

obscurity. But his loyalty to our Lord, and the high standard of consecration which he conceived to be Christ's due from every Christian, is a challenge and a spur. Miss Thompson tells the story delightfully, without hiding the inevitable element of human frailty and failing; she allows Mitchell to speak for himself, and the message of his life and preaching, so clear to those who knew and heard him, is given permanency by her book.

1954, with its Crusade on this side of the Atlantic, and its conferences on the other, cannot fail to be important and in some ways decisive. Such a book as *Climbing on Track* can help all concerned to that deeper devotion and prayerfulness without which, whatever the results on paper, this year will fail in its promise.

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## The Theology of Billy Graham

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR CARL F. H. HENRY, PH.D.

NOT everybody is a Theologian, but everybody has a Theology. And, simply because these are the words with which many a seminary professor reassures new ministerial students, they do not say enough about an evangelist whose labours under God have given him a conspicuous place in contemporary Christian effort. Billy Graham has a theology—doubtless not fully systematized and carefully elaborated in details as the professional theologian would prefer it, but something considerably more than a vague and formless phantom whose features seem never to achieve definiteness.

One might begin by saying that Graham's theology, in its main thrust, is that of Moody and Sankey, or of R. A. Torrey, and doubtless this is a fact, although it would not be the happiest of beginnings. There is, beyond doubt, a common core of doctrinal conviction which may be traced through almost all the prominent American evangelists, whether one thinks of past generation figures like Moody, Torrey and Billy Sunday, or contemporaries like Charles E. Fuller of world-wide Revival Hour fame. They are evangelicals, and as such have stood consciously over against the optimistic liberal tradition in theology. Many of them, indeed, would be quite ready to confess that evangelism is ideally the task of the local Church, but that the loss of the evangel or good news by multitudes of pulpits or its retention simply in principle without an urgent outreach to the lost, had created the necessity of mass evangelism in our era.

But more must be said than that. Graham's convictions, as they obviously do, place him solidly in the tradition of evangelical theology. The burden of the true evangelist is the apostolic message: Christ crucified for doomed sinners and risen. And it is to the biblical theology, frankly and unashamedly, that Graham would trace his first lines, and measure the content of his preaching by the prophetic and apostolic message as an absolute norm.

This may be seen conspicuously in the manner in which Graham appeals to the Scriptures. Seldom does he preach a message which is not populated rather generously with an emphatic declaration: "*The Bible says. . .*" And the force of his words falls equally much on this preparatory phrase as on the quotation which follows. Karl Barth somewhere ironically depicts the liberal ministry of a generation ago taking elocution lessons in the effective use of the word "God", so that the expression would retain all its traditional urgency although the pulpit had filled it with a quite modern content. When Graham says: "The Bible says 'the wages of sin is death'", or "The Bible says, 'He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out'", his hearers are in no doubt of the sense in which it is intended; Scripture is appealed to as the Word of God written. The mood in which Jesus appealed to the Old Testament: "it stands written" (the perfect tense in Greek suggesting action completed in the past, the force of which continues into the present) is one which hovers over Graham's sermons; what the Scriptures say, God says to us. The theological presupposition is the inspiredness of the writings. The emphasis on God's self-revelation is not made an alternative to biblical revelation, although Graham labours the point that a belief in the doctrines only is an historical belief and not a saving faith; God wants the whole man, and addresses the totality of His being in the offer of pardon. Bible doctrine itself foredooms a merely doctrinal belief as fully as it requires confidence in revealed truths about God and His purposes.

All of this has a curious relevance for the broader theological scene to-day. Few even of the great pulpit masters of our day carefully elaborate in public the basis of authority on which they predicate the positive affirmation which they make. That is equally true of Billy Graham; I am not aware that he brings any special message on the inspiration of Scripture or the nature of revelation, or any of the more technical theological themes. In the case of much of the preaching of our day, however, it is sometimes very unclear how the authoritative note can be justified where the pulpit wishes to invoke it in view of the concessions which are made in other connections. In Graham's case the question of authority does not arise in this way; he appeals to Scripture as the Word of God written, and to God as the ultimate author of Scripture, in such a way as to raise no question about the pulpit as a third and intervening reference.

The thrust of the evangelist, however, tends to be to draw all strands toward the place of decision, of commitment. And, like most evangelists Graham will not allow argument to conceal the need for getting into right relationship with God. He can carry on a competent spiritual discussion; although he is no seminary graduate, Graham is a college graduate, and this leaves a certain stamp upon his ministry, although he is by temperament less creative than eclectic. His series of syndicated articles in the *Chicago Tribune* and other papers often is flabby in content, although this may be due in part to the customary newspaper preference that controversy be avoided. Christianity is nothing at all if it does not enter into violent controversy with the modern man and his prejudices. But there are also unnecessary controversies, and these Graham, through his intensely full evangelistic

experience, has learned skilfully to avoid. Once, when he came to Boston for a major campaign, one of the local newspapermen sought to enlist Graham in a criticism of the personalistic philosopher, E. S. Brightman. During the press conference, a reporter asked: "What do you think of Brightman's Doctrine of a finite God?" Graham later confided to his associates that he knew precious little about the Boston University Professor's metaphysics. But he handed the question competently nevertheless, replying: "Dr. Brightman's critics are able to take care of him; I'm more concerned to preach the Gospel". More than once, in fact, Graham has turned the closing minutes of a press conference into an appeal for spiritual decision.

At the centre of Graham's preaching, as the ground of the sinner's acceptance with God, stands the work of Christ. This appears not as an appendix to Graham's messages, but as the presupposition of the whole: the life and death and resurrection of Christ appears, in the mercy of God, as the staggering yet lone reference point of hope, for doomed sinners. The love of God is the setting for this emphasis. Graham has a message on the love of God in which, for ten solid minutes, he burns the theme "God loves *you*" into the hearts of his hearers. But the emphasis on divine love is not one-sided and sentimental. Both love and righteousness are anchored with equal ultimacy in the nature of God. Probably nothing makes this as clear as the emphatic manner in which the American evangelist preaches Christ's substitutionary atonement alongside the love of God, and preaches it in its Reformation dimensions as propitiating the wrath of the holy Lord. Graham takes no cheap fickle view of sin. While he lashes out at contemporary sins, and finds abundant timely illustrations in the newspaper headlines and news magazines for up-to-the minute introductions to his messages, he finds the root of these sins in man's sinful nature, and knows no way to God other than the way of the Cross, of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, annulling the guilt and penalty of sin.

Graham's preaching of the Cross, simply because of his lack of formal theological training, is not always as theologically definite as this. But when he is specific it is in these terms. I recall hearing him in a large Los Angeles rally on a Sunday afternoon in a wrestling arena converted for the occasion. We had attended the same Christian college, Wheaton in Illinois, about the same time, and he invited me to come along for breakfast. The following morning when I arrived Graham, unusual for him, was not ready, and asked me up to the room. While he finished shaving, I thought I would voice some provocative reactions. "I suppose you know," I began, "that many an old time liberal would have said almost all that you said about the Cross yesterday?" Graham fixed his eyes on me and with a note of demand asked: "What do you mean?" We chatted for a while about the way in which American liberals frequently preached the new birth: the integration of personality and deliverance from inner frustration achieved when one surrenders his life to Christ as Lord. In such a message one found no emphasis on the representative death of Christ, the new birth was proclaimed apart from a unique activity of the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Godhead, and now and then it was even stressed that submission to Christ takes place not on the intellectual

level but on the volitional and emotional level. Put in those dimensions, there could be no doubt of Graham's higher ground. But at Los Angeles, he had so emphasized the new birth, and minimized the ground of man's acceptance by God, that my observation promised a rather lively conversation.

Graham's reaction was revealing. He told me of an elderly lady who had come up to him at the end of one of his earliest meetings, and held his arm firmly like some divine ambassador and said: "Preach the Cross, Billy". "Yesterday when I came down from the platform", he continued, "I sensed that something was wrong, that something was missing. And I thought of that old lady and her words to me, 'Preach the Cross, Billy'. Then he asked me a question. "Do you know what makes my meetings better than they are?" he enquired. And with characteristic humility he replied: "The personal workers. Those 200 people who came forward will be helped clearly by men and women who have Bibles in their hands, and who know that no other way leads home but the way of the Cross". And by "The way of the Cross" Graham meant the Lamb slain for sinners.

But Graham preaches no plan of salvation which can comfort man in sin. It is man's sin which has nailed Christ to the tree and it is to free us from the tyranny of sin that He became our Saviour. Christ is not Christ if He cannot break the power of cancelled sin. While He lives on high, and intercedes for men, He works out His redemptive purpose in the lives of believers by the indwelling Spirit. Graham has therefore a "deeper life" message for Christians. He does not regard the Christian life only as a promise to be realized in the next world. Nor does he hesitate to find a connection between sin in the believer's life and an indifference to the evangelistic and missionary task.

But the burden of Graham's message reaches to the lost. And some of his critics have complained that, in view of the vast spiritual ignorance prevalent in our times, he does not lay down a sufficient background of definite teaching in his campaigns. To some extent this has been met by an effective programme of follow-up work. But when so, there is little question that the dogmatic content of his messages is not as fulsome as, for example, those of Torrey. The widow of the late Billy Sunday once mentioned when we were contrasting evangelistic methods that Mr. Sunday often spent the first week of a campaign either speaking to Christians or giving definite doctrinal instruction before the first invitation was extended in a meeting.

Two observations, I think, need to be made. One is that there is much preaching to-day which seeks to exalt Christ's Cross and Resurrection but which becomes progressively vague as the specific implications are delineated. Men bring the death and resurrection of Christ to a new pulpit centrality, without returning to, and even while bypassing, a propitiatory atonement and a bodily resurrection; by contrast with the prevailing tide of preaching, Graham is proportionately as definite as were his predecessors in an era more doctrinally alert. That is not to suggest that the doctrinal quantum should be determined from the history of dogma, but merely to state an impression.

The other observation has to do with the world and life setting of the evangelistic message to-day. The eschatological note is a prominent element in Graham's preaching. He senses that the mood of cultural doom hovering over our generation works a secret inner conviction of spiritual urgency, a sense of end-time, which gathers together and multiplies man's awareness of misappropriated light and spurned grace. The modern man lives closer to the line of spiritual decision as an imminent necessity than did the past generation. The task of the evangelist is to meet him where he is and lead him promptly to Christ as Saviour. This necessity gains urgency not only from man's greatly troubled conscience, but as Graham sees it, from the imminence of the personal and visible return of Christ. The American evangelist is no date-setter, although after his vast rally in the Pasadena Rose Bowl, where almost 50,000 persons attended his one-night visit, the *Los Angeles Times* gave rise to a widespread report that there remained probably not more than two or three years before the final judgment. But a transcript of Graham's remarks showed otherwise. There is little doubt that Graham believes we *may* be on the very threshold of final doom; he does not speak of thousands and tens of thousands of years which remain for the accomplishment of the Christian mission. While he refuses to say this is it, that we *are* in the final few years of the age of grace, he preaches on that assumption: the opportunity of grace is shortened with every passing hour, the final and irreversible judgment of God is nearer than ever. And he does not hesitate to point out the striking similarities in our time of confusion and self-indulgence and spiritual vacuum with the biblical picture of the end-time.

All this suggests a cultural relevance about Graham's preaching which is obvious from the type of introductions he employs in his messages. He sees the inescapable doom of western culture, or any culture which does not become explicit about the problem of sin and redemption and its solution. The sombre headlines in the daily newspapers are to him simply so many footnotes on this downward drift. Nothing can allay this movement but the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Not that Jesus Christ would work out a solution to our problems *as we pose them*; much of our difficulty is that from the prospective of sin we project artificial or inadequate remedies, although the sad predicament in which we are is reflected by our inability even to rise to these diluted solutions. When Graham visited Pasadena, somewhat of a cultural centre in America, with more Cadillacs per capita than any other city in the States, and the home of the California Institute of Technology, one of the local daily papers carried a front page statement by the evangelist on science and theology. He did not dismiss science by any means, but he left no doubt that ignorance of the supernatural is as inexcusable in mid-century as ignorance of the natural, and that the concentration of modern genius in the natural sphere is one of the major ingredients of our world of lost values and purposes. But he pleaded for no vague re-orientation to the supernatural. California is already plagued with an assortment of wierd religious cults. Graham called for a return to the God of Hebrew-Christian revelation, self-revealed in Christ, and the restoration of His Word written as a light to the stumbling feet of the contemporary man. If he speaks of the

latest statistics of the mounting modern divorce rate, and the threat to the stability of the home, or the latest murder scandal, or the frustrations of the peace-table in seeking escape from the threat of military aggression, he does so not as a commentator on current events, but in order to adduce those events as a commentary on the biblical view of man.

The cultural relevance of Graham's preaching—although it is hardly what one would call a carefully worked philosophical analysis of the religious outlook in the twentieth century world—comes to its sharpest focus when he relates the struggle between Communism and the West to the urgency of spiritual decision to-day. Few persons who have attended a Graham campaign quickly forget the picture he gives of Communism sweeping over the modern world in judgment, before God's judgment hands falls upon that movement also—as in the Old Testament times Jehovah permitted the Assyrian tyrant to humiliate Israel before he destroyed Assyria, because of the vast light which His people possessed and yet disregarded. The voice of the Old Testament prophets rings forth again in the warning of impending catastrophe, in the solicitation to immediate and thoroughgoing repentance in the offer of divine pardon to sincere and contrite hearts who lodge their trust in the God who offers, and has provided redemption in Christ. This is always one of the points in a Graham Campaign in which immense conviction hangs over the congregation.

British readers may recall that at General Eisenhower's inauguration to the presidency, at his personal request, a Bible was opened to the familiar passage in Chronicles : " If my people, which are called by my name will humble themselves and pray. . . ." It is a favourite Graham text and there have been rumours that it was Graham who suggested the verse chosen for the occasion. I have not verified these, for if they are accurate, I suspect Graham would hesitate to admit this. But it is known that he visited the president-elect, at the latter's request, shortly before the installation verse was chosen. And no symbol could have given more dramatic expression to Graham's convictions in regard to national doom and repentance than these inspired and sobering words as an Inauguration Day text.

What remains yet to be said is that the secret of the Graham ministry on its human side is his transparent sincerity in the passion to win lost men to Christ ; and on the divine side, the blessing of the Holy Spirit, which falls with singular power and dynamism during the personal invitation to response which follows the messages. On the human side itself, Graham points to nothing in himself as a key to his ministry, but insists that whatever its successes it is the sovereign grace of God ; the success of his ministry will continue as long as God wills and it will be shared and surpassed by others as God wills. It is true that he gives himself to faithful prayer and study of the Word, although he leads no hermit life ; golf is a favourite sport, and he enjoys watching a good football game. The latter interests help create in America a favourable press for an evangelist, although that does not account for Graham's fondness for athletic events. But it is the divine factor, the gripping impact of the Holy Spirit especially during the evangelistic appeal, which is perhaps the most astonishing feature of the meetings. Graham

presses the invitation, confident that there will be a response, aware that hungry hearts are waiting for the call to Christ, sensing that some would be disappointed and perhaps turned away from Christ were it not given. Neither the reserve of the people—a factor with which he will have to cope with in Britain much more than in America—nor the obstacles of a physical and structural nature to an effective response, such as awkward meeting places, deter him in this regard : the message exists for the sake of the appeal. In the Rose Bowl in California, a vast outdoor sports bowl, any evangelist would know in advance that, when the invitation was given, it would be at least three or four minutes before anyone could find his way from the stands to the platform. But the night of Graham's visit the newspaper estimated that 1,000 persons had answered the invitation by making their way to the cinder track and acknowledging a deep spiritual need of one kind or another.

Graham's theological sympathies are of a moderate Calvinistic framework, though not a Calvinism which erases the urgency of personal decision, and perhaps too mildly Calvinistic for some observers. But he is foremost an evangelist and not a theologian, and it is by his evangelism that he, like Moody and Torrey, will be remembered in Britain. The Isles need his message ; given a sympathetic hearing it will turn impressive numbers to Christ, create a fuller interest in the Churches, encourage the clergy to restore the task of evangelism and missions to the proper priority, and perhaps quicken the prayer meeting movement to a return to those spiritual elements with which Moody launched it a half a century ago.

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## The Impact of Mau Mau on the Church in Kenya

BY THE PROVOST OF NAIROBI

**T**HAT Christianity is on trial in Kenya to-day is undeniable. We are passing through a phase of which we trust history will record that the Christian Church has proved the truth of Samuel Rutherford's saying that " the ship He saileth in is scatheless anywhere ".

I have been asked to try to give an assessment of the impact of the Mau Mau uprising on Christianity in Kenya with special reference, naturally, to the Anglican Church. Although it is really too close to the events themselves to be able to judge fairly, and I myself do not feel qualified to assess a situation in which I am not personally as deeply involved as some, yet I would like to try to give an interim report because I believe that what is happening in Kenya to-day is of significance for the whole Church, particularly the younger Churches. The thoughts and prayers of Christians of all kinds have turned to this Colony, and if we can do anything to prepare the Churches of other lands for the impact of persecution, should it come, we shall feel greatly rewarded. " The holy Church throughout all the world " as a wide