



Tuesday, July 27<sup>th</sup>

7/29/64 9

Toby & I have had some further thoughts about our conversation - and here are some of them.

It seems everything that I'm currently reading is very pertinent in some small way. First of all, a book you would thoroughly enjoy. Tolstoy's Resurrection. In it Tolstoy attacks organized religion with great vigor and places love of neighbor at the top. You would especially like his description of the Orthodox Mass on pp 134-9. It's in a Signet Classic Paperback edition: 75¢. The theme of love of neighbor above all, and that anything else is hypocrisy goes right through it and is presented very powerfully. So your views are not new.

Secondly, a book that is very uneven, and usually quite hard to read, Bonner's Rite + Man. Especially pertinent is his discussion of comparative religion in the first two chapters. He is well read in the field and he comes to some interesting conclusions - especially in chapter two. It would provide a different opinion from your own in this area.

Thirdly, and least importantly, a study of St. Anselm by an Anglican, Southern. The interesting part is towards the end when, in passing, he discusses the ups and downs of the Immaculate Conception controversy in the early Middle Ages. There had been a feast of the Conception of John the Baptist which, he speculates, may have caused the beginning of the feast to the Virgin. Then the Baptist feast loses out everywhere. When the Normans invade England the Immaculate Conception feast is eliminated in many places, but Anglo-Saxon writers eventually get for it wide acceptance, many years later. The Dominicans strongly opposed it because of Thomas, but it won out. It could hardly be said that the Church simply accepted it without thinking twice about it.

The Bonner book would be worth getting, perhaps from the GSU Library. Even though some parts are unnecessarily filled with jargon, most of it is an excellent current survey of many areas of science that fascinate you.

I also have thought on the issue myself. And I do feel that if you ignore the question of dogma entirely and reduce charity to merely love of neighbor without concerning yourself with God at all, then

1° you are really presuming that either God doesn't care and therefore it is up to us to do the best we can, or that He wants us to do it all by ourselves, either of which is, of course, antecedently possible, but a mere presumption until proven and I'm sure you would not want to be so anti-intellectual as to operate on mere presumptions. What if this is not true, what if the benefits you bring to your fellow man are actually not the greatest benefits you could bring him? What if the God who exists has benefits for man which the truth-possessor can dislodge? Only after an intellectual effort, I think, could these possibilities (and I personally think them actualities) be eliminated.

2° and it's really more of the same. So you feed the poor slob and clothe him and educate him and enable him to live a relatively comfortable 50 years of human existence. Is a comfortable existence such a great thing? Is this all that is available to him? Isn't this dream the cause of the nausea that the existentialists talk of? If this is all you can offer a man, this extended, dragged-out nightmare of frustration, and if 'adjusting' to this nightmare is emotional maturity, then no wonder our hospitals fill up as we get more & more comfortable.

If you really care about your neighbor, shouldn't you be determined to bring him the best that you can bring? Should you be satisfied to offer him an easing of his pain, a sedative, when there might be a cure around available for those who use their heads? Aren't the problems of life still unsolved after you've got a roof over your head?

If you presume that these problems can never be solved anyway (or if you have proven this), then I can see it. But if you are quite sure that there are solutions and that great happiness is available for your neighbor, then charity demands that you get it to him if at all possible, at any price.

You know how highly I value charity but and how important I consider simple daily acts of love of neighbor. But charity must be realistic. It must bring the greatest benefit to my neighbor. I must find out what that is and this involves a search for truth.

I'll be seeing you one of these days and we can continue then.

William Sampson, S.J.

12  
12/13/64

BOSTON COLLEGE  
Chestnut Hill 67, Massachusetts

December 13, 1964

Department of Geology

Dear Ed,

I am sorry this is so late but I have had very little time until now and your questions actually require years to answer!

1° Do the certitude of God + existence which you spoke of one of things that comes and goes with the emotions? No. I don't feel as if I had a tooth removed (perhaps because of novacaine + earphones, etc.) but I am certain it has been removed because I can see it, or the dentist told me, etc. - the because of the evidence, in other words. Certitude is related to the intellect, not the emotions. Much more could be said on this.

2° Can certitude be examined intellectually or is it achieved by just living the way faith in God would entail? Both. You can examine your certitude with your reason, but you need not make a close intellectual examination in order to achieve it. It takes courage to live as if God existed, that is, the God who is a perfect father for us. But if (for any number of reasons) we live in this way, we become certain that God is and that He is a perfect father. Our <sup>USA</sup> motto is "In God we trust." We hope and believe - trust - that we will be shown someday that God has always been to us a perfect father, no matter ~~what~~ how things may have appeared. This trust - this willingness to accept His word that our courageous living will not be shown to have been a mistake, a waste of energy, a waste of time, a deception - this trust (or living the faith) leads to deepening certitude. But certitude can be examined intellectually and we did this in the training for 4 years. What is the evidence for God's existence? Many people must examine this question because of their intellectual difficulties - others because of their intellectual ability simply must go into it and should. Much, much more could be said on this.

3° Is it a waste of time to examine what is certitude? Of course not, if it is 'bugging' you. In fact, you will be made (at least they used to) to do this in any Catholic college. Much, much, much more could be said on this.

4° What is an intellectual explanation of certitude? In brief of the toothache; at length - it would take years.

5° Should I just pray for certitude? Not necessarily. You should always pray for<sup>13</sup> ever-deepening certitude. But you have an intellect and God may want you to use it in order to achieve a deeper certitude.

6° "I know it as a fact - but how is one intellectually certain" ← from your letter, but  
Know as a fact = intellectually certain.

Stated over simply: if the connection between what my mind states and what really is, is a firm connection, then we say that the statement is certain. Certitude is a quality of my intellectual statement concerning reality. It is present when there is a firm link between reality and the mind. If there is no obvious link between reality and the mind then ~~we~~ certitude is not present in the statement of the mind. "I don't know ~~too~~ perhaps what color you prefer." This statement is certain. "You prefer blue". If the previous statement is certain then this is uncertain.

: if the link between what my mind states and what really is, is a loose, doubtful connection, then we say that the statement is doubtful.

So certainty is a question of intellect, not emotion.

Say I passed out in the dentist's chair. I wake up and ask myself, "Is my tooth out?" I feel with my tongue but the novacaine has deadened all sensation. The doctor's out of the room. I can't get any evidence. I may feel that it's not out yet because of the lack of pain, or that it is out because of the pain - but certitude arises from evidence present to the intellect not from an emotion. (Now that I think of it this isn't a good example.)

I hope this helps a bit. I began a book this summer on the Act of Faith in French, Le Problème de l'Acte de Foi, but I think it would be better to wait until after you have your college course in this question. Get hold of a college text and see what it has to say (provided it is post 1920, and preferably post 1955). Just consult the index on 'certitude' or 'faith'. → = after

Meanwhile, how are you? How's the class and the professors? There's a likelihood that I'll be in Washington, maybe in February for a few days. If so, I'll write you beforehand and we can get together.

I'll probably be in New York after the first of the year.

I hope everything is going well; meanwhile I ask you, Ed, to remember me in your prayers and I assure you that I will remember you in mine.

Fr. Sam psm

BOSTON COLLEGE

Chestnut Hill 67, Massachusetts

1/22/65

January 22, 1965

Dear Ed,

It was good to hear from you, especially since you had solved your problem. Actually that is a very crucial question and I'm glad you found a good explanation.

Ordinarily I don't read St. Thomas, but at your suggestion I read him on unity and perfection. Do you have Fr. Ciolfi in any of your courses? He is a very close friend of mine and he's very alert to the developments in the

Liturgy. He was putting on the new liturgy 8 years ago, when we were at Woodstock. 15

Now that graduation from Georgetown is approaching so rapidly ... It's hard to believe that I'm this old.

Judging by all the activity you're involved in, the Sodality, the tutoring and meeting social workers, it doesn't look as if you have the time for spiritual direction. But if you can get someone really good, it would be a big advantage (and free).

Probably by now you have solved the problem on adoration. Really it includes the acts of faith, hope and love and they are all contained in the act of love.

## BOSTON COLLEGE

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It expresses itself in obedience to His Known will and a desire to Know His will where all is unclear. (Just as the act of contrition expresses itself in our forgiveness for others, blotting out their evil acts as we wish ours to be blotted out.) The first part of the Our Father is an act of adoration. We recognize his holiness, the infinite gap that exists between us and that He has bridged with his adoption of us. Then we refer to His will, as I mentioned above.

There is a striking expression of adoration as love mixed with awe and a desire for union of wills in

17

the "Wreck of the Deutschland", a poem of Gerard Manley Hopkins, stanzas 9 and 10. (and in the opening line

"Thou mastering me  
God!" )

Another example is the Halleluja Chorus. All the other acts will fade and adoration - love of God, as personal and supremely holy - will be our activity in heaven.

I don't think I'll be in Washington until later but I'm sure I'll get there this semester. I hope you made  
action.

I would appreciate a remembrance in your prayers  
and I remember you in mine. Your friend,

Father Sampson, S.J.

Ed,

5/6/65?

16

I was to a choral concert, the other night in which Mr. Walsh took part. It was excellent. Also with Mr. Teti and Mr. Walsh I went to Holy Cross to see the ex-students. They all seem in great shape. I talked at length with George Donahue.

Otherwise all is very quiet - very

little outside activity.

17

Please Keep me informed on your summer plans and I'll do the same.

In the meantime I appreciate you praying for me - even visiprally - and I will continue in my (semi) mystic fashion to pray for you.

Your brother in Christ,  
Father Sampson