

BILLY GRAHAM'S PREACHING

D.B. KNOX

"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

You may have heard Billy Graham or seen him on T.V. or at least read about him in the papers. His meetings were a great success. How is this to be accounted for? Anybody who went out to the racecourse would know that there was no emotionalism in the meetings, rather the opposite. Just a straightforward talk and an invitation to people to commit themselves to the lordship of Jesus Christ in their life and to come forward and receive further help and a copy of St. John's gospel.

I first heard Billy Graham in 1947 and he is still going strong over thirty years later. It is worth asking why. There seem to be four reasons. First, his addresses are Christ centred. Christ is our divine creator and saviour, these are what the facts are and it is therefore important that our world view should be in accordance with this. But we are always tempted to have some other centre for our life and thought, but Graham was absolutely Christ centred. Secondly his talks were centred on the cross. Since Jesus is our divine saviour, then His crucifixion by the men of His time must be the most important event of history. Nothing happens by accident to God, so there must be a very important meaning in the crucifixion of Jesus and Graham made this meaning central. Its meaning is that we, as men and women, are sinners, and for this we will be judged by God eternally. But the cross also means that God has taken the judgement on Himself and suffered in our place, if we put our faith in Jesus as our saviour and our Lord. There is salvation for all of us in the cross, there is forgiveness for all our sins however bad they might be. There is restoration to friendship with God

and the sure prospect of eternal life with Him in heaven. That was Graham's message, it is a relevant message and a true message and people found it to be true.

The third reason for Graham's success was a real love and concern for members of his audience. He was speaking, as it were, individually to everyone present and he was most concerned with their relationship to God, with how they will stand on the Judgement Day in God's presence, and he pressed them earnestly and lovingly to accept the salvation God has provided through the death of Jesus. You cannot keep up a facade for thirty years. So it was plain to me that Graham really had genuine love for those who came to hear him. He had a real message for them and he lovingly urged them to accept it.

The fourth reason was that Graham's life sustained the genuineness of his message. He is a humble man. When he was pressed on T.V. on money matters, his handling of money was seen to be upright. Of course we cannot do these things in our own strength. Prayer is the secret. God's Spirit is given to all of us when we ask for His presence. Graham's addresses showed that he was a great student of God's word the Bible and his life and manner showed that he was a man of prayer. Each of us as individual Christians must follow the same route, meditate on God's word so that God may speak to us daily through it, and be regular in prayer. Make time for prayer, it is the most important of activities to speak to God Himself. Above all make Christ central in your world view and in your life and values, accepting the forgiveness that He has won for us by dying for us at Calvary and rising again to the heavenly throne which He shares with all who put their faith in Him. Thus as we walk in God's presence He will give us love for one another and the needed help to obey His

commandments so that our character will reflect
the character of Christ.

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