CHAPTER XV

THE MIND OF THE LORD OF THE WORLD

(Q. 84-89)

MOUNTAIN climbing and deep-sea diving appeal to only a sporting few among men. There is a considerable danger in each, increased, perhaps, by the hint each carries of the tragic character of extreme height or depth to the human individual. He knows if he goes down deep enough he will be crushed by outside pressure; and if he goes up high enough he may suffocate from lack of oxygen before he explodes from lack of outside pressure, but suffocation is small comfort. Indeed, it is probably the element of comfort rather than the fear of danger that keeps most men on the prosaic level of smooth earth. Whatever can be said of the thrill of heights and depths neither can compare in sheer comfort with a sleepy street on a summer evening or a soft chair and a warm fire on a wintry night.

The most comfort-loving man cannot dodge all heights and depths; but he can dislike them wherever he meets them. Usually that dislike is prompt and unmistakable. Even though we have stepped into an express elevator of our own free will, its almost instantaneous plunge down thirty stories leaves us with a sense of incredulousness and blurred fright. It is not so much a matter of danger or discomfort as it is that we have simply come down too fast; we are not built on the express model, we labor up step by step and come down even more cautiously. Our minds work that way, our wills work that way and, as far as we can arrange it, all the details of life follow the same pattern. But our arrangements are by no means sufficient to

cover the whole span of life. With no warning whatsoever, we look into the eyes of another and suddenly realize there has been a mutual plunging into the depths of a human soul; we are numbed and stumble away in a kind of dazed unbelief. Genius may labor over stubborn material for hours on end, then suddenly there is a flashing insight that sends the mind into the heights like a frightened angel scurrying home; even genius is slightly dazed, incredulous, though its disbelief be hidden in a competent silence.

If we look down from the heights through the window of a speeding plane, railroads, ships, cities and forests look like toys; they can hardly be real—again that note of dazed disbelief. If you can picture a man getting that same view without moving a foot off the ground, you have some idea of his incredulousness before the fact of his own knowledge. His mind puts him off to one side of the universe, or above it, giving him a plane passenger's view of the whole as if he were no part of it. Without any warning, that human mind plunges past the surface of men and things down to the very depths to reveal, not something about men and things, but men and things themselves; and in a fraction of time that defies analysis, with an absence of intervening steps that jars us out of our apathetic plodding. It is no wonder that this thing of knowledge has been a prime problem for philosophers from the beginning; it is no wonder that they have approached the problem in a somewhat sour humor, irritated, almost angry at the speed, the mystery, the heights and depths of it.

Moreover, the problem has an immediate and crucial interest for every individual. For if it is true that appetite must follow knowledge, then it is precisely because of this mysterious, farsweeping, universal knowledge of man that human appetite surpasses that of the animals. It is because man can search the heights and the depths that he

can be satisfied only by the supreme good. It is, then, the universal, abstract knowledge of man that is the immediate source and explanation of his freedom in the face of limited, imperfect goods; it is this distinctly human knowledge that gives him dominance over the physical world and himself; it is this that ultimately explains the responsibilities of human life, the possibilities of personal success and failure, of victory and defeat, of moral life and its ultimates of heaven and hell as being within reach of human activity. In a word, it is because man has a distinctly human knowledge that he has distinctly human desires and so distinctly human acts; that human life lies on a plane just below the angels and far above the brute world of matter. This, then, is no mere academic problem, this problem of knowledge; it is not to be shrugged off but to be painstakingly investigated.

It is not strange that the philosophy of our day has lost no share of the universal interest in the problem of knowledge. What is surprising is that the activity of modern philosophy should be centered chiefly in denying the humanity of man's knowledge rather than in trying to explain it. But the fact is plain. This opposition to the humanity of man's knowledge is one of the chief grounds for the rejection of the scholastic answer to the problem—the so-called naive notion of the scholastics that the knowledge of man exceeds the content of sense knowledge yet takes its rise from the senses and the sensible world. The moderns have rejected one or the other of these two elements or the conjunction of the two. One school will insist that the world of sense is a world of illusions, it is the mind that we are projecting and playing with when we play the game of knowing the world about us; the other completely disregards intellectual activity, or tries to, reducing such activity to the world of the sensible, automatic, blind, instinctive forces. In this way the heights and the depths, the mystery and speed and all the

rest are done away with by the simple expedient of blowing up the sensible world or of strangling the mind of men; quite a high price to pay for the comfort of level territory.

The technique of escape from the problem of knowledge is by no means new. It was tried when philosophy was young and many a time since; still the world goes on and the minds of men go on. But a man who is trying to run away is not to be discouraged by previous failures; inevitably the technique would be tried again. The modern attempt can trace its intellectual roots to the beginning of the modern era when Descartes assumed his artificial chasm between the mind and the world of reality, an assumption that forced him to build the fantastic bridge of totally unwarranted parallelism. A fantastic bridge to span an assumed chasm seems fair enough; but men took it seriously.

Kant gave this assumption a philosophical flavor by apparently justifying it, when, with typical modern clumsiness, he rushed to the "rescue" of the humanity of man's knowledge against the positivistic attacks of Locke, Berkely and Hume. The rescue was effected by murdering the victim. Kant proceeded by assuming that what is not given *formally* in experience comes *wholly* from the mind; such an unqualified statement as "sugar is sweet" is obviously not given formally in experience for all sugar cannot be experientially tested for its sweetness, so the statement must take its rise wholly from the mind. Both of these elements of Kant's original assumption were then developed independently to their logical conclusion of naturalism and idealism. The problem of knowledge was escaped again by the same technique of denying or disregarding one or the other of its constituent elements, the world or the mind. Still there were the stubborn facts remaining unexplained: both the world and the mind refused to be snubbed.

Coming down closer to our own day, Bergson made a polite gesture towards intellect as he stabbed it in the back by his contention that the intellect was not an instrument of valid knowledge and reality was so fluid a thing that it could not be known without being stopped in its flow and so falsified. The result was that we had neither a worth-while mind nor a world with which we could come into contact. The intellect of man was not a valid investigator of the world of reality; it was a falsifier, a maker of useful (not true) concepts whose whole purpose was action. William James accepted the Bergsonian gesture with open arms, developed his Pragmatism (or disregard of truth in favor of utility), thus turning a valid scientific method of inquiry into an immensely popular and thoroughly worthless system of philosophy.

Today we reap the fruits of this wild sowing. For it is our age that has come sharply up against the express attempt at a thorough invalidation of the intellect and its activity or even a downright denial of the existence of the intellect. That means that we are faced with a denial of human knowledge, with all the consequences of such a denial for philosophy, science, human activity and human life. We are the victims of a modern "rescue" of men by modern "champions" of man's humanity.

In an earlier chapter, it was shown that the Church had been forced to come to the rescue of the humanity of the very nature of man and to defend the freedom of human action. The same is true of man's knowledge. Just as the Church insisted that man was human, not animal, not angelic, not divine; just as she insisted he was master of his own actions, not the slave of blind forces within or without himself; so she insists on the humanity of his knowledge, the validity of his intellect. Man's knowledge is not the mere sense knowledge of the animals, it is not the innately perfect knowledge of the angels, it is not the sum total of all knowledge as is God's; it is the knowledge

proportionate to human nature, to a spiritual soul informing a material body—a rational knowledge taking its rise from the senses and the world of the senses.

In this matter, the difference between these two, both claiming championship of man, is that the one not only admits the existence of the spiritual, it sees the spiritual, not as something extraordinary, not as supernatural, but as an integral part of the natural order; the other, impressed by the vividness, the size, the multiplicity and the constancy of the sensible world and sense impressions, cannot tear its eyes away from this fascinating part of nature and so can see nothing else. The nature of man is a startling thing in the universe; it is a fusion of the material and the spiritual, the link binding together the spiritual and material world. But man is not, from that fact, a supernatural creature, a freak in nature, an upstart that must be reduced to a lower level. His knowledge, too, is a startling thing, taking its rise in the physical world and reaching to spiritual heights that far surpass anything in the world beneath man; but it is not, from that fact, an unnatural, preternatural or supernatural phenomenon, it is not to be treated as necessarily an illusion or an absurd paradox that defies understanding. It is entirely natural; and quite naturally it possesses such spiritual characteristics as immateriality, immutability, universality and necessity.

A man's knowledge of a stone, a tree or another man immediately leaps far ahead of the particular notes of this stone, this tree or this man and presents the knower with a concept that is universally valid, one true of all stones, another true of all trees, another true of all men. It is coin of the realm of truth that is accepted even in eternity. It is not only universal, it is as necessarily stable as the natures of those things known, because it is precisely those *natures* that are known. As long as a circle cannot have its nature changed and still be a circle, as long as man

remains man, that is, as long as the essences of things cannot be falsified, this knowledge remains immutable.

That knowledge exists in a spiritual soul, in the immaterial faculty of intellect, in the only way in which it can exist there; that is, freed from the limitations of matter. It outstrips the contingency, the changeableness, the singularity of the physical world, taking on the characteristics of the spiritual world, yet faithfully representing the world with which it brings a man into immediate contact. There is indeed truth in the concepts of wetness, of beauty and of humanity; though it is not wetness but wet things, not beauty but beautiful things, not humanity but humans that have physical existence in the sensible world.

Yet, in spite of its decidedly spiritual nature, it is a serious error to trace this knowledge to any but a source proportionate to that composite nature that is man's. Certainly we do not know things, as God does, by simply looking at ourselves, knowing our own essence. A concentrated and exclusive study of ourselves may teach us some surprising things, but the number of things it will not teach us is positively staggering; and, if we continue this one-sided study long enough, we shall end up by not even knowing ourselves. We are men, not gods. We could know all things in our own souls only if the things existed there beforehand to be known. They do exist in God, the divine exemplar, the model to which all things were made. We have only the form proper to our nature, the substantial form which is our spiritual soul; it has the capacity to receive unlimited forms of other things by way of knowledge, but only the capacity. A savage of Tierra del Fuego can search his soul from now until doomsday, go into a very trance of introspection, and never come up with the knowledge of an automobile. In other words, we cannot know all things by simply knowing ourselves because we are not the cause of all things.

To a man whom the Lord has delivered up to study, the

story of Catherine of Siena receiving profound knowledge through a miraculous infusion of ideas has an appeal that may well be tinged with envy. Not an hour of study went into her knowledge, no single difficulty kept her mind in turmoil for weeks, no book wore down her eyes, no error shook her judgment. Think of it! But do not think of it as the ordinary mode of acquiring human knowledge; that is the way the angels get their knowledge and men are not angels. It hardly seems necessary to argue the point, yet some men have been captivated by the joyous ease of innate ideas and argued that so men knew the world. If this were true, we would never be potential knowers for we would have our knowledge from the beginning. Then, too, there would be the insurmountable difficulty facing us, namely, that men born blind cannot know color and men born deaf cannot know sound. It might also be pointed out as somewhat strange that all men should forget all they naturally know.

Our knowledge does not come pouring into our heads from some outside source such as Plato's separated ideas. Any teacher will testify that nothing can be poured into a student's head, nor even hammered in; the student has to reach out and feed his own mind. As a matter of fact, in such an hypothesis there would be no excuse whatever for man having a body; it would be at best an obstacle and at worst a prison, rather than the essential constituent of his very nature.

The strongest argument against these dreams of easy human knowledge is the facts which clearly indicate that our knowledge takes its rise from sensible things. The apprenticeship of childhood is an absolute requirement for the mastery of adult knowledge. The sensible world acts upon our senses giving rise to that sense knowledge we have in common with the animals, writing its permanent record in the phantasms or images of the imagination. So far sense knowledge carries us and no farther

It is the gay knowledge of children, full of vidid colors, rippling sounds, swift movement, delicious odors and lingering tastes with none of the animal's fear to tone down its gayety.

From this highest level of sense knowledge, intellectual knowledge takes its rise. That transition from the sensible to the intellectual, however, is not made simple by saying it quickly; it represents difficulties that have been too much for many a philosopher. For the phantasm is sensible, particular, concrete; moreover, no sensible thing can act on a spiritual substance, cannot bump it, squeeze it, tickle its fancy, or take it by the throat. How, then, explain the immaterial, universal, necessary concept in the spiritual intellect coming from such a source?

Admittedly men start off with their minds a blank page; such knowledge as we have, short of a miracle, must take its rise from the senses. It is also unquestionably true that everything in the world of experience is singular and concrete, not universal; while our knowledge is obviously universal. Yet St. Thomas denies that the universals are wholly from the mind, as Kant would have it. That denial is precisely the refusal to admit an identification of "what is not given formally in experience" with "wholly of the mind." Much that we know is not given formally in experience, such a prosaic thing, for example, as the sweetness of sugar; but this does not make it wholly a product of mind. The universality of man's knowledge has some root in the concrete, singular world of experience.

The specific nature of this dog is the same as that of another dog or, indeed, of all dogs. It is precisely the common nature enjoyed by all dogs which makes this creature a dog and not a horse. In technical language, this means that the specific nature, or essence, of the concrete thing is negatively universal. The scholastics called this *ratio* or *essentia*; let us use a word with which we are now familiar and call it a form. It is differentiated in

each dog by individual elements, the elements that contribute the "thisness" of the particular dog. This form of a sensible thing cannot exist in the physical world without individuating elements supplied by matter—a fact that experience forces on our mind; we are not chased by a universal dog or introduced to universal human nature. But it is evident that the specific form itself is not averse to universality; it does, as a matter of fact, exist in many dogs at the same time.

To have this form in its universality, then, means no more than to have it without the individual elements matter has given it; *the universal form does exist fundamentally in things.* Can it be unearthed in some way from particularity, from the "thisness" of the concrete thing? This is the work of the intellect, by the process of abstraction, to make formally universal what was only fundamentally or potentially so.

Since scholasticism has been put in the stocks, this process has become famous; it is one of the missiles most frequently hurled at the hapless scholastic head. All rumors to the contrary, it is not a surgical operation cutting apart the individual and universal elements; it is not a matter of slapping a universal tag on a patently concrete thing at our own subjective pleasure or necessity.

Abstraction is in no sense a separation; it is simply a distinct consideration of the form to the disregard of the particularity of this thing, somewhat as a man might regard the redness of an apple without consideration of its sweetness, or the softness of soap-suds without regard to their taste. It is the same trick mathematics uses in considering quantity without regard to beauty; or that art uses in considering beauty without regard to the mathematician's quantity. Obviously the scholastics have taken out no patent on the process.

We have a faculty of intellect, called the active intellect, whose sole work is to throw light on the sensible image

or phantasm to make the universal stand out from the particular as a spot-light makes one girl stand out from a chorus. This light, focused on the specific nature in the phantasm, enables the intellect to concentrate on its proper object, the universal nature of the thing, to the disregard of the particularizing elements of it.

The result of this distinct consideration, or this process of abstraction, is the intelligible species or form, representing the essence, ratio or form. More strictly, it is certainly not the universal nature existing in the mind in the same way as it exists outside; but it is the same nature existing in the mind in a different way. Whereas in the concrete thing, the dog, for instance, it exists physically, in the mind it exists intentionally; whereas in the dog it was only fundamentally universal, potentially intelligible, in the mind it is formally universal and actually intelligible.

The intelligible species or form is not a sheer luxury; it is indispensable for distinctly human knowledge. This concrete thing is certainly singular and our knowledge is just as certainly universal. If this concrete thing is ever to be known intellectually, it must be made actually universal, actually intelligible. Without such a universalization, the possible intellect (our other intellectual faculty) cannot produce the positive act of knowledge. Let us put it this way. Precisely because the possible intellect is capable of knowing all things, it is not determined to any one, just as the eye, because it is capable of seeing all colors, is not determined to any one. Without such determination there can be no knowledge, just as without some color there can be no sight. The determination of the intellect is by the intelligible species or form. Just as the form or essence gave the universal nature in the physical order resulting in the concrete dog, so it gives the universal nature in the intellectual order resulting in our knowledge of the dog. We might see the whole picture as a double

sharing in the ideas of God: physically, in the order of existence, and intentionally, in the order of knowledge.

A common mistake that has turned many a philosopher against scholasticism centers upon the intelligible species. The notion has somehow got around that the scholastic is never in contact with the world; he knows an intelligible species, an idea, but not the world of reality. As a matter of fact, the intelligible species is not the object known; rather it is that by which we know the thing. It is not the object but the medium; just as light is not that which is seen but that by which color is seen, so the intelligible species is not that which is known but that by which a thing is known. We can, in fact, sail serenely through life without ever suspecting that we have a species, and be none the worse for it; but if we have no suspicion of possessing knowledge, we cannot sail through life, we shall have to be towed. It is only by the reflective, that is, the philosophic, consideration that we advert to the presence of species at all.

Nor does this make our knowledge exclusively universal, barring us forever from an intellectual knowledge of singular things. The *direct* object of our knowledge is the universal; the singular is no less an object, but it is seen *indirectly*, as we might see something from the corner of our eye without looking at it directly. It is, in fact, quite impossible for us to make use of any one of these intelligible species without adverting to the phantasm from which it was abstracted; so that in using any one we must indirectly, obliquely, consider the singular from which it arose. It is by direct intellectual knowledge that I know "man"; but it is also the fruit of intellectual operation that enables me to say "John Smith is a man." The knowledge of the concrete individual "Smith" is intellectual, but indirectly so.

There is no chasm between the intellect and the sensible world; rather there is identity. To know is, in a sense,

to become the thing known; it is to have one's own form physically and the forms of the known things intentionally. Knowledge is a vital action, not a mere passive reception or an automatic response. It is a union so intimate that we cannot so much as consider our act of knowledge without considering the object known; we do not know the act of our intellect knowing, but the act of the intellect knowing *something*.

As it starts off on the long, hard road of knowledge, the baby knows a puppy long before it recognizes the genus brute; for the first things we know are singular things, not universals. Sense knowledge must come first, furnishing the material for intellectual knowledge; and sense knowledge is of particular, singular things. Really, the infant has some vague, blurred knowledge of things at rest, things in motion and things colored, before it begins to play with the puppy. It passes from the mere potentiality of knowledge to actual knowledge; the medium between those two extremes is imperfect or confused knowledge. Thus a man standing on a hill and peering down a long road will first see something approaching; then he will be able to distinguish it as some animal, then as some man and finally he will recognize the individual traveller. The process is the same if considered from the angle of the time element; the child will distinguish a man from other animals before it distinguishes one man from another. In the intellectual order, the same holds true: first we get the more general notion; and only as knowledge gets more perfect does it become less general.

Our progress is necessarily slow, step by step, because the door of our minds will not admit more than one intelligible species at a time; some one or the other may contain many interrelated notions, as one mirror may reflect a roomful of people, but the intellect can no more be actualized by different forms at the same time than a man can run in different directions at once. If we were to stop

this consideration of intellectual knowledge right here, we would not have gone beyond what the scholastics call "simple apprehension," that is, the knowledge of things immediately perceived through intelligible species.

Of course we cannot stop here; this is only the first of three steps. First we grasp the essences of things; then we compare these forms one with another, tack on or deny certain properties, accidents, habits, circumstances, a process that is called judgment, the fertile field of everyday mistakes; finally, a comparison of judgments gives us the act which has given its name to our type of intellectuality, the act of reasoning and it is here that philosophers are weighed and, not infrequently, found wanting.

Until we get past the simple apprehension of the essences of things, there is no chance for error in our knowledge. The healthy intellect can no more make a mistake about the essences of things than a healthy eye can about color or a healthy ear about sound. The essences of things are the proper object of the intellect, the reason for which it exists; it is made precisely to know them.

Error in judgment and reasoning is not only possible, it is a fairly common fact. At least, many people, other than ourselves, frequently make mistakes. Judgment and reasoning involve composition or division; we can and do put the wrong things together or refuse to put the right things together. There is truth in the concept of a grumbler, as there is truth in the concept of man; but it may, in this particular case, be totally unjust to judge that this man is a grumbler. In other words, we cannot make a mistake about the essences of things, but we can be mistaken about the properties, the accidents and the circumstances of this or that essence. The bases of our mistakes in judgment are much the same as the bases of our mistakes in conclusions, though the principles from which we argue be correct; that is, we make the com-

parison too quickly, without consideration, without grounds for such a union, or through prejudice rather than on evidence, and so on.

Some men do make more mistakes than others, if for no other reason than because some men do not understand as well as others. It is not merely a matter of better physical equipment, more apt organs of sense, keener imaginations and better memory; but because of a distinct difference in the quality of the intellect itself. We can improve our minds. But no bit of magic can change them from the tabloid class into the intellect of an Aristotle or a Thomas Aquinas.

The field of knowledge thrown open by intellectual activity seems almost limitless in comparison with the feeble knowledge enjoyed by the animals. If we keep our eyes fixed on the brutes, we might be able to persuade ourselves that there is no knowledge superior to our own. The fact is, however, that human knowledge has its limits; rather than approach the question from this deflating angle, let us inquire just what we do know.

As we have seen, we know particular things indirectly with an intellectual knowledge, by a kind of reflection on the phantasm of the imagination. We know necessary things, like first principles, laws of the physical world; and contingent things, like grandmothers, and school days. We can even know some future things, like eclipses or next week's blizzard; but we know these things, not in themselves, but in their causes as a man knows there is trouble in the offing from the scowl on his wife's face. As for future things like a laugh, a sin, a yes or a no, they can only be guessed at by us at a great risk of having our guess turn out wrong. To see in themselves the future things that proceed from free causes is not the prerogative of men but of God.

We can know our own soul, its nature and faculties, not by meeting them on the street or by abstracting them

from ourselves, but from the acts they produce. The acts, for instance, of the intellect and will are known by reflection: we know that we know by considering the act of *knowing something*; we know that we will by considering the act of *willing something*. This reflexive power is our special gift, a gift proper to intellectual nature alone; we are the only ones who can stand aside and look at ourselves and our acts critically, with an almost disinterested objectivity, as an angel might look at the earth.

Things above us, like the angels and God, because they are completely free of all material are evidently not the proportionate, natural, direct objects of our knowledge. There is no point to our standing on tiptoe trying to snatch them into our minds directly; we must be satisfied to learn about them the long, hard way, by reasoning up from the material world we know so well. In this way we can know them, not comprehensively, not directly but, as in the case of God, by tracing His effects for the clues they give us as to His nature, stripping off the imperfections of the created world to get a glimpse of the uncreated, attributing all perfection to the one possible source of that perfection. This was, in fact, the procedure we followed in the very beginning of this book in treating the nature of God.

Briefly, then, the direct object of human knowledge is the essences of things abstracted from singular, concrete things. From this basis, all judgment and reasoning proceed.

For a complete survey of the problem of knowledge there still remains the question of knowledge after death, for the soul of man does not die and it is precisely in the soul of man that his knowledge is centered. Separated from the body by death, the soul has lost its medium for investigation of the physical world, indeed of contact with that physical world. The helplessness of the soul seems even more striking when we remember that we cannot

make use of a single intelligible species without referring to the phantasms of the imagination; and, of course, these phantasms cease to exist with death.

Still, this separated soul is the same soul with exactly the same nature it had before death, retaining possession of all the intelligible species amassed during life; it is consequently a rational soul, proceeding on the path of knowledge by that process of comparison which is judgment and reasoning. To deprive an artist of color or a musician of all sound would be not nearly so tragic as to leave such a soul in a blank oblivion after death; it would be the most despairing, most frustrated of creatures. But how can it know?

The answer to the difficulty is to be found in the fundamental truth that the mode of activity is determined by the mode of existence; thus the form of material things, when it enjoys a physical mode of existence, acts as the substantial form of a concrete thing, but when it enjoys an intentional mode of existence in the mind of man, it acts as the intelligible form of the intellect, causing knowledge. The separated soul has a different mode of existence than it enjoyed on earth; it exists without the body. Consequently, it should have a different mode of knowledge that, while not supernatural, is yet not the natural mode of knowledge of the soul when it is actually informing the body.

The mode of existence the separated soul has is that proper to such separated spiritual substances as the angels. It therefore knows not only by the species gathered in life, using them as the angels use their concepts, but also by new species infused by God. Not that this new way of knowledge elevates the soul to a more perfect knowledge; in fact, this knowledge is inferior to that which was had and used by reference to the material part of man. The separated soul is like a little boy wearing his father's clothes, or a street peddler sitting in on a conference of

European diplomats. This soul is sporting its big brother's mode of knowledge and is not quite capable of handling it.

The angels understand through fewer and more universal species, and quite perfectly; the soul, confronted by such a species, is like a man, totally ignorant of philosophy, forced to use the metaphysical principles of St. Thomas. He sees something in them, can make some use of them; but nothing like what St. Thomas could see in them and do with them. But precisely because these species are such angelic things, coming directly from God, they have the advantage of doing away with the necessity of physical contact with the sensible world, of being totally independent of distance, free of the necessity of reference to the phantasms of the imagination.

In that state of separation from the body, the souls know other souls, just as the angels do. They have some knowledge of all natural things, but rather a vague, confused knowledge; whereas the angels, with the same kind of species, have a perfect knowledge of all natural things. This confused character of the separated souls' knowledge—due to the species being too big for them—also limits their knowledge of particular things to a blurred vision, as though their intellects could not quite focus. Evidently more determination must be had than is to be found in the species themselves if a clear, distinct knowledge of particular things is to be enjoyed; there must be some other force focusing the intellect to the point where the details stand out clearly, such a force, for instance, as some preceding knowledge, some bond of interest, of love, of natural inclination to this particular thing, or a special ordination of God.

As a result, souls separated from their proper bodies have no natural knowledge of what goes on on earth. They can know particular things clearly only through the determinations we have just mentioned; and such deter-

minations cannot do away with the fact of separation from the physical world and the souls' lack of natural contact with it. That the curtain which hides the doings of men might be drawn aside momentarily by a miracle is of course possible; that the blessed in heaven have a clear knowledge of the drama of earth supernaturally, through the essence of God, is quite true. But naturally speaking this is impossible to the soul after death.

Looking out over the vista of human knowledge, we can understand something of the dazed unbelief, the frightened incredulity of modern philosophers. The thing is a distinct shock; it goes up too high, down too deep, and with a speed that jars us out of the plodding pace of the material world. It is even a little irritating in its mysterious intangibility. The temptation is to sulk a little, like a man who sees something that simply cannot have happened but nonetheless does; he will not quite admit it, though he cannot deny it without admitting to himself that he is stubbornly fighting the facts.

The shock of human knowledge falls principally on the man who has focused all his attention on one part of the universe and made it impossible for himself to see the smooth harmony of the whole. He has studied the material side so expertly and intensely that he eventually becomes convinced that nothing else exists or can exist. It is almost too much to ask him to see the light of intellectuality as a great sun with rays streaming from it, for such a figure demands a view of the whole of the universe, not merely a part of it. Thus, in the very center, all things are understood by the one flaming sun itself, God knowing through His own essence; as we get further away from that center, the light becomes dimmer, less penetrating. The angels understand through a few of these powerful rays, and perfectly; man, as the rays get dimmer, needs many to light the way and then only imperfectly; finally, on the level of brute and inanimate creation, the light dies

out altogether and things must be steered through the darkness by the hand of God.

To take the same universal view from the other side, we see the creatures which work towards their perfection and that of the universe without knowledge of their own, but solely through the impress of the knowledge of God. Up a step we have the animals seeking their limited ends through a particular knowledge of the senses which precludes freedom; man stretches forth to his infinite goal through the universal knowledge of intellect, seeing the goal and each step towards it, but laboriously, step by step, with many an error; the angels dart to the same infinite goal easily, naturally, perfectly with a complete and infallible knowledge; God Himself is that goal, knowing Himself, possessing Himself by His very essence.

No, man's intellectual knowledge is not a freak in a physical universe; it is but another strip in the film unfolding the beauty and perfection of God, a corner of a blueprint which fits perfectly into the universal plan of the divine architect, a link in the chain that binds the meanest of creatures to the absolute perfection of God. Intellectual knowledge is not a freak but a demand of the humanity of man, the rightful trappings of his state as lord of the physical world, sharer in divine providence with the divine ability of looking ahead, considering his goals, providing for himself and for others in that kingdom.

This human knowledge, because it is so intimately a part of man himself, is an indispensable condition for human activity, intellectual or otherwise. Without that universal, necessary, immaterial knowledge, the physical sciences, philosophy and the arts are impossibilities; without that knowledge of absolute, universal truth there can be no freedom, no morality, no striving for heaven, no ultimate union with God for eternity. Only the possessors of intellectuality survive the inevitable death which

stalks the physical universe. Only those who can know the wide stretches of the immaterial can taste eternal life with its eternal vision; all else must pass.

It is only those who defend that intellectuality of man who can be counted among the friends of man and of truth; for only these are ready to face facts and to take up the burdens and privileges of humanity. Only those who accept the guidance of that intellectual beacon are worthy of the humanity which has been given them, only these take their place in the divine plans, and hold a valid claim to the title that belongs to man—the lord of the world.

A COMPANION TO THE SUMMA

VOLUME I—THE ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE

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