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hard time getting others to see that it was even reasonable.

As for myself, I am no longer at B.C. nor am I in Tertianship. I requested my Provincial a few times over the past few years to be allowed to live independently of the Society and the priesthood for a year or so. For me it was to be like a pilgrimage (which was once a required part of Jesuit training), a testing. And unbelievably enough I was finally allowed to go. So in September I came to Cleveland, got a job as a blueprint-folder and a room by myself. At first it was intensely exciting, a real close shave with starvation, but gradually my wealth grew and my personal contacts, and now I am a real bourgeois.

I am trying to decide now whether to move into the negro section of town and get a job there. I find the people I am now in contact with are quite Christian and though not wealthy are not destitute either. But I am not sure I can with charity break with some of them ~~whom I am of~~ are in real need of help, even from me whom they do not know to be a priest.

As for the summer, it's all just probabilities. I hope to be back at the camp again and then resume some activity in the Society. I think you should make your plans independent of where I may be, because my future is so doubtful - I have permission to stay out another year, though at present I don't think I'll use it.

It has been very profitable for me. I'll keep you informed of where I will be, as I learn about it myself and perhaps we can get together. Thanks again for the very fine letter.

Your friend,
Father Sampson

find it gone through some unexpected confusion.

By then I was informed that I stood a good chance of being sent in June to a superb mission in Ecuador. As a result I started to study Spanish, a language I had last seen in high school.

Now I am to return to the Society on Monday and to be stationed at Nativity Parish, a Puerto-Rican parish the Jesuits have in lower Manhattan. It will give me plenty of practice in speaking Spanish as well as in working in a poor area.

As for Ecuador in June, I will have to discuss it with the Provincial but the chances seem about even that I will be going. Naturally, I have been reading up on the set-up there, and it is in a very splendid mess. After many years of effort things seem much worse now than when they started. If I don't go there, I will, I suppose, be at Nativity for the year.

Your reaction to ~~the~~ Kafka was just the opposite of my own. I liked the incomprehensibility of the court as a superb literary image of the

great gulf between the finite and the infinite.[27]
He has a way of portraying the uselessness of human effort that I find a good reflection of the teaching of Christ. If you want to get more depressed, try "The Castle" and a short story "The Great Wall of China." I can still remember how much I liked them, though I read them many years ago.

He rejects all attempts at building up the city of man - he makes it plain that this goal is a waste of energy, a light beckoning to us from a swamp; if man's life makes sense, it doesn't consist in being a part of a great human accomplishment. I agree with this so I like to read him. "The Great Wall of China" is rather short and I think he is here at his best.

Also my reaction to the historical study of the New Testament was obviously different from yours. I found it a tremendous stimulus and inspiration, but I think this is more than can be handled in a letter. I have kept up my reading in the area. ~~and~~ Perhaps I reacted

differently because before my study of it, 28
the Bible had never held much appeal for me.

If I do get down to Washington we could go into that as well as your "mystical or intuitive certitude of Jesus' personal interest" which is a closely related subject.

This past year has given me much time to do a lot of thinking about those two problems which are somewhat(?) central.

If you can get up to N.Y. don't hesitate. I should have time. But if you can, warn me on it. Till then.

Your friend,
Father Sampson

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6/13/66

Church of the Nativity
44 SECOND AVENUE
NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

June 13, 1966

Dear Ed,

It was nice to hear from ym and to learn that everything is going reasonably well.

I hope the next letter ym get from me will be written in Ecuador. Tomorrow I start going for my visa and I should leave within 3 or 4 days, a week at most. One plan involves my returning for a few weeks in September or October, so I may see ym then - who knows?

Your summer work sounds tremendous. I'm not sure but I think Woodstock theologians used to work there also - but don't hold that against

the place.

It sounds like a very nice year for your brother also. What would be the aim of your year in Germany - an M.A.? - would that be out if you decide to go into social work?

As for your lines on not being able to prove Christianity from history, or philosophy etc., would you also hold that one cannot Know from history etc. that Christianity is the true faith? When a man reads history with 'perfect objectivity', will he reach no conclusion one way or the other? Will there be a more probable opinion - or are the facts themselves absolutely neutral? Do he really getting at neutral facts anyway - isn't history written by ~~un~~partial human beings?

Or do you hold that what I cannot prove, I do not Know?

As for our own conscience - do you feel that we can safely presume that our ~~may~~ conscience is ~~all~~ always correct? if not, do you feel that we can follow it anyway whether it is misguided or not? or by following one's conscience do you ~~mean~~ include the advice of others, the experience of others, history philosophy etc. - in other words, man's best? or do you also see a need for

is written by a nun. She very carefully discusses poverty and religions and she makes some general suggestions that sound like the future of Nativity parish - if all goes well.

I'm also reading Bonhoeffer's Cost of Discipleship and I really like it. I'm sure you would, too - it's the Imitation without the monastic physical separation. I left my copy in my confessional last Saturday and someone stole it. They're going to be surprised.

Also Mc Kenzie's Power and Wisdom on the personalist interpretation of the NT which I find as close to the Gospel as you can come.

Other than these - history, as usual. Acton, Council of Constance, Spain in the 16th Century, and Huxley's Grey Eminence. None of them is the perfect work - recent, Anglican, limited in time, from original sources, on a religious figure, etc. - but they all approach it enough.

Well, Ed, you'll be hearing from me again and I hope I can see you again when I return.

Your friend,

Father Sampson

XXXXXXXXXXX THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME

XXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX

I have done things and had things happen to me and nobody knows about it. So I am writing about it so that people will know. Although there are a lot of things I could tell about, I will just tell about the jumping because that is the most important. It gave me the biggest thrill. I mean high jumping, standing and running. You probably never heard of a standing high jumper but that's what I was. I was the greatest jumper ever was.

I was going to high school and I wasn't on any team. I couldn't be because I had to work for a drugstore and wash bottles and deliver medicine and sweep the floor. So I couldn't go out for any of the teams because the job started soon's school was over. I am used to grab to the fellows about how old man Patch made me wash so many bottles and so they got to calling me Bottles Barton and I didn't like it. They'd call me Bottles in front of the girls and the girls'd giggle.

Once I poked one of the fellows for a calling me Bottles. He was a big fellow and he played on the football team and I wouldn't have hit him because I was little and couldn't fight very well. But he called me Bottles before Anna Louise Daniels and she laughed and I knew it was her I should have taken the first poke at. I was more mad at her than the football player although it was him pulling my xxxx nose and sitting on me.

The next day I met Anna Louise in the hall going to the ancient-history class and she was with a couple of other girls and I tried to go past without them noticing me. I don't know why but I had a funny feeling like as if somebody was going to throw a rock at me or something. Anna Louise looked at me and giggled.

"Hello, old Rubbernose," she said.

The girls giggled and I hurried down the hall and felt sick and mad and kind of like I was running away from a fight, although nobody'd expect me to fight a girl. And so they called me Bottles sometimes and Rubbernose other times and always whoever was near would laugh. They didn't think it was funny because Jimmy Wilkins was called Scrubby or Jack Harris was called Doodles. But they thought it was funny I was called Rubbernose and Bottles and they never got tired of laughing. It was a new joke every time.

Scrubby pitched for the baseball team and Doodles was quarterback on the football team. I could have pitched noChit games and I could have made touchdowns from my own ten-yard line. I know I could. I had it all figured out. I went over how I'd throw the ball and how the batter'd miss and it was easy. I figured out how to run and dodge and straight-arm and that was easy too. But I didn't get the chance because I had to go right to Patch's drugstore after school was out.

Old man Patch was a pretty good guy but his wife she was nothing but a crab. I'd wash Bottles and old man Patch he would look at them and not say anything. But Mrs. Patch, old lady Patch, she would look at the bottles and wrinkle her nose and make me wash half of them over again. When I swept up at night she'd always find some corner I'd missed and she'd have me out. She was fat and her hair was all straggly and I wondered why in the dickens old man Patch ever married her, although I guess maybe she didn't look so awful when she was a girl. She couldn't have been very pretty though.

They lived in back of the drugstore and when people came in at noon or at six o'clock x either old man or old lady Patch'd come out still chewing their food and look at the customer and swallow and then ask him what he wanted.