

A NEW YORK POLICEMAN AND BILLY GRAHAM

By George Burnham

News Editor, Christianity Today Magazine

New York City—People usually write growling letters to the editor about policemen.

Conrad S. Jensen, captain of one of New York's roughest police precincts, the 23rd, switched the procedure. He wrote to the editor of Life Magazine on the unlikely subject of Billy Graham and his critics.

It was in answer to the views in Life of a theologian, Reinhold, Niebuhr, and a practicing pastor, Dr. John Sutherland Bonnell, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Since the letter isn't likely to see the light of print, unless it appears here, portions of it are quoted as follows:

"I am aware that my scholastic background, as compared to Mr. Niebuhr and Mr. Bonnell leaves me only a rung or two off the ground . . . because I am a policeman I encounter the danger of being put to the category of a 'dumb cop.' Notwithstanding, I have no ulterior motives and God knows my heart.

"Nineteen hundred years ago a centurion (a police captain like myself, if you will allow this parallel) stood by the foot of the cross of Christ and made this statement: 'Truly, this was the Son of God.'

"He had just witnessed the crime of all crimes. No doubt he was reluctant to carry out the order to crucify 'this just person.' Whether or not the centurion had time to reflect on the worth of this sacrifice and recognized it as a 'bargain,' as Mr. Niebuhr puts it in his closing statement, I don't know . . . Perhaps the centurion saw the peace of God in the face of the penitent thief and then looked at the other malefactor who refused a 'bargain.' However, both men came to a decision without the benefit of 'Christian historical scholarship.'

"It has been my experience to witness the 'Gospel' of some of those taught by Mrs. Niebuhr. The message is mostly 'birth control' and 'rent control . . .'

"When Mr. Niebuhr calls the Gospel preached by Billy Graham a bargain, he must realize there will come a time when he will have to justify this remark. Jesus also had His critics—His greatest being the intellectual, religious, self-righteous Pharisee, who, no doubt, had a lot of 'historical scholarship.'

"Throughout Mr. Niebuhr's views, he refers to the fact that Billy Graham's approach is 'too simple,' 'less complicated,' 'over-simplified' and 'uncomplex.'

"If America ever needed something simple and uncomplex, it is now . . . The vitals of America are being chewed out by plain ordinary sin and lawlessness.

"It is easy to understand how Mr. Niebuhr has difficulty with the simplicity of Christ. Nicodemus, a religious ruler of his time, asked Jesus, 'How can these things be?' He tripped over his historical scholarship and fell flat on his face when Jesus said, in simple words, 'Ye must be born again.'

"God establishes His Word by picturing for us the attitude of some people when they hear the Gospel. 'For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.' When Mr. Niebuhr puts the Gospel of Christ, faithfully proclaimed by Billy Graham, into the basement with other bargains, close-outs and items reduced for clearance, I believe he verifies the verse above.

"Apparently, man will ever labor to put God into a pattern that fits his miserable, finite, inadequate intellect.

"I think God that Jesus was not 'marked down' for

my benefit, but was 'sent down' to pay the price of my sinfulness. Also, I thank God that I am just foolish enough to believe that salvation comes by faith in the sinless Son of God. As long as Billy Graham preaches the 'unsearchable riches of Christ' I shall pray for him and those that labor with him."

Lots of folks probably will disagree with Captain Jensen. They can tell him so most any day at the 23rd precinct headquarters. It will be easy to spot him. He is the big, tough-looking fellow in charge.

THE SECOND BLESSING

By C. W. Ruth

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

"I knew Jesus and he was precious to my soul; but I found something within that would not be sweet, and patient and kind; I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and when I gave him my will he came in, and took out all that would not be sweet and patient and kind, and then he shut the door." Thus testified George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, more than two centuries ago. After he "knew Jesus" there was still "something within," which was antagonistic to the spiritual life implanted; nor was this experience peculiar to him alone.

Such is indeed the experience of every newborn and truly regenerated soul. While they may not understand the subject of entire sanctification, and perhaps never have heard of the "second blessing," yet, a young convert seldom goes three months in the newly found experience, until he becomes painfully conscious that there remains a "something within" that hinders, and retards his spiritual progress, and often becomes a source of much distress.

The manifestations of that "something" vary, but frequently the first showing of it is in a man-fearing spirit, or anger, or a disposition to doubt, or an unforgiving spirit, etc. Then comes frequently the temptation that perhaps after all there had not been a true conversion or these things would not manifest themselves; and because they had not been properly instructed, many have wearied of the conflict and struggle and have cast away their confidence.

The Bible name for that something is "the carnal mind," which "is enmity against God: for it not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

Paul said of the Corinthians, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ," but because they were "babes in Christ," said "I have fed you with milk. . . ye are yet carnal", thus showing that the carnal mind is not eradicated in conversion, but still continues in those who are "in Christ"; for a babe in Christ is just as certainly "in Christ" as a mature saint is "in Christ."

Then again the Bible speaks of that "something" as "the flesh." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Here the dual nature is clearly set forth, and the inward conflict indicated. While the man has "the Spirit" which would not apply to a sinner) he also has a something antagonistic to the Spirit, called here "the flesh." But in verse 24, we read, "And they that are Christ's have

(Continued on Page 4)