

Graham Tells Why Good Friday Is Celebrated

To Christians across the world, today is a most solemn of holy days: the day Christ died. Why is this a day to commemorate? One preacher of renown offers a modern-day explanation in the following dispatch.

By DR. BILLY GRAHAM
Written For UPI

A six-year-old boy who had never been in Sunday school before sat listening to the teacher tell the story of the Crucifixion of Christ. When she had finished, the boy said, "If Paladin had been there, they wouldn't have gotten away with it." The little boy symbolizes some of our vague thinking about Holy Week.

At this time of the year our thoughts go naturally to the climatic events surrounding the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Millions have only the vaguest idea of what it is all about. A man said to me during Holy Week last year, "Why does the church make such a fuss about the death of Christ?"

Recurring Question

During the last few weeks I have been on several university and college campuses. I have answered literally hundreds of questions on many subjects, but one of the recurring questions which students were asking was, "Why did Christ die?" In other words, why do we celebrate Good Friday? Usually we celebrate the birthdays of great men, not the death days. Who can give the date of Washington's or Lincoln's death? Why is there such interest in the death of Christ? And why is it mentioned with awe and reverence throughout the world?

In a popular life of Lincoln, there are five thousand pages, but only twenty-five are devoted to the dramatic story of his assassination and death. This is the rule of most biographies. The death of the hero is a mere incident at the end of the book; but when we come to the four biographies of Jesus, we are confronted with an extraordinary fact. One-third of the book of Matthew, one-third of Mark, one-fourth of Luke and one-half of John are devoted to the life of Christ. The death of Jesus Christ was different from all others. It is true that Socrates drank hemlock. But when Christ died, the lightning flashed, the thunder roared, the darkness settled, and even



NAP TIME - David McCarthy, 12, of Gilroy, Calif., a member of the Gilroy 4-H National Livestock Exposition at the San club, was caught taking a nap with his

the soldiers confessed that this was the Son of God.

There has never been a death like it in history. When one hundred prominent Americans were asked a few years ago to name the most significant fact of history, the number one event listed was the death of Christ.

Of all men who ever lived, Jesus did not have to die. He was the lord of life. Sin causes death, but Jesus never sinned. Many people say that Christ was a martyr. This is not true. The soldiers did not seize him by force. They did not take him against his will. He said, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself."

Christ was dying for the sins of the world. The Apostle Paul said, "God was Christ reconciling the world unto himself." The cross of Christ had amazing power because in it justice and love are blended together in one great and final revelation of God. Love divorced from justice is always in danger of becoming a sentimental thing. God in Christ laid the expiration of

man's offense on himself, and the cross is the eternal revelation of what man's sin means to God.

Faintest Reflection

A parent's agony when a son or daughter, heedless of all prompting, pursues reckless and perilous forces, is but the faintest reflection of the agony of God in the face of the sin of man. The cross condemns the sins of our time—pride, arrogance, prejudice, cynicism and disillusioned idealism. It condemns the perversion of law and order. It condemns even our false religiosity and hypocrites. Whether we like it or not, the people of our generation are linked by "chains of motive" to those who crucified Jesus Christ.

The words of the old spiritual are pertinent to us as with Paul we contemplate the spectacle of the cross and its cosmic meaning. "Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there?" When I stand by faith at the foot of the cross, I can only pray the prayer of the publican in the parable of Jesus: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Another unique thing about Holy Week is that our Lord could not be held in the grip of death. He said, "I have power to lay down my life and take it up again." The sadness of Good Friday must yield to the gladness of Easter.

The good news of the Gospel is two things—Christ died for our sins—and He rose again on the third day. If Christians the world over actually believed that Jesus Christ was alive today, there would be a new hope entering into the United Nations or the disarmament conference at Geneva.

Exit Guaranteed

Jean Paul Sartre has said, "There is no exit from the human dilemma." I say there is: This exit is guaranteed because Christ has been raised from the dead.

Also distinctive about Good Friday is that today, twenty centuries away from that event, we can share its power and glory. This week in thousands of Catholic and Protestant churches, millions of people will listen again to the words from the cross. He said, "Forgive them," and he still

Administration Ready To Open Fight for Transportation Bills

Editor's Note: Following is the first of two dispatches on President Kennedy's mass transit plan, describing the \$500 million program and its aims.

By JOSEPH D. HUTNYAN

Washington—UPI—The administration opens its fight next week for an ambitious half-billion dollar plan intended to strengthen commuter public transportation and reshape some of our society's traveling habits.

The legislation, requested by President Kennedy in his transportation message, would broaden a \$75 million loan-and-grant program enacted last year, and supervised by the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

The Senate Banking and Currency committee is scheduled to begin hearings Tuesday on this second phase of the program which embodies \$500 million in matching

grants over a three year period.

Sponsors Optimistic

Sponsors of the legislation, led by Sen. Harrison A. Williams (D-N.J.) generally were optimistic. But they emphasized the need for a "tough" campaign of congressional salesmanship to pass it.

The feeling was that the Senate would approve the bill, but there was concern about its reception by the rural element in the House.

The parent legislation passed last year was attached to a catch-all housing bill—a tactical maneuver that hampered its opponents. This year it will have to stand on its own.

The Senate in the coming

weeks also was expected to amend the bill to permit long-term grant commitments without sole reliance on annual congressional appropriations.

Backers of the legislation say this is necessary to give the plan financial stability. But the change will raise the issue of "back door spending" and add to its political sensitivity.

The proposal is aimed at stimulating the purchase of railroad cars, buses, terminals, tracks and other equipment to revitalize urban mass transit systems.

The idea is to get more commuters to leave their cars at home and use public facilities. Supporters claim the alternative is frightening.

Car ownership within the next 15 years is expected to increase from 70 million to 115 million. If more commuters are not enticed from their autos to buses and trains, the urban scenery will be a kind of bumper-to-bumper chaos.

Planners conjure up an awesome scene of expensive multi-lane highways funneling this automotive army daily into traffic choked cities reeling under its impact. They claim that neither the cities nor the nation can afford it.

Between 1950 and 1960 Americans increased their life insurance ownership 150 per cent while the population rose 19 per cent.

ENDORSE ROAD SYSTEM

Washington—UPI—The National Association of County Officials, paced by Oregon spokesmen, have endorsed an expanded National Forest access road system before the House Public Works committee.

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