Billy Graham: A Parable of American Righteousness
by Marshall Frady
(Little, Brown; xi + 546 pp.; $12.95)

Billy Graham: Evangelist to the World
by John Pollock
(Harper & Row; x + 324 pp.; $10.00)

Tracy Early

Frady had better walk cautiously. Though Graham himself prefers to shower critics with buckets of warm syrup, some fiercer disciples may discover the love of Christ impelling them to boil Frady's head in a washtub. But he has written a useful book, the first attempt by a writer with stature outside the religion camp to give Graham the full treatment.

Also useful, in a quite different way of course, is the work of Graham's official biographer, John Pollock, a Church of England minister. In *Billy Graham: The Authorized Biography* he took the story up to 1966, and then updated it in 1969. Now, in *Billy Graham: Evangelist to the World*, he covers the past decade. Pollock provides not only data but also the tint of lens for viewing Graham as Graham would wish, especially in scenes dealing with his relationship with Nixon. But for analysis, Frady's the one. By showing himself greatly enthused, Frady got several hours with Graham plus interviews with family and associates. They are likely not pleased by his interpretations of Graham as one who happily took the kingdoms of this world and obligingly served the devil.

Himself the son of a Southern Baptist preacher, Frady feels the awkwardness. Many Baptists will anathematize him, he knows, as a scalawag who smiled his way in for dinner and then dirtied on the rug. So he sprays a magnolia scent around: "The difficulty is that, when one arrives at the point where one has to begin the actual writing of it, one necessarily must withdraw...." And so on, which won't pacify them a whit.

The rest of us, however, can feel grateful for the book, though it turned out to be less than it might have. Frady overwrites with a purplish passion, never stopping at one superfluous adjective when the dictionary will yield four others as silvering, shimmerous, scintillant, and sockdolagizing. He also detours rather much, delivering the deep things of Calvinism, his tracings of American culture, and other fancy goods. Though all that may come chockablock with import, the reader will skip over patches of it. More pertinent are the pages showing Graham's connections with the American power structure in the cold war years, and how he won the backing of big men who did not necessarily share his piety or his views on fornication.

The lineup of important figures in Graham's career makes a sobering spectrum—from conservative to ultraconservative to wacky. One starts with his forward-walk as a high school junior under the exhorting of the anti-Semitic tub-thumper Mordecai Ham. Then, via Bob Jones, a Florida Bible institute, and Wheaton, on to anointment by the dying warhorse William Bell Riley. Next to Hearst, whose 1949 order to "puff Graham" put him in orbit—like Nixon, from Southern California. Later, he accumulated plutocrats such as Sid Richardson, politicians such as Strom Thurmond, and panjandrums such as Henry Luce. L. Nelson Bell, pure Goldwater, became not only Graham's father-in-law but also an influential advisor.

And there are some that Frady skips. He bypasses Graham's decision to identify with the First Baptist Church of Dallas and its ranting pastor, W.A. Criswell—a notable decision because Graham had no personal or organizational reason for putting his membership in a Texas church except to show...
HOW WELL I KNOW HIM

1955: “I disagree with those who say Mr. Nixon is not sincere. I believe him to be most sincere, and like President Eisenhower, he is a splendid churchman.”

1959: “Mr. Nixon is probably the best-trained man for President in American history, and he is certainly every inch a Christian gentleman.”

1964: “I know that he is a devout person and a man of high principles, with a profound philosophy of government.”

1968: “He has a great sense of moral integrity. I have never seen any indication of, or agreed with, the label that his enemies have given him of ‘Tricky Dick.’ In the years I’ve known him, he’s never given any indication of being tricky.”

1969: “I have known him for many years and, after many conversations, I am convinced his greatest concern is that America have a moral and spiritual renewal.”

1971: “I remember once I made a suggestion to him. He looked me in the eye and said, ‘Billy, that wouldn’t be moral.’ At that moment, he was the preacher and I was the sinner.”

1972: “I know the President as well as anyone outside his immediate family. I have known him since nineteen-fifty, and I have great confidence in his personal honesty. I voted for him because I know what he’s made of. “Kennedy was no intellectual—I mean, he was written up by the Eastern press as an intellectual because he agreed with the Eastern Establishment. But Nixon is a true intellectual, and he is a student, particularly a student of history. In that respect, he’s a DeGaulle type.”

1973: “I have known him a long time, and he has a very strong sense of integrity.”

1974: “What comes through in these tapes is not the man I have known for many years.”

1975: “He’s suffered a lot, but religiously he has grown.”

1976: “I understand how there’s a piece that’s come out about him at some dinner party not long ago, drinking and using profanity and all those things like that again. I haven’t seen it yet, but—. I don’t understand it. The last several times I’ve seen him, I thought he—I mean, I really had the feeling he’s gotten over all that. But this thing now that’s just come out, if it’s true—.”

1977: “I wasn’t really one of his confidants, either to have a game of golf or to sit down and have a serious discussion. I didn’t really move at the level with Nixon that the press thought I did.”

where his heart and treasure lay. Nor does Frady mention the late oil baron J. Howard Pew, once introduced by Graham to a Madison Square Garden crowd as “a man I go to for advice as much as any layman in America.”

Thus oriented, Graham naturally took such stands as knocking the Senate for its censure of McCarthy. But like Nixon, Graham promotes the idea that his stature has increased a cubit or two, that a new Graham comes broadened by experience and chagrined by youthful excess. Frady and Pollock show that this has about as much validity in Graham’s case as in Nixon’s. If some numbers of the McCarthy era dropped from the Graham repertoire, the reason lay more in the shifting tastes of the fans than any change in the stars. So Graham can still perform to the satisfaction of Park in Korea and the generals in Brazil.

The banality of Graham’s intellect can take one’s breath away. Frady got his cool analysis of Nixon’s fall: “I think there was definitely demon power involved. He took all those sleeping pills that would give him a low in the morning and a high in the evening, you know. And all through history, drugs and demons have gone together....”

Maybe a bit gullible at times, Frady holds a straight face as Graham reports that he cried on reading Nixon’s profanities in the transcripts. If Graham indeed shed tears, they may have been tears of joy for such a godsend. At a time when he desperately needed to say something, the expletives gave him a heavenly chance to moralize without confronting anything substantive.

Sympathizers indulgently suppose that Graham is naive and lets himself be used. Frady shows us how Graham learns to be used, and how his deliberately willed naivety makes him “a parable of American righteousness.” Cold to suggestions that he get seminary training, Graham learned early and well that mass evangelism went faster when he avoided complex thoughts and just preached a straight fundamentalist Bible. He grins and acknowledges that he cannot explain all the contradictions. But what he can do is refuse to think about them and assure others that they, too, can get the blessing without having to wrestle.

Similarly with American righteousness. Graham cannot explain all the deeds that make some people question, but he can pass over them so lightly that
his followers keep their minds at ease. If Mylai threatens our complacency, he quickly trivializes it with the observation that all have had their Mylais in the thoughtless word or deed. Graham can preach all night about God’s judgment on America and never speak a line that might annoy the most super of patriots or endanger his welcome at the White House. Thus a minister who even now might annoy the most super of patriots remains unable to voice a moral judgment that all have had their Mylais in the nation, but a reflection of the conscience operative in Connally’s America. Graham followers may hear about billions of their tax dollars going to the CIA every year, but they certainly don’t want to hear about their use. America’s moral superiority to nations that spy and do other nasty things might seem weaker if they thought about Americans spying, bribing, overthrowing governments, planning assassinations, and teaching dictators the methodology of torture. In The Powers That Be David Halberstam reports that in 1965, when CBS showed a film of Marines destroying a Vietnamese village and the villagers, it got hit with frenzied phone calls from the enraged saying Americans don’t do such things and how dare CBS show Americans doing such things. One of the calls came from a close friend of Graham’s, the president of the United States. As in some other controversies, there was no danger of leaking secrets to the Vietnamese, who knew quite well what they were enduring. But Johnson worried that Americans might not exploit their power to the fullest unless they remained free of inner reservations about their own righteousness, and about the interests they were serving.

Johnson needed an Amaziah to warn, “Prophecy not again any more at Bethel, for it is the king’s chapel.” Meeting the need, Graham would step forward with a rebuke when Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke against the war. Later, as people asked Graham to exert his influence with Nixon and counsel restraint, he explained that he was a New Testament evangelist, not an Old Testament prophet. But luckily, whereas New Testament evangelists have often been run out of town, the well-to-do in cities across the nation compete for a chance to finance the Graham “crusades.”

The kingdom of Graham’s highest ambition, Frady shows, is not money or pleasure or power, but popularity. And this he has gained beyond measure by his gift for sensing what people want to hear and his eagerness to give them, especially the better sort, what they want. Like other celebrities, Graham may find his fame a nuisance at times. After a TV appearance, a pack of fans come running up before he can make his escape: “Dr. Graham, do you think this generation will see the Second Coming?” Verily, he has his reward. But more seriously, Graham’s status means he got his information on King direct from J. Edgar Hoover, on Vietnam from General Westmoreland. And he cannot doubt Authority.

Using a technique in some dispute, Frady often lets critics of Graham get their licks in without being identified. But one quote is too good to ignore: “What I want to know is, how can a man spend thirty years preaching the gospel, and with maybe only two or three exceptions, not have one mayor, one governor, one banker, one chairman

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of the board, one president of a Chamber of Commerce, one Defense Department official, one political party chairman—not one—speak a single ill word against him. You ask me if there's anything finally tragic about Graham in all this? Lord knows, it's tragic.”

It must be admitted that the nation as a whole must share responsibility for what Graham (and Nixon) became. We would have gotten different behavior had we been a nation that rewarded different behavior. Amaziah has no binding ties to any political slant. If the king says “war on poverty,” Amaziah will say “war on poverty.” If the king says “exit cold war; enter détente,” Amaziah will say “exit cold war; enter détente.” Like a mirror, he only shows us what we are. If America ever develops a better conscience, Graham will be the first to pick it up on his radar and proclaim it, without compromise.

Ethics, Functionalism, and Power in International Politics
by Kenneth W. Thompson
(Louisiana State University Press; xi + 170 pp.; $10.95)

Sidney A. Rand

The author has long been concerned about moral issues related to statecraft and diplomacy; this volume builds on those interests and moves several issues into sharp focus. At first impression the title seems too ambitious. Such large and profound issues seem to require more than these few pages. One suspects Thompson would agree—the preface describes the book as a “first step” in an effort to deal “somewhat more critically [than some other recent attempts] with the main currents of international thought.” In that, the book succeeds.

Thompson is Robert Kent Gooch Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia and director of the White Burkett Miller Center for Public Affairs. Until recently he was vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation, with responsibilities for programs in international cooperation in agriculture, education, and health. His overriding concern is with values where he, along with others, senses a crisis. The book abounds in straightforward, even categorical, statements about the inevitability of moral concerns and the possibility of dealing with them. “If there is a way out of the present impasse—and no one reading history can be sanguine that historical trends are easily reversed—it is visible along the lines marked out by three propositions: 1) We need to rediscover and school ourselves in the ancient tradition of moral reasoning; 2) Whatever our satisfaction with general principles and truths, we should understand that values become powerful only in context; and 3) Where higher truths are involved, it is in their ordering character that they serve mankind, in their placing of the practical and immediate in tension with the ideal always lying beyond human reach.” In the epilogue Thompson acknowledges the influences that mark the work, notably those of Hans J. Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr.

The first chapter is on the subject of values, the second on “ethics in war and peace,” the third on “functionalism and world order,” and the fourth on “the problems of power, nationalism and the future.” In fairly broad strokes the author spells out his position on each topic. The reader is left to fill in the details, but the basic assumptions are clear: the need for consideration of morality and values, the impossibility of an exclusively “idealist” or “realist” position on international issues, and the root problem of pride on the part of strong nations such as the United States. He emphasizes that pride too easily becomes the stance out of which a nation’s relationships with other nations flow, with the result that a wise or practical solution to problems becomes impossible.

The author’s religious perspective is informed by Niebuhr. Emphasis on the tragic element in human existence, the partial nature of solutions to problems, and the possibility of living with ambiguity and unresolved problems are insights Niebuhr stressed again and again. Thompson speaks clearly as one informed by Christian faith and background as well as by experience in international affairs. Absolutists of all varieties will be unhappy with the book. The pacifist, the pragmatist, the cynic, the militarist will all find much to criticize. The position Thompson takes is difficult. He calls for a wrestling with the issues, a willingness to leave some problems unresolved, an open mind about differing points of view, and above all a humility before life’s perplexities. It is easier to be doctrinaire and bring to tough problems some quick solution. But Thompson is concerned about the long view, the “moral” solution.

In speaking of the rapid changes in the world, the author writes: “There is no such thing as one objective response to change, for each of us responds from the ground on which we stand.” On the inevitability of a concern for values: “Man’s problems are too overwhelming, his perplexities too unsettling, and the burden of his choices too oppressive for him not to seek meaning where he can find it.” And words that echo a lesson learned by many recently: “The 1960’s and 1970’s have taught...that responsibility must be the handmaiden of freedom.”

Thompson refers more than once to his being reared in a parsonage, to the pioneers who settled the prairies of the Middle West, to his mother who taught by her example much of the basic sense of values and commitment that Thompson holds. It is refreshing to observe that a man of Thompson’s scholarly ability and worldly-wise approach still finds at the core of his being the marks of a heritage that many would count passé. With perfect openness he owns his past. More than that, he claims it is the past that has molded almost all of us, and seems to recommend that as a nation and a people we reclaim it and live by its precepts. In short, there is piety here. It is a piety that never becomes maudlin, but communicates strength. This is a book one commends to those most involved in making decisions in international affairs. It both haunts and inspires.