

# GRAHAM COMES TO GLASGOW

by our Special Correspondent

An eye-witness account of his arrival and reception

**I**N THE GREY DAWN of Friday, March 18th a group of men and women gathered around the dock gates at Plymouth an hour or so before the French liner *Liberte* came to anchor in Plymouth Sound. As the tender bearing Dr. Graham and his party left the liner, others hurriedly gathered, until there was a small crowd; somebody started to sing "This is my story" and as Dr. Graham stepped ashore on to British soil he was greeted with the theme song of last year's Harringay Crusade.

He travelled by car, on a sunny spring morning, spending some hours resting in the home of a friend near Petersfield, and arrived in London in time to catch the night train to Glasgow; that same evening the smoky arches of Euston Station echoed to the song that Plymouth had heard at dawn. Billy Graham entered the train and said a few words to the crowd; meanwhile in two big London churches hundreds of people had gathered to spend the night in prayer for Billy Graham and his team; similar meetings were held in Scotland, and in centres scattered through Great Britain.

## Scotland

A little after 9.30 the train pulled in to St. Enoch's station, Glasgow, and after a warm reception and many hand-clasps Billy Graham made his way past the station barrier to the hotel, and for five minutes addressed the waiting and expectant crowd from an upper window. Coffee was then served to the members of the Executive Committee and the other guests who had come to bid him welcome; the Rev. Tom Allan, Chairman of the All-Scotland Crusade Executive Committee, made an official address, voicing the welcome of all Scottish hearts, and there was time for Billy Graham to make a brief reply before the party left for the Press Conference at the North British Hotel. Here, assembled in a private room, were well over one hundred representatives of the Press, and the flashes of many cameras marked the entrance of Dr. Graham and his party as they made for a small raised platform. Dr. Graham spoke at some length, touching on the finances of the Crusade, on his methods, and on the message he was to preach. He had come, he said, with nothing new, but with the old message which had been the bulwark of the Scottish nation for many a long year. He spoke of his own Scottish ancestry, and his longing to repay some of the debt North America owed to the message of the Gospel brought to them generations ago from Scotland.

## Kelvin Hall

After about an hour and a quarter the Press Conference dispersed, and already there was a feeling that momentous events lay ahead. The team and members of Dr. Graham's party left to visit the Kelvin Hall where workmen were still busy with last minute preparations. Kelvin Hall is the largest Exhibition Centre of its kind in the British Isles; usually with no provision for seating, nine miles of tubular scaffolding had been introduced to support a great stand for the majority of the congregation, and another for the choir. The Parks Department of Glasgow had supplied, free of charge, all the chairs; the hall had been hung with cream and blue drapes, and decorated with small fir trees from the banks of Loch Lomond, and with flowers. Special lighting, amplifying, and closed-circuit television systems had been introduced, together with provision for recording apparatus, and a stand for Press photographers and the television camera; this was used nightly to project a picture of the meeting into the overflow arena of the adjacent circus building.

The workmen gathered to hear Billy Graham speak a word of appreciation and thanks, and he was photographed

in their midst; the counselling room was inspected, together with overflow accommodation ready for when it should be needed; in addition they saw an upstairs hall where Christian people could gather for prayer throughout the evening meetings. The party went out on the balcony of the Kelvin Hall, overlooking the University and Art Gallery of the City, where there was erected the largest poster hoarding ever seen in Glasgow, bearing the city arms, and in huge letters the old motto, "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word and the praising of His Name." Immediately opposite on the raised grass leading up to the University stood the flagpoles bearing the red letters "HEAR BILLY GRAHAM" and banners with the cross of St. Andrew.





Arriving at St. Enoch's station with the Rev. Tom Allan



Outside St. Enoch's station



Walking through the snow to Glasgow Cathedral for the Service of Dedication

### The Civic Reception

A little before 5 p.m., Billy Graham and his party moved across from the North British Hotel to the Civic building. In this historic and beautiful building distinguished guests from all over the country had gathered. At 5 p.m., the Lord and Lady Provost attended by Glasgow's City dignitaries, accompanied by Billy Graham, entered the reception chamber. The team and the guests were received first by the Lord and Lady Provost and then by Billy Graham, and so passed to the banquetting hall. In due time the Lord and Lady Provost, with Dr. Graham, took their places on the platform in the banquetting hall. The Lord Provost spoke first, then Dr. Graham, and after him the Rev. Tom Allan. Then, quite spontaneously and obviously not as part of the planned programme, the Lord Provost rose to his feet again, and recalled the days of D. L. Moody's visit to Glasgow. Moving across the platform to the piano in the corner, he recalled how every great religious awakening was accompanied by song, and seating himself in his robes of office at the piano he led the whole company in the singing of the twenty-third Psalm. It was a moving and dramatic moment.

### Sunday Worship

Saturday night saw a meeting for all Crusade workers and helpers at the Kelvin Hall, in which the members of the team were introduced and Dr. Graham spoke a word to all who were to share in the work of the Crusade. Early on Sunday morning the team gathered together in an upper room at their hotel to take breakfast together, and after the meal Dr. Graham spoke with them of the tremendous responsibility resting on them in the coming days. Immediately afterwards the members of the team departed to different Glasgow churches for morning worship. By the time the church services were over the early sunshine had vanished and Glasgow was covered in a white blanket of snow.

At 4.30 a distinguished company gathered in the Cathedral at the invitation of the Provost for a Service of Dedication, and later that evening Dr. Graham and his party went to the Parish Church of Springburn in the North of Glasgow, where the service was broadcast on the Scottish Regional Programme of the B.B.C.

### The Opening Night

On Monday evening the moment arrived for the first service in the Kelvin Hall of the All-Scotland Crusade. By 6 o'clock, with light snow falling, many thousands of people had gathered outside the hall; inside, the stewards were receiving their final briefing and taking their places ready for the

doors to be opened. At 6.20 the doors were flung open and people flooded in; by 6.40 the choir seats were filled—there was accommodation in the choir for 1,200, and some 4,000 had volunteered.

A quiet dignity pervaded the huge arena as seats rapidly filled. The Executive Committee and guests, together with members of the team, assembled in the committee room and at half past seven went together on to the platform. The Rev. William Selly of the Sponsoring Committee led the whole company in prayer, and Cliff Barrows, who had been leading the singing, then introduced the Rev. Tom Allan, and later Major-General D. J. Wilson-Haffenden, Chairman of the Greater London Crusade Executive Committee of 1954.

After more singing, including the well known setting of the Lord's Prayer, and "To God be the Glory," Dr. Graham came to the microphone and delivered the first of his messages in Glasgow. He spoke for some time, taking as his theme the storm of Acts 27, ringing out with the affirmation "Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God and it shall be even as it was told me."

Dr. Graham spoke not only of the storm and turmoil of a troubled and divided world, but of the personal lives of many individuals; he preached the good news that in Christ's death upon the Cross lies our hope of peace—individual as well as international peace—and that this may be the experience of everyone who puts his faith in Christ.

### The Conclusion

In the way that Harringay made so familiar, at the end of his message Dr. Graham asked that all heads should be bowed, and all eyes closed; and he invited all those who then and there wished to receive Christ as their Saviour to rise from their places and come forward to the platform. It was a tense moment; there was a perceptible pause; and then, while the choir softly sang "Just as I am," people began to move from their seats all through the great auditorium. Four hundred and seventy people came forward on that night, the largest number on the first night of any Crusade conducted by Dr. Graham.

### The Crusade Continues

So it has gone on; at the second meeting George Beverly Shea had recovered from his throat trouble, and was able to sing; Cliff Barrows was already establishing "The Lord's my Shepherd" to the tune of *Crimond* as the theme song of the Crusade. On the second night four hundred and three enquirers came forward; it has been Glasgow's experience that a large

proportion of those who have come forward at the Kelvin Hall have been non-churchgoers.

By the middle of the second week numbers were higher yet: over six hundred came forward at more than one meeting, and a larger percentage of them from the television room than from the main hall.

By this time the seating accommodation, including the overflow rooms for television and sound relays, had been increased to hold over 17,500 people, and bus parties were coming from all over Scotland to the Kelvin Hall. There was one evening when arc-lights took the place of the press cameras which had been much in evidence on the opening night, in order that filming might take place. It is hoped to produce, not a feature but a colour documentary of the All-Scotland Crusade.

There were anxious moments later in the week, concealed from many by the lack of newspapers, when Dr. Graham seemed likely to succumb to a cold or throat infection. On the Saturday of the second week, a dismal rainy afternoon, Grady Wilson spoke for Dr. Graham who did not appear. But he was back in the evening, and the end of the first fortnight of the campaign saw a total of well over five thousand enquirers in twelve days—a response beyond any expectation.

Dr. Graham spent Sunday quietly out of Glasgow, and on the following day he spoke to about two thousand soldiers at Redford Barracks, Edinburgh, where he was warmly welcomed. Troops assembled in a vast garage hastily converted into an auditorium, and from a simple rostrum under a roof of low steel girders Billy Graham preached and made his usual appeal. From Edinburgh he returned to Glasgow, for the first meeting of Holy Week. Throughout the week his themes were Redemption, Reconciliation and Forgiveness, and on the evening of Good Friday the service was broadcast and televised, to be seen and heard by hundreds of thousands in all parts of Great Britain.

As this report goes to press the end is not in sight. Relays have already reached many cities in Scotland, and details appear on another page of the Relay Programme for England and Wales, which estimates show will reach up to a million people per night during the twelve days for which relays are planned. Certainly from all that we have so far seen of God's work in Glasgow, and reaching out from Glasgow into many other centres, Dr. Graham seems likely to be justified in his declaration: "I believe that all the evidences are here for a religious awakening in Scotland that has no precedent in your history."

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*Above: with the Lord Provost at the Civic Reception*



*Below: The close of the first evening*

