian Richard Tucker writes, this assertion was incorrect, “If the Klan were utterly un-American it could never have succeeded as it did. The Klan is not alien to the American spirit. The Klan is but the recrudescence of forces that already existed in American life.”⁵ The Klan was able to capitalize on the fears of many Protestant Americans that too many dangerous aliens were entering the country and that America was falling apart at the seams. It was during this period that the Klan promised to restore law and order and also promote “100% Americanism.” Imperial Wizard Hiram Evans stated that, “only the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants of the Klan could truly claim 100% Americanism.”⁶ The First World War provided the Klan the outlet for their religious position regarding American Protestantism, “America is

³ Mary Ann Clawson. *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1989. 4

⁴ *Ibid.*, 218. In the first fifteen months that Clarke, Tyler, and Simmons joined forces they recruited 85,000 new members and earned a combined \$300,000.

⁵ Richard K. Tucker. *The Dragon and The Cross: The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Middle America*, Hamden, Archon Books. 1991.

⁶ Gillette 53

Protestant and so it must remain.”⁷ The Klan was prepared to fight in order to defend the dominance of Protestantism in every aspect of American society.

Another Klan historian Leonard Moore shares this belief as he asserts that one of the main reasons that the Klan of the 1920s was so popular and able to gain as much political influence as it did was because many native-born male Protestants believed that rural, small-town American life had lost its prominent place on the American landscape and had been replaced by urbanites, anarchists, and immigrants.⁸ Kenneth Jackson argues that cities such as Denver, Indianapolis, and Atlanta, saw a great deal of Klan activity as they were mostly Protestant and populated by large numbers of men who felt themselves especially vulnerable to modernizing forces in the U.S. economy and society. Atlanta, for example, boasted to be “the capital of the Protestant world.” These were also cities where the people readily joined organizations, and so the Klan found a receptive audience.⁹ In the eyes of many, the Klan was just another fraternal organization that white Protestant men could join to associate with one another.

One group of white Protestant men in particular, namely the Protestant clergy flocked to the Klan in large numbers. Approximately 40,000 Protestant clergymen joined the second era Ku Klux Klan. Once they were initiated into the Invisible Empire, these Protestant ministers often served as the Kludd for the Klavern. The Kludd was simply the Klan’s secret word that meant the Chaplain. The Kludd served in the same capacity as most Chaplains by conducting weddings, funerals, and birth ceremonies. The mutual benefit and empowerment that existed between the Ku Klux Klan and the Protestant

⁷ Robert P. Ingalls. *Hoods: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan*. New York, G.P. Putnam’s Sons. 1979. 27

⁸ Leonard J. Moore. *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan In Indiana, 1921-1928*. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina. 1991. 3

⁹ Kenneth T. Jackson. *The Ku Klux Klan In The City: 1915-1930*. New York, Oxford Press. 1967. 29

clergy cannot be ignored as the Ku Klux Klan helped give these Protestant clergy a more masculine image and the Protestant ministers helped give legitimacy to the Klan. The Klan was quite grateful for the vocal support and kind words that many Protestant ministers gave to the Klan. In return, the Klan provided Protestant men an alternative to many of the liberal Protestant churches which were seen as being “feminized” and being controlled almost entirely by women. In fact the Klan, like Sunday, often ridiculed and mocked opponents as being weak and effeminate. The Ku Klux Klan offered many Protestant ministers a golden opportunity to participate in male bonding and validate their masculinity.¹⁰

Historically, members of the clergy were often viewed as being weak or effeminate and now with the Ku Klux Klan attempting to masculinize Protestant Christianity their image was changing drastically. The Klan was so successful in its promotion of masculinization of Protestant Christianity that preachers from a wide array of Protestant denominations joined, praised, and supported the organization. Many leaders of the Klan believed that their organization could bring these diverse Protestants together in defense of their common religion and country. In Oklahoma, their Grand Dragon believed that the Klan should assist and do whatever it could to help create networks for members of different Protestant denominations to come together:

We should work constantly with the ministers of Protestant churches with a view of having at least once or twice a year great mass meetings, wherein all Protestant churches, will for the time be combined together as one church, laying aside their differences in denominational beliefs and gathering together with but one purpose in view, the worship of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.¹¹

¹⁰ Blee 45

¹¹ Grob 47

The various Protestant churches were more factionalized than the Roman Catholic Church, and so many members of the Klan believed that in order to combat the Catholic threat posed to Protestant America, many Protestant denominations would have to come together under galvanizing male leadership. Another reason the Klan promoted a united Protestant front was that this would lead to an increase in membership and an increase in membership would mean more money for the Klan.

It was evident that their plan to bring together Protestant clergymen from all denominations was quite effective. In Portland, Maine, a Universalist minister, the Rev. C.H. Marvin, offered his praise for the Ku Klux Klan:

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan has achieved the distinction of being the greatest secret order in America. Its rapid growth in membership and power, and its aggressive fight against the Roman Catholic control of American politics has made it many bitter enemies. History shows however that great orders must always fight for their very existence.¹²

The term Knights in reference to the Ku Klux Klan is another clear indication of the intended masculine nature of their organization. The Knights were to be chivalrous and virtuous defenders of women and children.

Rev. Marvin was just one of many Protestant clergymen who praised the manly, bellicose Klan. In fact the Klan received praise or support from virtually every major Protestant denomination. Rev. Adams, the pastor at the First Baptist Church in Galveston Texas said of the Klan, "It has my indorsement, do not regard it as a menace."¹³ Another Baptist minister W. B. Harvey from Newport, Kentucky said, "Certainly do not consider Klan a menace to anything except Political Romanism, the greatest curse in

¹² *Imperial Night-Hawk* June 6, 1923. 6

¹³ *Imperial Night-Hawk*. August 1, 1923. 5

America.”¹⁴ P.D. Knickerbocker, President of Dallas District Methodist Episcopal Church, said the following about the Ku Klux Klan:

So far from considering the Klan a menace, I consider it a great organization, my knowledge of its personnel leads me to say that it is composed of men who are strongly in favor of law enforcement and are patriotic in a high degree, it stands for the best ideals of Americanism.¹⁵

The Klan was so successful in selling its image as a masculine, militant, and Protestant organization that countless Protestant clergymen were willing to publicly speak out in favor of the Invisible Empire. Edgar Fuller astutely points out how the Klan was able to use members of the Protestant clergy in order to promote their Klankraft:

Gifted men of the pulpit have been drafted or bribed to enter upon the service of propagating the Klan ideals and purposes. Nearly all of the lecturers on the Klan rostrum are minister of the gospel. Some of these men appropriate all of their time to preaching Klankraft, and others a part of their time to disseminating the sermon on the mount and the constitution of the United States, for so many dollars per week.¹⁶

The old saying that it takes money to make money once again proved to be true as the Klan often made singular contributions to various ministers and traveling evangelists in order to ensure that they were preaching pro-Klan sermons.

The Klan allowed these diverse Protestant clergymen to come together in a common cause, where they might otherwise have had little or no contact with one another. As previously mentioned, the Second Ku Klux Klan was also more geographically diverse than the anti-Reconstruction Klan which was primarily based in the South. In fact, the Klan of the 1920s even received praise from the Protestant

¹⁴ *Imperial Night-Hawk*. 5

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5

¹⁶ Edgar I. Fuller. *The Visible of the Invisible Empire “The Maelstrom”*. Denver, Maelstrom Publishing Co. 1925. 27-28

ministers living in the North East. The Rev. E.E. Robbins of the First Congregationalist Church in Rochester Vermont said:

There is no more law-abiding organization in the country. No accusation made against them has been substantiated or proven to be true. The enemies of the Klan fill the air with all the dust and smoke they can, and then—when their efforts fail, and when they fail to convict, or prove their charges true, they suddenly drop the matter. They do not print the outcome of their charges, and the fact that the Klan is innocent is not published. Furthermore, the papers will not print the other side of the matter. Why? Those who understand the nature of the fight know why. The Klan stands for one hundred percent Americanism; it stands for the sacredness and the purity of the home; it stands for the maintenance of our public schools and the Bible in the same, it stands for the Protestant Church and the Protestant religion. Is there any organization that can stand for higher or better things? They often fill a church where before there was but handful in attendance.¹⁷

Rev. Robbins thus joins fellow Protestant clergymen in recognizing the willingness of the Klan to fight in order to maintain Protestant supremacy in America and identifies them as standing for the enforcement of law and order and morality.

In addition to Klan attempts to masculinize Protestantism, the Klan also promoted itself as a stout defender of tough Protestant morals and law and order as is apparent in the following Klan advertisement found in Indiana during the 1920s Klan era:

Every criminal, every gambler, every thug, every libertine, every girl ruiner, every home wrecker, every wife-beater, every dope peddler, every moonshiner, every crooked politician, every pagan Papist priest, every shyster lawyer, every K.of C. [Knights of Columbus], every white slaver, every brothel madam, every Rome-controlled newspaper, every black spider—is fighting the Klan. Think it over. Which side are you on?¹⁸

The Ku Klux Klan portrayed itself as fighting alongside the police in enforcing law and order. The groups that were opposed to the Klan were viewed as being anti-chivalric and anti-manly forces. The Klan claimed to be the defenders of good, honest, hard working

¹⁷ Imperial Night-Hawk. October 17, 1923. 1

¹⁸ Richard K, Tucker. *The Dragon and the Cross: The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan in Middle America*. Hamden, Archon Books. 1991. 56

white Protestant American men. Members of the California Klan describe their view of themselves in the following letter:

That the Ku Klux Klan stood for law and order and that good law-abiding people have nothing to fear and that the police were not in a position to cope with the crime situation. The Klan would deal with the whiskey runners, scalawags, and grafters.¹⁹

The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s found the state of Indiana to be very fertile ground in which they were able to plant their seeds of tough 100% Americanism. In his well documented book *Citizen Klansmen*, Leonard J. Moore discusses how the Ku Klux Klan was not just an organization of petty bigots, but also represented something larger and in the eyes of many a good fraternal organization. It was indeed an organization that many Protestants believed was fighting to bring about justice, order, and stability.

The 1920s was an era of increased immigration, rising crime, and many other social problems. The Klan was able to play on the fears and prejudices of white, native people in order to enforce the law vigilante style.²⁰ Another Klan historian, Shawn Lay, acknowledges that the Ku Klux Klan was popular both in rural and urban areas alike:

Like their equally unprivileged country cousins, these urban white Protestants craved a sense of moral superiority to make up for their low social status, and were drawn, therefore, to the Klan's bigotry and its vigilante campaigns against sexual sinners, bootleggers, and un-American ethnic and political groups.²¹

The Klan drew a great deal of support from ordinary Protestants and the Protestant clergy all across the country. There was one individual in particular who helped generate a great

¹⁹Shawn Lay. *The Invisible Empire in the West: Toward a New Historical Appraisal of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. Historical Interpretations of the 1920s Klan: The Traditional View and Recent Revisions.* Chicago, University of Illinois Press. 2004. 103

²⁰ Moore 22

²¹ Lay 28

deal of publicity and create a sense of legitimacy for the Klan and that man was Billy Sunday.

There are some people who speculate that Billy Sunday was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. However, after the death of both Billy and Helen Sunday, their belongings were sorted through and catalogued and no evidence was discovered that proved Sunday was a member of the Klan. However, as Sunday biographer, William G. McLoughlin says, “it seems undeniable that there was a high degree of correlation between Sunday’s supporters in the 1920s and the members of the Klan.”²² This should come as no surprise as there were many areas of agreement between Sunday and the Klan. They had so many things in common a close relationship would have developed over time. Billy Sunday openly accepted contributions from members of the Klan and even spoke in favor of the Klan on several occasions.

When the Klan attempted to recruit new members, they had to keep in mind that they were encroaching into places such as Indiana which Klan historian, David Chalmers cleverly called, “Billy Sunday country.”²³ If the Klan wanted to be successful in gaining more recruits, it was forced to be complementary rather than contradictory in its relationship with Sunday. On the other hand, all Billy Sunday had to do was preach sermons on Americanism or Prohibition and members of the Ku Klux Klan financially supported his ministry. The method that the Klan would use to give their offering to Billy Sunday or any other evangelist was usually identical, as Klan historian, Robert Ingalls, describes:

²² William G. McLoughlin. *Billy Sunday Was His Real Name*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. 1955. 275

²³ David M. Chalmers. *Hooded Americanism: The History of The Ku Klux Klan*. 3rd Edition. Durham, Duke University Press. 1987. 165

Typically, a small group of Klansmen would interrupt a Sunday service without any prior warning. Hidden by hoods and robes, the Knights dramatically marched down the aisle, handed the minister an offering of money, and then silently departed. On occasion, a Klansman or the minister himself would explain the purpose of the secret order and invite churchgoers to join.²⁴

Billy Sunday witnessed and welcomed the Klan arriving in this fashion on several occasions during the course of his ministry in Indiana, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Tennessee. For the Ku Klux Klan, its encounter with Billy Sunday helped increase its legitimacy and also provided its members with a cheap and efficient way to gain publicity, by demonstrating its charitable side of the organization.

On May 14, 1922 the first known encounter between Billy Sunday and the Klan took place at the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Richmond, Indiana, in front of a crowd of approximately 6,000 people. The following day, the *Indianapolis Star* reported about the happenings of Sunday's meeting:

Billy Sunday's evangelistic service was interrupted with the appearance of twelve members of the Ku Klux Klan, who filed into the tabernacle, marched down the center aisle to the pulpit and halted. Two of the Klansmen then deployed and walked to the platform, handed the evangelist a letter and another envelope which letter was found to contain \$50. Six thousand persons were in the building at the time. After the envelopes containing the money had been handed to the Rev. Mr. Billy Sunday, the two Klansmen returned to their companions and marched out of the tabernacle as silently as they had entered. They entered automobiles in which they had come and departed before the audience could recover from its fright. The men, twelve in number, were robed and masked. When Fred Rapp, business manager for Sunday, saw the men enter the structure, he immediately ordered ushers to form a line of defense. The Rev. Mr. Sunday was so excited himself that he could say nothing more than "I thank you" after the envelopes had been handed to him. One of the Klansmen appeared nervous. Several persons in the crowd, who were sitting near where the men were standing, said they could see him shaking. The evangelist attempted to read the letter after the robed men had departed, but was unable to finish it. He called upon

²⁴ Ingalls 39

Homer Rodeheaver, his music leader, to read the letter to the audience, which follows:
“Muncie, IN.
“Send reply to none.
“To Billy Sunday:
“We, the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, desire that you accept this little token of our appreciation of the wonderful work that you and your associates are doing in behalf of perpetuating the tenets of the Christian religion throughout the nation, and we wish to inform you that we stand solidly behind the teachings of the Christian religion, free speech, separation of church and state, liberty, white supremacy, just law, the pursuit of happiness and, most of all, the upbuilding of our institutions, of public schools and the teaching of the Holy Bible in the public schools and the upholding of law and order in every sense at all times, and we are desirous that the world at large should know our principles.
Very sincerely yours,
“Muncie Klan No. 4 and Richmond Provisional Klan, Realm of Indiana, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.”²⁵

This meeting between Sunday and the Muncie Klan was the first of several that took place throughout the duration of his ministry. This was the only meeting where Sunday appeared nervous or surprised, as all the other interactions he had with the Klan he was much more calm and collected.

In April of 1923, Billy Sunday was scheduled to visit Chattanooga, Tennessee. This would have been his second visit to the city as he had preached there four years earlier in November, 1919. The *Daily Times: Chattanooga*, the local paper, carried a story on Wednesday April 4, 1923 which announced that Billy Sunday would be visiting their community on Wednesday April 11, 1923.²⁶ On Friday evening April 6, 1923, approximately 2,500 men and 1,500 women gathered at the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to hear prominent citizens give speeches denouncing the Ku Klux Klan.

²⁵ *Indianapolis Star*. May 15, 1922. 1 & 15

²⁶ *Daily Times: Chattanooga*. *Billy Sunday to Speak Here Coming Next Week*. April 4, 1923.

The former Solicitor General of the United States, W.L. Frierson delivered a strong speech denouncing the Klan. The following day, the *Daily Times* wrote that General Frierson made it clear that, “he could and would not support any man he thought was guilty of indorsing or aiding in the distribution of Klan propoganda or who indorsed or believed in the principles under which the Klan is spreading bigotry and religious intolerance.”²⁷ Thus, in a strange twist of events, the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Chattanooga was used to voice opposition against the Klan while the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Richmond, Indiana, had been the location where Billy Sunday had publicly accepted a \$50 donation from the Ku Klux Klan the year before. In the end the speeches against the Klan was the primary voice of the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Chattanooga, as Sunday himself was unable to attend due to one of his grandsons being sick with pneumonia.

The following July, Sunday was in Beckley, West Virginia, when he received a visit from their local Ku Klux Klan at the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Beckley. The *Imperial Night-Hawk*, the official publication of the Ku Klux Klan at the time reported about the evening in a short article titled “Billy Sunday Strong For The Klan Creed”:

Billy Sunday, noted evangelist, is not a Klansmen but he tells the world in his unique and emphatic way that he endorses the Klan Creed and everything the order stands for. Billy is busy saving souls at Beckley, West Virginia, just now and a few nights ago a number of members of Beckley Klan Number 11 visited his meeting in full regalia bearing the American flag. They told the evangelist that they appreciated the work he was doing and slipped \$226.00 in the plate. The crowd which thronged the huge tabernacle rose and cheered the visitors.²⁸

According to the *Imperial Night-Hawk*, even though Sunday is not a Klansmen, he and the Klan are fighting together to defend Protestant manhood.

²⁷ *Daily Times: Chattanooga*. April 7, 1923.

²⁸ *Imperial Night-Hawk*. July 11, 1923. 5

On March 28, 1924, the local Shreveport Klan made a visit to the Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Shreveport, Louisiana. According to the *Shreveport Journal*, an estimated 8,000 men and women including approximately 5,000 Klansmen were in attendance. There were so many people in attendance that some people climbed up onto the roof of the tabernacle. Many others left after they discovered there was no room left for them to watch Sunday preach. Shreveport Judge, W.C. Barnette opened the meeting by telling the crowd:

The Klan stands for just what this meeting stands for fully and no further. There has been much said about the Klan he stated, by people who didn't know. The Klan stands for religion such as has been preached by Billy Sunday, and no such preaching has ever been heard in Louisiana. We have had the opportunity of hearing the greatest preacher on earth and greater good is going to result from this campaign than from anything Louisiana ever had come to it.²⁹

Once again Judge Barnette attempts to make the case that the Klan fully supported everything that Billy Sunday preached and nothing else. It was another attempt by supporters of the Klan to link their organization with the efforts of Sunday. The Shreveport Klan had a letter delivered to Billy Sunday which read:

The truths and principles he has been expounding are those for which the Ku Klux Klan stands. The living Christ is the Klansmen's criterion. The service Mr. Sunday has rendered cannot be measured in dollars and cents.³⁰

That evening Sunday also received a check from the women's Caddo Klan No. 1 in the amount of \$66, as a token of their appreciation for his good work. In addition to the Klan's contribution, the El Karubah Temple of Shriners gave Billy Sunday a check for \$250. Sunday was very grateful and recognized the generosity of the Klan and other

²⁹ *The Shreveport Journal*. March 29, 1924.

³⁰ Ibid

established male fraternal organizations for making the donations before he began his sermon.

Sunday mentioned that before his sermon he had been asked if he was going to preach a Klan sermon. Sunday's reply was emphatically yes because as he said, "For when an American sermon is preached the Klan endorses it."³¹ Sunday also praised the [Klan] members of the order for assisting officers of the law. He also mentioned that in the past he had noticed activities of the Klan in different communities and had observed that they assisted authorities in ridding the places of undesirable characters, their fighting efforts along this line being right and proper. When violations are learned of, the officers should be notified, he said, and cooperation rendered. Sunday admitted that there had been some people who had committed outrages while wearing robes, but he pointed out that there were members of the church and people working in the cabinet in Washington D.C. who had committed outrages also. He went on to say that he believed that the Klan would endorse the prosecution of any violators of the law.³² Sunday made it apparent in his speech in Shreveport, Louisiana that he believed the Klan was a beneficial, combative organization working to save society. Sunday's endorsement of these "Knights" tied into his own aggressive masculinity.

Over the next few months, there were other occurrences that linked Sunday with the Klan. Sunday was delivering a sermon in Memphis, Tennessee, on February 18, 1925, and there were many members of the Memphis Klan in the audience.³³ Billy Sunday owned a farm in Oregon's Hood River Valley and he was one of many evangelicals at the time who held revival meetings in that area. While Sunday and these

³¹ *The Shreveport Journal*

³² *Ibid*

³³ Jackson 58

other evangelists were delivering their sermons, the Klan saw their local memberships increase significantly. The revival meetings of the evangelists and the Klan's presence also coincided with an increase in escaped nuns and former priests who traveled around the country warning people about the wickedness of the Roman Catholic Church. There was little doubt that there was a link between Sunday and his fellow evangelists and the Klan.³⁴ In fact when he was in Salem, Oregon, Sunday received a great deal of criticism from local ministers for his support for the Klan.³⁵

In May of 1925, Billy Sunday went down to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where he received an open and public endorsement from the local Klan. Members of the local Klan paid for an advertisement that ran in the *Winston-Salem Journal* on May 17, 1925 during Sunday's time in their city. The ad contained a picture of Billy Sunday pointing at his congregation and in the background there were several masked Klansmen carrying crosses while they were riding horses. At the bottom of the ad it read: "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan: Klan No. 56, Realm of North Carolina."³⁶ In this large advertisement that the Klan made, they openly endorsed the work of Billy Sunday:

Not For Self—But For Others

Dear Mr. Sunday:

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, are every ready to oppose those who are against law, desires to thank you through the press for your work in showing the erring ones the right path. The police records show a big decrease in crime of every description since you started your meetings one month ago. Our belief is that your work here will leave an imprint upon the minds of ourselves and our fellow citizens that will never be erased. You have accomplished great good for our city and we believe that sin is fast disappearing due to your preaching. The organization heartily

³⁴ Lay 157

³⁵ Chalmers 91

³⁶ N. Bruce Howe. *The Revival of Billy Sunday in Winston-Salem, North Carolina April 21-May 31, 1925*. 204

endorses your splendid work. May God bless and keep you and yourselves is the earnest prayer of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan of Winston-Salem.³⁷

The advertisement also contained a second letter that was also addressed to Billy Sunday from members of the Klan:

A Message From 100% Americans

Rev. William A. Sunday:

More than one thousand per cent American citizens of Winston-Salem, members of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, after hearing you deliver your message of the teachings of Christ day after day and night after night, desire to take this method of sending to you a message of cheer and encouragement. You are spreading the gospel to mankind and it is only through the belief in the divine power that this great nation will be saved from sin. This organization joins you in your fight against sin of every kind. We, like you, are fighting to make our great country one that stands for Christianity. Christ is the Klansmen's Criterion of Character.³⁸

In this letter, the Klan acknowledges that Sunday serves a vital role as a scrappy, bellicose fighter against the forces of evil. The Winston-Salem Klan argued that Sunday and the Klan had common, expansive agendas and that they were both fighting heroically on the side of good against evil.

Billy Sunday was one of many Protestant evangelists who received money from the Klan in the 1920s. Evangelist Jerry Jester also received money from the Klan during services that he preached in Stockton, California. Rev. Jerry Jester was holding his services in 1923 when eight masked Klansmen carrying a fiery cross and the American flag entered his revival meeting. As soon as Rev. Jester saw the Klansmen approaching, he said to his congregation, "Here comes some real men. They are always welcome

³⁷ Howe 204

³⁸ Ibid., 204

wherever I am and I see they are carrying the American flag so I suggest we all stand.”³⁹

The emphasis on “real men” once again distinguishes the Klansmen from other men who are not willing to stand up for what is noble and virtuous. The Klansmen handed Jester an envelope with a donation in it and then they left. His entire congregation rose to their feet began applauding and kept applauding even after the Klansmen had departed their service.⁴⁰ Rev. Jester, like Sunday, also believed in the hyper-masculinity of the Klansmen who demonstrated their potency by carrying the American flag and giving him a personal contribution.

In early August of 1923, a large group of Klansmen from the Wilmington Klan in Delaware attended Sunday Services at the Chichester Memorial Presbyterian Church where the Rev. Walter Bruggeman was preaching. The combination of his congregation and the Klansmen was so large that Rev. Bruggeman held the service outdoors. Rev. Bruggeman said, “These red blooded Americans are oath bound to uphold the laws of their land against the forces of evil which seek to undermine the constitution.”⁴¹ For Rev. Bruggeman the fight against the forces of evil was very real and the Klan is seen once again as standing up resolutely for the good guys.

The Ku Klux Klan also supported Bob Jones, a fellow fundamentalist and the second most popular evangelist of the day next to Billy Sunday. The Klan supported most of the conservative Protestant ministers during their prominence on the national stage. On November 10, 1922, the Greenville Klan no. 29 gave Bob Jones a gift of

³⁹ *Imperial Night-Hawk*. June 20, 1923. 8

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ *Imperial Night-Hawk*. August 29, 1923. 3

\$1,568.⁴² Evangelist Bob Jones describes an event when he was speaking in El Paso, Texas and the Ku Klux Klan attended his service:

One night after I had concluded a service in El Paso, Texas, I was invited to address a gathering of men. I did not know what the meeting was but nevertheless, I felt urged to go. There were 500 men packed into a room that was supposed to hold 200. I found out that they were members of the Ku Klux Klan, and among them I found ministers and many of the outstanding consecrated Christian laymen of the city. The lodge was not in session. They had adjourned and were waiting for me to talk to them. They told me that the minutes of their order would show that the entire organization had gone on record against anybody taking the law into their own hands, that they worked through constituted authority and worked in no other way. I talked to those men in that lodge room about Jesus Christ and urged them to be true to Him in everything. I pleaded with those men that night to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. My plea there met with as much approval as it had in the tabernacle in any of my services.⁴³

It is evident from the testimony of Bob Jones that the Klan was emphatic about their desire to work alongside law enforcement and not to be vigilantes who exclusively act as judge, jury, and executioner. Again portraying itself as a supporter of law and order, but not as a vigilante organization helped the Klan establish credibility for those who had undecided feelings towards the Invisible Empire.

The links between Billy Sunday and the Klan are not too surprising after one examines their common agenda and goals. On the issue of alcohol, Billy Sunday worked hard to bring about the Eighteenth Amendment and once it had become national law, the Klan then enforced it. As Leroy Curry, a Klan supporter, writes about the Klan's position on liquor and Prohibition, it is evident that the Klan's brand of Americanism is completely dry just as Sunday's was:

I am going to mention the liquor question in order to prove that Americanism stands for a complete abolition of the liquor interests and a

⁴² Turner 12, 329

⁴³ R.K. Johnson. *Builder of Bridges: The Biography of Dr. Bob Jones, SR.* Murfreesboro, Sword of the Lord. 1969. 138

strict enforcement of the Prohibition amendment, and to prove with equal force that despotism stands for a violation of our constitutional laws and a modification of the Volstead Act.⁴⁴

Curry went on to add: “Our Great American Organization fosters and defends the very principles of Prohibition and a strict enforcement of the Prohibition law.”⁴⁵ Curry, like many Protestant ministers, praises the Klan for enforcing the Eighteenth Amendment and being the defenders of law and order. The fact that Sunday and the Klan shared a common enemy in alcohol gave them a strong bond. In fact, members of the Klan joined Sunday during the funeral celebration in Atlanta to mark the death of John Barleycorn on January 16, 1920.⁴⁶ Since Sunday and the Klan both felt passionately about making America dry, this one issue alone would be enough for them to work together closely, but there was a lot more that they agreed on.

World War I provided Billy Sunday and the Klan another opportunity to work together in close concert. The war was a golden opportunity for the Klan as it allowed its members to demonstrate their brand of patriotism for America. The Klan marched in many pro-American parades and also hunted down unmanly draft dodgers.⁴⁷ During the war, Sunday and the Klan constantly promoted the idea of Americanism and both found a receptive audience across the country among millions of WASPS. Their mutually beneficial relationship ensured that, as long as the Klan was popular, Sunday would continue to vocalize support for the organization and also accept its contributions as well. Alongside other fraternal organizations, the Klan and Billy Sunday helped masculinize Protestant Christianity in the 1920s.

⁴⁴ LeRoy Amos Curry. *The Ku Klux Klan Under the Searchlight*. Kansas City, Western Baptist Publishing Company. 1924. 107-108

⁴⁵ Curry 107-108

⁴⁶ Jones 93

⁴⁷ Ingalls 23

The war years also saw Billy Sunday focusing on linking Christianity to being a real American. And so it was that just as Sunday believed Christianity and patriotism to be synonymous, members of the Klan felt that being a Christian was not enough and that one must be a militant Protestant man in order to be a real American. In order to be a good American one had to be more specifically an actively, combatively Protestant Christian. Evans also writes about how the Klan equated Protestantism and Americanism which essentially meant that any non-Protestant was not a true American. According to the Klan:

The Klan is Protestantism personified. In it are drawn together Protestants of all creeds—united in one body, for the defense and spread of those great principles which underlie the religious freedom guaranteed by the American Constitution. Protestantism is bigger than any creed. This unity between Protestantism and Americanism is no accident. The two spring from the same racial qualities, and each is a part of our group mind. Together they worked to build America, and together they will work to preserve it. Americanism provides politically the freedom and independence Protestantism requires in the religious field.⁴⁸

The Americanization message that the Klan preached also focused on the Knights of Columbus, an enemy, Catholic Fraternal Order. Leonard Moore shows how the Klan convinced people that the Knights of Columbus were planning to arm the Catholics. In fact one Klansmen bluntly stated their feelings towards Rome, “Rome has no right to try to force upon Christian America her pagan ideals and propositions.”⁴⁹ Imperial Wizard, Hiram Evans asserted, “our government is on the banks of the Potomac and not on the Tiber in Rome.”⁵⁰ The Klan often showed their disdain for Catholics with claims such

⁴⁸ Evans 13

⁴⁹ Moore 19

⁵⁰ Ibid., 20

as, “Catholics, you are not Americans.”⁵¹ The Klan’s focus on Catholics, Jews, and immigrants also distinguishes it from its predecessor the anti-Reconstruction Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan also supported Americanism but their brand was specifically named “100% Americanism.” Hiram W. Evans, the second Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan was quite descriptive in defining what his belief in 100% Americanism entailed:

It was the English who stood firmly for individual liberty and who crippled the power of their king, destroyed the doctrine of ‘divine right’ and laid the foundation of free civilization. During the Middle Ages when the Roman Church sought political control of the world, it was the English who stood heroically against it. A few centuries later when Protestants rebelled against the Roman Church, it was the English who took the lead. Protestantism was born in Germany, but never became wholly free there. It remained a creature of the State. It was in the British Isles that Protestantism found flower. In France, in Spain, in Southern Germany, the Roman Church crushed Protestantism. Except for a comparatively few millions in Northern Europe, Protestantism is today synonymous with Anglo-Saxonism. All Protestants are our blood cousins. The spirit of Americanism and the spirit of Protestantism are one and the same. However, England was not free enough for the Protestantism that built America. The spirit of Puritans—their faith in their religion and race—drove them to make sacrifices. They went to Holland that they might worship God as they chose. They left Holland because they could not maintain there those racial qualities which were dearer than life. They came to America to face starvation, cold and constant warfare that they might preserve their religious faith and racial integrity.⁵²

Here, Evans refers to the struggle and militant sacrifice that many Protestants embraced in order to maintain their religion. The message of struggle and sacrifice are similar to the message of manly strength and perseverance found in many of Sunday’s sermons.

The idea that Protestant manhood was being threatened by external forces was what the

⁵¹ Jackson 219

⁵² Hiram Wesley Evans. *The Klan of Tomorrow and the Klan Spiritual Addresses By H.W. Evans, Imperial Wizard Delivered at the Second Imperial Klonvokation Held in Kansas City, Missouri September 23,24, 25, and 26 1924.* Kansas City: Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Incorporated. 1924. 5-6

Klan used to rally its forces to defense, as the following song titled *The Immigrant* which was sung to the tune of *Red Rose Rag* demonstrates:

Here to America, the foreigners come,
If they are on the bum,
Tired of other lands, here they come in bands,
Then they start to make the booze and rum,
Old Uncle Sam has always welcomed them in,
Now its time to begin,
To stop this immigration to our glorious Nation,
And the Ku Klux Klan are the Men,
To keep these gates shut tight, both day and night,
It's only right, for it we'll fight.
Lock up that open gate, make all those hunkies wait,
Till we have cleaned up our land.⁵³

Both Sunday and the Klan were set on cleaning up America from what they both believed to be sinister, degrading forces. While the Klan focused predominately on Jews, Catholics, immigrants, and blacks. Sunday focused more of his attention on the drunkards, saloons, and criminals of his day.

The Klan shared Sunday's belief that real men were Christians, but they also had to be Klansmen. Imperial Klazik, Brown Harwood paints the picture of the Ku Klux Klan as an organization that was "Deep in spirituality, powerful in Protestant patriotism, it has made an irresistible appeal to men everywhere."⁵⁴ The Klan also shared Billy Sunday's concern with American and Christian manhood. It was William Simmons, the original founder of the Second Era Ku Klux Klan, who rhetorically asked, "Will not America's real manhood arise today from its lethargy, and create and apply the panacea with all the conscientious courage of the true crusader?"⁵⁵ In fact during the feud

⁵³ Danny O. Crew. *Ku Klux Klan Sheet Music: An Illustrated Catalogue of Published Music, 1867-2002*. Jefferson, McFarland & Company Inc. 2003. 147

⁵⁴ Gerald N. Grob. *Papers Read at the Meeting of Grand Dragons Knights of the Ku Klux Klan: Together With Other Articles of Interest to Klansmen*. New York, Arno Press. 1977. 3

⁵⁵ Simmons 49

between William Simmons and Hiram Evans, Simmons attacked Evans and his supporters as being less than true American men:

The Imperial Klondike, all of whom were Evans' henchmen, actually or indirectly on his pay-roll, refused, at his diabolical demand, to take any action on the book. They fawned and fell to his despotism as slaves to a merciless master. They readily violated their individual conscience to please his nefarious notion and perfidious plan. Such supine vassalage! Heretofore such fawning was unknown in this country—a mercenary mutilation of America's reputed matchless manhood.⁵⁶

The question of Protestant manhood is an important one to Simmons and Sunday. Both men rejected the idea that one is able to be a non-Christian and a real man. They also maintained that true men would fight to defend what was rightfully theirs.

It was the Klan's intention to project itself as a masculine, militant, Protestant organization that was protecting the rights of native-born white American Protestants:

The Klan movement is needed as a militant Protestant organization. The Klan is not engaged in warfare upon any religious sect, unless that sect is disposed to interpret the Klan's positive Protestant program as a declaration of war. Even then, the Klan will continue persistently to maintain without fear and without cessation the principles of genuine Protestantism. Theologians may continue to split tenuous hairs; pulpit denunciations of the Klan; mongrelizing minions may mouth their vapid vaporings about the bigotry of men who dare stand for principles in which they believe; shrinking, timorous, paling souls may deprecate the temerity of men who are bold to proclaim their Protestant Knighthood; BUT—the Klansmen of the nation, unafraid and undeterred, strong in their faith in God, cherishing an open Bible, loyal to the Klansman's Christ, firmly believing in the principles taught by Him, rejecting all traditions and opinions of men contrary to His teachings, will continue to contend to establish these principles in Protestant America. In the midst of so much uncertainty, the Klan is needed to sound continuously its certain Protestant note in this Protestant country. And no ecclesiastic can silence us. Selah!⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Simmons 156

⁵⁷ Grob 133

The masculine rhetoric and militaristic language mirrors Sunday's call for men to prepare to battle the devil. Another example of the Klan's desire for strong, Protestant men to join their organization is found in the following poem called *God Give us Men!*:

God Give us men! The Invisible Empire demands strong
Minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands,
Men whom lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous
flattering without winking!
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and private thinking;
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, Lo, freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps,
God give us men!
Men who serve not for selfish booty,
But real men, courageous, who flinch not at a duty;
Men of dependable character; men of sterling worth;
Then wrongs will be redressed, and right will rule the earth
God give us men!⁵⁸

Sunday would agree entirely for the need for strong Christian men to join the ranks of those fighting against the liquor traffic and against the sinful enterprises such as prostitution and other vices. As the Grand Dragon of Oregon eloquently portrayed the Klan as the organization that young American boys will aspire to join once they become 100% American men, "The Klan idea will appeal with resistless force to the imagination and the heart of the average Protestant boy, to whom the Klansman, let us hope, is a true hero—the incarnation of all manly virtues, a knight without fear and without reproach."⁵⁹ It is clear that the Klan was preparing its followers for the possibility of an earthly battle. The Klan used tactics such as intimidation and even tarred and feathered opponents who

⁵⁸ Grob 134

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 85

were drinkers, wife-beaters, or had committed some other crime or vice. Sunday focused more on the spiritual battle between good and evil and was more willing to allow the authorities to enforce his conservative moral ideas rather than doing it himself.

Billy Sunday was able to use the changes taking place in America during the World War era to gain popularity and influence throughout the country. In 1915, Democratic President Woodrow Wilson invited Billy Sunday to come to the White House for a visit. Billy Sunday delivered a sermon to the United States Congress and also had lunch with Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. Two years later, Billy Sunday wanted to go to France to preach to the American troops but President Wilson requested that he remain in America because he had the “ear of the people.”⁶⁰ Since Sunday had been across the entire nation and was in the prime of his career, it is clear that President Wilson believed Sunday could do the most good by rallying the people behind the war while remaining in the country. Instead of preaching in Europe, Sunday remained in America throughout 1917 and he began preaching his brand of ultra-patriotism on a regular basis.

After World War I ended in 1918, Sunday preached fewer patriotic and America First type sermons. Now most Americans were simply not as interested in the patriotic rhetoric since the war was over. Instead, Americans became more focused on “escapist entertainment” rather than “saving the world.” Thus, Sunday and his message declined in appeal and popularity.⁶¹ It was clear that with the war finished it was harder to find a receptive audience for his often militaristic messages. He continued to preach the

⁶⁰ Evans 84

⁶¹ Putney 201

importance of Christians demonstrating their manhood as he argued that Christ desires a masculine church:

Jesus Christ intended his church to be militant as well as persuasive. It must fight as well as pray... Strong men resist, weaklings compromise... Lord save us from off-handed, flabby-cheeked, brittle-boned, weak-kneed, thin-skinned, pliable, plastic, spineless, effeminate, sissified, three-care Christianity.⁶²

It was clear that the World War I was over, but for Sunday, his personal battles against sin and evil continued on undeterred. However, both Sunday and the Klan found themselves up against new opponents in their fight to masculinize Protestant Christianity.

It should be stated that although the Klan was quite popular among many American Protestants, the organization, like Billy Sunday, also had its critics. One of the most outspoken critics of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s was Edgar Allen Booth. Booth angrily charged that the Klan took advantage of well meaning Protestants and that the long term impact that the Klan would have on the Protestant Churches in America would be negative:

And Protestantism is being done more harm than good... It would take a volume to in itself to explain the conditions of disrupted Protestant churches; Protestant ministers without positions; distrust created by the crooked Kleagles, and other things too numerous for an attempt to enumerate here.⁶³

For Booth, the hyper-masculinizing Protestant approaches of Sunday and the Klan was more harmful than helpful as he believed that organizations such as the Klan were exploiting the rank and file Protestants. Booth offers his firsthand account of why he believed that the Klan ultimately failed:

⁶² Betty A. DeBerg. *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press. 1990. 89

⁶³ Edgar Allen Booth. *The Mad Mullah of America*. Columbus, Boyd Ellison Publisher. 1927. 259

The Ku Klux Klan, founded upon the highest ideals, has been garroted and butchered, and its political bones left to decay and rot as the stench of political corruption arises toward Heaven; and sincere and Christian Klansmen and Klanswomen have been betrayed and lied to by unscrupulous men who have placed money and political ambition above the principles of an organization which has accepted as its criterion, Christ Jesus our Savior. The perfidy, the prostitution of Protestantism, the betrayal of loyal men and women, and the use of these men and women to build and keep intact a damnable political machine which is a menace to America, is almost beyond the comprehension of mere man.⁶⁴

The political corruption that Booth accuses the Klan of might also have blemished the record of Sunday as politics makes strange bedfellows and Sunday and the Klan both worked together supporting Calvin Coolidge in 1924 and Herbert Hoover in 1928 and 1932.

A Baptist minister took issue with the fact that the Klan would burn the Christian Cross and bravely spoke out against them, “The Cross is to be borne, not burned.” A group of Methodist ministers from Atlanta described the Klan as “a cowardly anti-Christian mob.”⁶⁵ Another Protestant critic of the Klan was Bishop Ainsworth, a Methodist Minister from Dallas made some profound criticism of the Klan when said:

Many principles of the Ku Klux Klan may be patriotic, but there can be no doubt of the fact that it assumes to be a sort of masked monitor of society, and, as such, it has threatened, pursued, castigated and run men out of communities where they lived, without reference to their rights, in law, the established procedure of civilization. Any masked, sheeted and secret court is a travesty upon justice, and has no place in a civilized land. It is particularly a serious thing for any minister of Jesus Christ to lend his influence and prostitute his pulpit to the promotion of such dangerous propaganda. If this is permitted to go unchecked, and preachers, churches and charities continue to receive the Klan’s anonymous aid, it will not be long before masked men will assume to dictate to the pulpit what it shall preach, and threaten to run men from their pulpit who refuse to do their way.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Booth 328-329

⁶⁵ Ingalls 82

⁶⁶ Fuller 48

Bishop Ainsworth was not only criticizing the ministers that joined the Ku Klux Klan, but ministers like Billy Sunday and many others who accepted support and contributions from the Klan as well. Kansas Governor Allen astutely pointed out how the Ku Klux Klan was able to influence the sermons and messages of Protestant ministers by making contributions. Governor Allen said, “Whenever a K.K.K. atrocity was committed, Klan leaders would flatly deny any involvement and then give \$50 to a loose-mouthed preacher who would thank God for the Klan.”⁶⁷ Allen directed his criticism at evangelists such as Billy Sunday. Sunday did receive contributions from the Klan on numerous occasions and he did provide the Klan an opportunity to be viewed as legitimate during his nationwide revivals. As long as the Klan made financial contributions to his ministry, Sunday was more than willing to speak positively about the organization.

Although Sunday and the Klan had a lot of common goals and interests there existed between them major differences of opinion. One of the most noticeable differences was their feelings and attitudes towards Roman Catholics. The Klan was very vocal about its opposition to a perceived Roman Catholic threat. When it came to Catholicism in general, Klansmen also were very outspoken in expressing their feelings. In fact, the second Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, Hiram W. Evans, said, “The real objection to Romanism in America is not that it is a religion, which is no objection at all, but that it is a church in politics; an organized, disciplined, powerful rival to every political government.”⁶⁸ Jackson also observes that many American Protestants were suspicious of Roman Catholics during the 1920s and they believed that the Catholics

⁶⁷ Gillette 45-46

⁶⁸ Jackson 20-21

were unable to be both a good Catholic and a good citizen of the United States of America. This was because the, “Roman Church, fundamentally and irredeemably, in its leadership, in politics, in thought, and largely in membership, [is] actually and actively alien, un-American, and usually anti-American.”⁶⁹ Leroy Curry explains the Klan’s hostility towards the Roman Catholic Church:

Our antagonism to the Roman Catholic activities in this country has possibly grown out of the false philosophy that the hand of Rome is stronger than the spirit of Christ. But feel assured that the American sentiment is not antagonistic to the Roman Church as regards their liberties to worship God in any way their conscience might dictate; though remember that the members of this great American Organization is protesting against the activities of those who, posing as real Americans, are attempting to carry the flag of Rome to be transplanted upon American shores and substitute that black flag for the glorious Stars and Stripes—the purest and the most beloved flag that ever floated beneath the canopy of heaven.⁷⁰

One of the reasons that the Klan and millions of other Americans held such vehemently anti-Catholic feelings was there were still stories passed from generation to generation about the persecution early Protestants had suffered at the hands of the Catholic Church in Europe. There were also various Protestant preachers who constantly preached about the Roman Catholic threat. It was not long before many Protestants accepted the potential threat that the Roman Catholic Church allegedly posed to their families and America. The Klan reserved the bulk of its animosity towards the Jesuits. The Jesuits were a small sect of Catholic priests who played a significant role in the Counter-Reformation and so, for many Protestants, these Jesuits still posed a major threat to their brand of American Protestantism. One example of the animosity that the Klan had towards the Jesuits was found in the *Kourier*, a Klan newsletter, it described the

⁶⁹ Jackson 21

⁷⁰ Curry 146-147

Jesuits as, “the deepest, darkest, and most damnable association of political and religious pirates which the world has ever seen.”⁷¹ The Klan also was very suspicious of the Catholic fraternal order known as the Knights of Columbus.

The 1928 Presidential Election was the nightmare scenario for the Ku Klux Klan. The Democrats successfully nominated Catholic New York Governor Alfred Smith as their Presidential candidate. It now appeared that all the years of prophetic warning that one day America would elect a Catholic President and he in turn would hand the country over to the Pope of Rome was unfolding before their very eyes. As one Klan member described the threat that American Protestants were allegedly facing in the candidacy of Al Smith:

With Catholic votes he [The Pope] would elect men to do his bidding. Catholics in control of government would destroy the separation of church and state, ban the Bible, and end the freedoms of press, speech and religion.⁷²

The Klan was not alone in its suspicion of Roman Catholics, as many Christian Fundamentalists who were not Klan members also believed that the Pope was plotting to take over the United States. Together, many Fundamentalist Christians and Klansmen worked together to ensure that Al Smith would be defeated in the 1928 Presidential Election. As one Klansmen clearly argued, that Protestant America would never relinquish the White House. He vowed:

Will Al Smith be elected to the presidency? As one American I stand before you to contend that we have enough real red-blooded Protestant American citizens to swear with our hand raised to heaven that we will float our horses in blood to their bridles before we will see a Roman Catholic sitting in our presidential chair.⁷³

⁷¹ Jackson 21

⁷² Moore 44

⁷³ Jackson 201

The Klan was willing to use threats in order to keep Al Smith out of the White House. In Georgia, an anonymous Klansman warned delegates that if they voted for Al Smith that their homes and families would be targeted by the Ku Klux Klan in revenge.⁷⁴ It was clear that masculine Protestants would vote for Herbert Hoover, who was a dry Protestant and the first Quaker elected to the White House. The necessity to prevent a Catholic from becoming President of the United States became such an emotional issue that Klan members continued to make threats. The Exalted Cyclops of Portland is a perfect example when he said, “The only way to cure a Catholic is to kill him.”⁷⁵ For the Klan there was no middle ground on the Roman Catholic question.

The Hoosier heartland which Chalmers referred to as “Billy Sunday country” was not without its strong anti-Catholic prejudices. In North Manchester, Indiana, an event took place where a man was giving an anti-Catholic speech warning that the Pope was on his way to invade America through the railways of Indiana:

He [The Pope] may even be on the northbound train tomorrow! He may!
He may! Be warned! Prepare! America is for Americans! Search
everywhere for hidden enemies, vipers at the heart’s blood of our sacred
Republic! Watch the trains!⁷⁶

The following day the more than a thousand citizens of North Manchester went to the train station prepared to defend America from a Papal invasion. When they got to the train passing their station, there was only one passenger on the train and he was a ladies’ corset salesman. The residents of North Manchester Indiana questioned him for approximately an hour and a half and then concluded that he was not the Pope in disguise

⁷⁴ Gillette 51

⁷⁵ Ingalls 39

⁷⁶ Chalmers 162

and so they allowed him leave on the next train out of town.⁷⁷ There was a real fear in America about a potential Papal invasion of their Protestant country, which was in deep need of manly, chivalrous defenders.

Billy Sunday himself was much more lenient in his attitudes towards Roman Catholics. If he shared the Klan's anti-Catholic feelings, he never expressed them publicly. Sunday once explained how it was that he had become a Presbyterian:

I went over to the west side of Chicago where I was keeping company with a girl now my wife, Nell. She was a Presbyterian, so I am a Presbyterian. Had she been a Catholic I would have been a Catholic—because I was hot on the trail of Nell.⁷⁸

Judging from his remarks, the issue of sectarianism was less important to Sunday than it was for the Klan. However, Sunday's lack of willingness to condemn the Roman Catholic Church created many opponents for him amongst his fellow Fundamentalist Christian ranks. They saw him as an opportunist who was essentially defending the Catholic Church by not openly speaking out against it. Sunday continued to argue that although Catholics were not Protestants, they were Christians just the same. The more conservative Christian Fundamentalists and members of the Invisible Empire could not disagree more with Sunday's opinion. Sunday was a strong supporter of Herbert Hoover, and he was confident that Al Smith did not have a chance to be elected president, "Al Smith has no more chance of being elected President than the Pope of being made Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan."⁷⁹ It was clear in the case of Sunday, that it was Al Smith's support for repealing the Eighteenth Amendment rather than the fact that he was a Catholic that led Sunday to campaign for Hoover.

⁷⁷ Chalmers 162

⁷⁸ Knickerbocker 80

⁷⁹ Lee 213

When it came to the issues of the treatment of blacks there were differences as well. The Klan had become infamous for lynching during the anti-Reconstruction Klan Era during the 1860s. The 1920s Klan was not a whole lot friendlier towards blacks. Many Klan members argued that blacks were a burden to white society and that they were often being manipulated by the Jews and Catholics to destroy White Protestant America. Ultimately, the Klan maintained that there must always be white Protestant supremacy in America.

Sunday once again was a little more ambiguous in his attitudes towards blacks. While he had been exposed to the notorious racism of Cap Anson and many of his fellow white ballplayers during his baseball days, he was also willing to hold revival meetings for black only audiences. It seems clear that while he may not have been as racist as his teammate Cap Anson, Sunday also clearly believed in white Protestant supremacy. Baseball historians McMahon and Tiemann reveal that this conviction was very prominent in the Midwest towards the end of the nineteenth century:

in the value system of his time [Anson] was regarded as a man of integrity... [He] epitomized the WASP values of the late nineteenth century, which unfortunately, included a belief in white supremacy... In his autobiography Anson repeatedly refers to the team mascot as a "little coon," treating him as sub-human. [Anson was] strict to the point of rigidity... derided his players' drinking and smoking [and was] a sanctimonious prig.⁸⁰

Sunday was unique in that he was willing to speak to black audiences. On Sunday March 25, 1923 he spoke to approximately 10,000 in Columbia, South Carolina. Sunday told his black audience that the Negro had the right to be proud of the progress that he had made since slavery. He also added that there were good people and bad people who are black and white. He emphasized the need for cooperation and later encouraged them to

⁸⁰ Macdonald 39

dedicate their lives to Christ if they hadn't already.⁸¹ Since the color of money was the same whether given by white men wearing robes or black men, Sunday was willing to speak to anyone as long as he received a financial contribution for his efforts.

Billy Sunday and the Klan both used the events taking place during and after World War I to gain popularity. Sunday and the Klan constantly promoted the idea of a combative Americanism and found a receptive audience across the country among millions of WASPS. Their mutually beneficial relationship ensured that as long as the Klan was popular, Sunday would continue to vocalize support for the organization and also accept contributions from its members. Alongside other fraternal organizations, the Klan and Billy Sunday helped masculinize Protestant Christianity in the 1920s. Although the message was always important, it was the way that Sunday delivered his sermons that made him unique during his era. While the Klan was popular, Sunday was more than willing to work together with the organization if it was financially or socially beneficial to him. However, as the Klan lost popularity, Sunday distanced himself from the organization as many did who were once supporters of the Klan. The Klan and Sunday both sought to rid America of the perceived evils of alcohol and they also shared a vision to masculinize the Protestant Churches across America. Their militaristic rhetoric was often very similar and hyper-masculine and ultra-patriotic propaganda both used during the World War I Era will forever link Billy Sunday to the Klan.

⁸¹ James Lutzweiler. *The Roots of Billy Graham: Billy Sunday in Columbia, South Carolina 1923. Volume 1 of 2 A Collage from the Adam L. Lutzweiler Collection of Newspaper Clippings.* Jamestown, Schnappsburg University Press. 2003. 284

Conclusion

The last years of Billy Sunday's life were marked by unraveling of his macho image. Two years before his death in 1933, his oldest son George committed suicide and his only daughter Helen also died that same year.¹ Sunday died on November 6, 1935, and shortly after his death, *Christian Century* magazine described the death of Sunday as a reflection of, "the desperate and hopeless condition of the evangelical type of piety."² Sociologist James Mathisen asserted that to the modernist Christian community, fundamentalism was dead—figuratively and literally. With the burials of Sunday and of fundamentalism, the vestiges of nineteenth-century muscular Christianity were also put to rest.³ While there were those who speculated that fundamentalism and muscular Christianity also died alongside of Sunday they were certainly mistaken. Sunday's funeral was held at Moody Memorial Church in Chicago and members of the Chicago Cubs even sent a large wreath for the onetime Chicago ballplayer.⁴ This gesture by his former team symbolized the link that would always exist between the Chicago franchise and their former player Billy Sunday. Sunday was remembered as the athletic, aggressive, bold ballplayer he once was and not the elderly, antiquated and out of touch preacher that he had become.

Billy Sunday made a lasting impact on the way that American Protestant Christianity was masculinized in the early part of the twentieth century. Today male Protestant Christian groups such as Promise Keepers, founded by Bill McCartney in

¹ Evans 84

² Ladd 102

³ Ibid., 102

⁴ Basil Miller. *Ten Famous Evangelists*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House. 1949. 81

1990, trace their heritage back to the groups for men that Billy Sunday inspired.⁵ Sunday also helped spread his masculine version of Fundamentalist Christianity across the nation. The Southern Baptists' emphasis on militant servant leadership for men and the importance of male exclusivity in preaching also clearly derive from Sunday. Tony Dungy, currently the coach for the Indianapolis Colts football team, also follows in Sunday's footsteps by emphasizing the importance of Christian manhood.

As a preacher during the early years of the twentieth-century, Sunday encouraged people to put their trust in God and he would provide for them financially, "It pays to serve God. I never saw a Christian hitting the ties and panhandling; I never saw a Christian that was a hobo.... They that trust in the Lord do not want for anything."⁶ Sunday was emphatic in his belief that if people would trust in Jesus Christ that the Lord would provide for them in abundance and that they would be able to be strong, self-sufficient, and macho Christian men. Many of the trends that are found in the megachurches of televangelists today stem directly from Sunday's rhetoric. Another directly related connection between Sunday's ministry and modern evangelists is the concept of Christian triumphalism whereby each preacher attempts to speak to as large of an audience as possible in order to maximize the potential converts. Interestingly enough, this method of counting the number of converts is similar to the tracking of baseball statistics. Compiling statistics on converts thus encourages a competitive nature amongst evangelists to see who can raise the most money and save the most souls.

The link between Billy Sunday and many of the more modern evangelists is revealed by the fact that the day Sunday died on November 6, 1935, "the boy who would

⁵ <http://www.promisekeepers.org/about/pkhistory>

⁶ Higgs 171

become the most famous preacher of all time had just given his life to Jesus Christ. The man was Billy Graham.”⁷ Graham soon emerged as a fundamentalist Christian who, like Sunday, also emphasized the importance of being strong Christian men and avoiding sin and temptation.

Sunday preached for nearly forty years and his wife Ma Sunday claimed that during his nearly forty years of ministry that Billy Sunday spoke to approximately 100 million people. Billy Sunday certainly did a lot of preaching during his lifetime as he preached approximately twenty thousand times, averaging seventy-five sermons per month and sometimes upwards of five sermons a day.⁸ All of this preaching for Sunday paid off as millions loved, cherished, and were inspired by the ministry of the baseball evangelist who taught American men that it was manly to be Christian.

At Sunday’s funeral, Dr. Stone, the President of the Presbyterian Seminary and Pastor Emeritus of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, gave the following eulogy about Billy Sunday:

Loyal, devoted, eager, intense, fervent, positive, impulsive, dynamic, sympathetic, human, humorous, guileless, plain, pointed, forceful, direct, colorful, conscientious, strong and sweet, he, with unique individuality, unremittingly denounced sin, and pleaded with the sinner to yield to the Only Saviour from sin...

He hated cant and insincerity. He never attempted to be another, but was just himself in all his rugged reality and unfeigned frankness. Sin he called sin, and graphically pictured it in all its frenzied and unexpurgated awfulness. But the hand that clenched against evil was bared to lift men, to clasp the scarred hand of his crucified Lord.⁹

Dr. Stone recognized Sunday’s unique style that differentiated him from many of the more orthodox and intellectual preachers of his day. It was Sunday’s willingness to stand

⁷ Higgs 288

⁸ Miller 79-80

⁹ Loizeaux Brothers. *Billy Sunday Funeral*. New York, Loizeaux Brothers Publishers. 1939. 17-18

up boldly for his muscular Christian beliefs and his colloquial speech that endeared him to millions of Americans who were often turned off by the effeminate and intellectual nature of many of Sunday's contemporaries. Sunday was different, as one of his biographers, William McLoughlin asserts:

Billy Sunday was a symbol of the American Dream, a living embodiment of the mythical farm boy who went to the city and made good... whose name became a byword throughout the land, and who lived on familiar terms with leading figures of his day.¹⁰

Throughout his ministry, Sunday fully utilized his fame that he had achieved from playing professional baseball and he was never afraid to remind people of his life as a young farm boy. The national influence that Sunday had during his lifetime can be seen by his success in helping to pass the Eighteenth Amendment, successfully campaigning for Herbert Hoover in 1928, and bringing about long lasting changes in many of the church communities that he visited across the country. One of the most famous sermons that Sunday used in order to convince his audience that alcohol was evil was the *Booze Sermon*.¹¹ Today, the *Booze Sermon* that Sunday repeatedly gave across the country is still given by Gene Amondson, the 2008 Presidential Candidate for the Prohibition Party.¹² Amondson has a great deal of respect and admiration for Sunday due to his role in helping to establish national Prohibition. His modern reenactment of Sunday's sermon demonstrates the lasting legacy of Billy Sunday. Many of Sunday's quotes denouncing alcohol are still used today by those who oppose its consumption as a threat to the masculinity of the drinker in much the same way that Sunday had once claimed drinking alcohol weakened the masculinity of drinkers.

¹⁰ McLoughlin 297

¹¹ http://www.biblebelievers.com/billy_sunday_booze.html

¹² <http://www.geneamondson.com/mission/islander.html>

The masculine persona that Billy Sunday created was remarkable. Sunday's movements and gestures in addition to his colloquial fast-paced speech mesmerized his audiences everywhere he went for good or ill. Sunday represented Midwestern values, and his message was so appealing because a great majority of less educated Americans related to what Sunday was saying. His association with the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, while thought of as nothing out of the ordinary during his lifetime, would today be viewed in a much more negative light. The shared interests that Sunday and the Klan had in the desire to masculinize Protestant Christianity bonded them together. In addition both the Klan and Sunday often resented intellectuals and it was this anti-intellectualism that helped both Sunday and the Klan gain widespread popularity across the country.

One of the main reasons that Billy Sunday was so popular was his ability to dazzle his audiences and keep their attention for long periods of time. Sunday spoke rapidly during his sermons and his acrobatic sermons were full of life, energy. Some of his critics claimed that his sermons were nothing more than circus performances. But whatever adjective was used to describe his efforts, Sunday knew how to entertain a crowd and had the ability to keep them coming back for more.

The twentieth-century witnessed many evangelists who travelled around the country preaching fire and brimstone sermons just as Billy Sunday did. Nevertheless, it was Sunday who earned a truly national reputation, mostly because he had become well known from his professional baseball career and he managed to successfully take this with him on the road during his evangelistic crusades. Today, there is a renewed interest in Billy Sunday as he was a vocal supporter of Christian manhood, but also a fierce opponent of the liquor industry. Sunday continued to preach his brand of Christianity

right up until his death. While the crowd sizes certainly diminished over the years, Sunday's passion and ferocious preaching style never relinquished and so Billy Sunday singlehandedly was able to not only defeat the liquor interests but he also brought many men into the Protestant Christian Churches with his sermons especially geared for them.

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