

THE GUARDIAN'S WEEK END SERMON SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

The Rev. Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman, the secretary of the General Assembly's Evangelistic Committee preached recently in the Central Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y. Dr. Chapman's subject was "Bells of Gold," and his text was Exodus xviii.33: "And bells of gold between them: round about them." He said:

There is music in the text, not simply because of the clashing and the chiming of those golden bells upon the robe of the High Priest, but also because of the truth for which the adornment upon the robe's hem stands in Bible teaching. I suppose the greatest Day in all Israel's history was the Day of Atonement, the day when Israel waited before Jehovah with minds ill at ease, with hearts burning and with consciences troubled, for they came to have their sins put away; when the two goats were placed before the high priest, one slain for the priest and the other taken for scapegoat. The high priest laid his hand on the head of the goat and confessed the sins of Israel and then the goat was led away into the land where no man lived, and Israel, as the result of the Day of Atonement, went away rejoicing.

Of all the people mentioned in the Old Testament I suppose the greatest, at least in the affections of Israel, would be the high priest. He was specially chosen, specially prepared for his sacred office, specially adorned with clothing and his clothing is described in this Book in the chapter from which I have taken my text. At the thirty-fourth verse: "So that there shall be a golden bell and a pomegranate, and again another golden bell and a pomegranate; and so: the thirty-fifth verse. "And it shall be upon Aaron to minister and his sound shall be heard when he goeth before the whole people and when he cometh out, that he die not." I need not say to you that this high priest of the Old Testament is an illustration of our High Priest of the New Testament. Upon the robe there was just as much fruit as sound, golden bells and pomegranates. The same thing is true of Jesus He said marvelous things.

I could possibly use a more familiar text, as for example, "He ever liveth to make intercession," but I am taking this strange scripture in order that when you have forgotten the preacher you may remember the text, and remembering the text you will get the heart of it, namely, that our great High Priest is living, and that is the cardinal truth. It is said that when Dale of Birmingham was preparing one of his great sermons (afterward his masterpiece), as he was writing he came to the expression "Christ is living." He read it again, and again, and a third

time, and then, rising, began to walk up and down crying as he walked, "He is living! He is living! My blessed Lord is living!" and they say when he rose to preach the next Sunday a gale from heaven swept the crowd, and that sermon came to be the masterpiece of the master preacher.

When the children of Israel came together on the day of atonement and the high priest made his way into the holy place they knew he was gone to make intercession. Imagine them waiting. They bend forward to listen, and one turns to his neighbor and asks, "Is he living?" and when they hear no sound their faces grow white and they can almost hear their hearts beat. Suddenly, as the high priest falls over the assembly, away in the distance they hear the clashing and the chiming of the golden bells upon the high priest's robe, and their faces are wreathed in smiles and their eyes are dimmed with tears as they say, "He is living!" They know it because of the sound of the bells; and that is the purpose of the message this morning, High Priest is living.

But we have a better High Priest than Israel better because He is both human and divine.

How many times we find this interwoven in His earthly ministry. As for example, when he has worked through the long day and has grown weary, He steps into the boat of one of His disciples and, when they have pushed out into the deep, He falls asleep. It is most pathetic. He, who holds the winds and the seas in the hollow of his hands is weary, so weary! And He is asleep like a man, "tempted in all points like as we are." He knows our difficulties. When suddenly the storm comes on and the boat begins to toss and the sky is overcast and the waves rise higher and the frightened fishermen creep over to where He lies sleeping and say, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" And without any commotion He raises His head and speaks, with the voice that bade the world come into existence, and says: "Peace, be still." There is another instance, when He stands by the grave of Lazarus. It says, "Jesus wept." He was not only looking at Mary and Martha as they wept, but he was looking down through the coming years to the time when your heart would break and because the whole world would weep Jesus wept. He is the man, Christ Jesus. I can see Him brush away the tears and stoop down and say, "Lazarus," and Lazarus' eyes open and they loose him and let him go.

Our great High Priest! Great in His sympathy; great in His power; great in His love; great in His majesty. Somehow this morning from the moment I came upon this platform I have heard the clashing and the chiming of the golden bells upon His robe. All His life was full of music. There were joy bells at Bethlehem and the children heard them; sweet music at Nazareth and the youth listened; music that is indelible in Callilee, and thoughtful men took notice; music, deep and solemn, when He bows at Gethsemane; music when He is raised upon the cross, with three worlds taking notice; the angels in heaven, the people round about the cross, the devils in hell, heard Him say "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" They say in one of the cathedrals across the sea there is a chime of bells that rings such music that people journey for days to hear it. It seems as if a company of angels had lodged in the tower and were giving the best of heaven's music. But there has never been a chime of bells like the story of His life.

There are three texts which I would take out of a multitude of texts to prove that His life was filled with music. The first is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Just as the day of Jerusalem and stood upon the slopes of the Mount of Olives, I saw the men coming home from their work. They had grown old before their time. I saw the women bowed down with burdens. Their faces were careworn, and I imagined how Jesus might have stood and seen people like them coming in, and how He stretched forth his arms and said in such a marvellous way, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest," and there has never been a man since with an aching heart that He did not speak to him; nor a woman since with a clouded mind that He did not comfort her; nor a man weighed down with business cares that He did not have him in mind when He said, "Come and ye shall find rest." And the second is: "God so loved the world." Of course it is all in that little word "so." Other people have loved, but not "so loved." "God so loved." You draw back and say, "Surely that does not mean me, I have rejected Him." Yes, it means you. And you say, "It cannot mean me; I have denied Him." Yes, it means you. And you say, "It cannot mean me; I have crucified Him afresh for I once knew Him, but wandered from Him." Yes, it means you. "Having loved them, He loved them unto the end." God's love is never vacated by your sin. He always loves. At the Bible conference last summer, a distinguished missionary told us of a young man who was arrested for murder. His old mother said, "Jem, did you do it?" He said, "Mother, I never did it," and that old woman walked out of his cell happy. When her neighbors tried to comfort her, she said, "My boy, Jem, never did it." When the day of execution came the chaplain went to prepare him for the end and asked him, "Did you do it?" "Yes, I did." Tell my mother,

Any other persons who, desire to join the Bible Study Contest will be promptly furnished with full particulars of conditions &c. upon application at The Guardian Office.

S. S. LESSON. @ February 14th, 1909. The Apostles Imprisoned.—Acts 5: 17-42.

Golden Text—Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. v.10.

Verses 17-18—If a child of God finds himself in prison which is the better thing to do; fret and worry about it, or be glad and rejoice?

If a good man is in prison is that the best place for him for the time? Can an enemy, or circumstances, or his ignorance, or any other power, other than personal sin, put a Christian in a position, where his highest interests are not being served to the utmost possible? (This question must be answered in writing by members of the club.)

Verses 19—By what method did God release the Apostles from prison? Does God in these days ever adopt similar methods, to release his servants from prison, and did he always adopt that miraculous method in those days? (See case of Jesus and John the Baptist.)

May a Christian in prison to-day, be absolutely sure of his release, if that is necessary for the accomplishment of his work?

Verses 20-21—Does God now give us direct, and specific, instructions as to our duty, when that is necessary?

Should a Christian always testify in God's Temple when he has the opportunity; or should he wait for special instructions from God?

Verses 22-25—Is it all possible that any power can prevail against God, or those in the care of God? Does God sometimes require us to run the risk of our lives, as the apostles were doing?

Verses 26-28—From the time of Jesus until now, which class of men have most opposed the advance of supernatural Christianity, the people or the priests?

What were the priests afraid would result from the teaching of the Apostles?

Will a true man of God, preacher, or layman, ever be angry at the teaching of any sincere religious teacher, no matter what the doctrine taught?

What is the proper attitude to take to all religious teachers?

Verses 29—Is the voice of the church the voice of God, or has it ever been so?

What, or who in the last analysis, is the final authority to a human soul?

Verses 30-32—Is there any power, or authority or threat, which can prevent a man who is indwelt of God, from boldly witnessing for God?

What is the witness to Christians to-day, of the reality of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension and of the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting?

Verses 33—When the holy (?) heretic persecutors get evidence that their victims are right, and that they are wrong, are they glad or mad?

What was it, that "cut" these priests "to the heart" when it should have made their hearts jump for joy?

Verses 34-40—What is the better way to treat heresy, to let it alone, or oppose it?

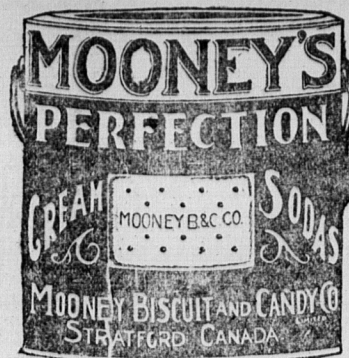
Is it not true that the heretics of one generation have been the saints of the next?

Who and what was this man Gamaliel?

How would you characterize Gamaliel's great defence to the Apostles? Verses 41-42—Is it as wise for us as it was for the Apostles, to rejoice when we suffer for Jesus' sake?

What is the daily duty and privilege of a Christian?

Lesson for Sunday, Feb. 21st, 1909.—Stephen the First Christian Martyr. Acts vi: 1 to 8.



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