

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMA · 2

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The splendor of man.  
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# THE SPLENDOR OF MAN

By  
Rev. Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.



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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMA

# The Splendor of Man

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMA is a simplified and abbreviated translation of Aquinas' work. It is intended for classroom, discussion clubs or private study. Only one chapter should be taken at a time. For St. Thomas packs a great deal of thought into a few sentences.

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## THE SPLENDOR OF MAN

By GERALD C. TREACY, S.J.

### **Human Dignity and Destiny**

THE splendor of the angels dazzles us with all the perfection that is in their natures. But we must remember that men also have splendor which we often miss because we are so close to it. We take it for granted as we do the marvels of nature that we are meeting up with every day.

Our human splendor is living, and this sets us apart from the non-living. We belong to the world of the living, the plant world, the human and angelic worlds, right up to Infinite Life from Whom is all life.

Each living creature has a living principle, a soul by which it lives. These souls are simple, that is they have no parts and they are spiritual, they have nothing material in them. They are the powers by which bodies live. This is a mystery.

### **What Is the Soul?**

All living creatures have souls; or else they would not be living. The soul of the animal is so dependent upon the body that it cannot function without it. It can produce no vital action without causing some bodily change. That change is sometimes harmful. Too much light can injure the eye, too much sound can injure the ear. But there is no truth too big for the intellect, no good too great for the heart. This shows the perfection both of the intellect and the heart in contrast with the imperfection of the eye and ear. Our souls' faculties or powers are not harmed by the perfection of their objectives. On the contrary they are improved. Truth and goodness demand no bodily change and they threaten no harm to the intellect that knows and the heart that loves.

Our bodies not our minds get tired. Our senses must work for our gaining knowledge and as they are physical they grow

weariness and require rest. Such weariness is accidental in our souls. And our souls do things above the physical. They can bring back the past, make the future present and form universal truths out of singular things. Such is the power of the soul.

### **The Wonder of Man's Soul**

The wonder of man's soul is its independence. As it has no parts it cannot be taken apart, nor can it perish as the body perishes. The soul transcends the physical in its actions, does not depend completely on the body but sparks the body's life. Its life is forever. Man's soul can be separated from the body but it cannot be destroyed. That separation is death.

Man's soul is unique for it is spiritual, simple, immortal, living its own independent life. It cannot decay or suffer harm from the body. Once created the soul lives on through the eternal years. A man's life and his knowledge really never end.

Man is less than the angels for he is not completely spiritual, made up of body as well as soul. He is more than the entire universe for he is unlike anything that the universe contains. In that universe he alone has a spiritual power, his soul.

In appreciating the wonders of our souls we must not be led to despise our bodies, looking on them as prisons hampering the great powers of our souls. Body and soul make man. We are not angels nor disembodied spirits. When death separates body from soul there is no longer a man. And there will not be a man until the Resurrection brings body and soul together again.

We are neither angels nor animals. To think of man only as a body is to despise humanity. It destroys the sense of responsibility. If man is nothing but body why do we punish the man who commits a crime? If he cannot control his evil impulses it is wrong to punish him for a criminal act. If we are nothing but bodies then how are some good, some bad, some heroes, some cowards? Not in the plant and animal world do we find justice and choice and responsibility, but in the world of man.



## **The Wonders Within Ourselves**

We live a life different from the rest of the universe. The soul that vitalizes our bodies can outdistance time, and shatter distance. We are spiritual and material beings, ruling our actions and our lives, responsible masters of both and of our universe.

### **The Masterpiece of Creation**

Man is God's masterpiece. He has within him vegetative powers and animal powers and something more than either plant or animal. Our senses link us to the animal world and yet with us they are human powers, superior to the senses of animals. Intellect and will within us make these things human. The plant and animal world are by these powers joined with the spiritual in a human unity. In all creation man is unique.

Men like animals have passions. God gave animals instinct and men reason as the controlling power of passions. What physical necessity imposes on the animal, reason imposes on man. So we speak of human self-control. Guided by reason human passions reach their perfection. The saint is the man of passion, the sinner the man of dehumanized passion. He is false to his nature.

If passions control a man they brutalize him. He becomes less than human. Instinct protecting the brute, will never allow him to sink as low as man sinks when he abandons reason and surrenders to passions' sway.

The wonder of man is that he is free. He can choose the paths that lead to the destiny for which he was created or abandon them. Man's acts are his own for he alone is master of himself. Responsibility for the good or bad that he does is completely his. He alone makes his life a success or a failure. He has intellect and will and can know truth and goodness. His intellect can size up any particular good with its limits, and his will is free to choose or reject it.

A man's life is made or unmade by what he freely chooses. To love a thing means to go out to it and make ourselves one

with it. This is true of good and of evil. We sink with the evil object and we rise with the good. The objects of our loves make our lives happy or miserable. Love can make us noble and it can degrade us.

Before we can love we must know. The head precedes the heart. This is made clear in the eternal life we shall lead. Then we shall know God directly through the joining of our intellects with the divinity. It will not be enjoying the idea of God, it will be seeing Him face to face. We possess God by our act of knowing and this will be our happiness. The loving joy in our wills is caused by that happiness.

### **The First Man and Woman**

To see man's wonder we must see the creature he was when he came from God's creative hand. Adam and Eve were as physically perfect as an omnipotent Creator could make them. Their intellectual perfection outstripped their physical perfection of strength, beauty and grace. All knowledge was theirs both natural and supernatural. They did not grow up in knowledge as children do, they received knowledge directly from God. We may say that Adam was the wisest of all men, our Lord excepted Who is God and man.

Adam's knowledge was without defects. Of course his knowledge was not unlimited. He was not God, so he did not see God directly. His knowledge like our own had for its object the natures of sensible things and all the truth that can be gathered from them.

Adam's will was sound. His heart was not carried away by trifles or worse. His sense appetites were healthy and not led astray by ignorance. He could be called a man of great passion and that is a tribute to his humanity. Such was Adam the perfect man. Yet with this natural perfection he would still have to die. In him would be the seeds of conflict between soul and body. This is inherent in man's nature.

How could this deficiency in human nature be met so as to have a truly perfect man? God made up the deficiency by granting Adam preternatural and supernatural gifts, making him more than a man, gifts to which he had no claim.



Adam and Eve had these gifts. The gift of order freed them from tendencies that were in conflict. The body was subject to the soul and man was in command of his world. The body would not grow old nor die. Injury and violence were kept away from our first parents by the gift of impassibility. Peace and security would prevail in their lives. Their intellects were wide open to truth, their hearts receptive of all goodness. Neither ignorance, malice nor passion would assail them.

### **Adam and Eve Shared the Divine Life**

God did more for Adam and Eve. He gave them power to share in the divine life. Divine living and knowing and loving were theirs. They began their lives sharing the divine life, for that is what is meant by their creation in sanctifying grace. They received all the supernatural habits of faith, hope and charity which made living the divine life possible for them. They had all the moral virtues and charity ruled their souls. As their souls were in complete subjection to their Creator, order guided all their actions.

All these benefits were not only for themselves but for the entire human family. Every father would receive these gifts and pass them on to his children. In Paradise all things were for their happiness. It was a life of unlimited truth, and goodness and love. And after this life without entering the pathway of death they would pass into eternal life. That was man as created by a loving God.

Even with their extraordinary gifts Adam and Eve were still human and their world would be just as human as is our world, but without imperfection. People would differ in their abilities and talents. The ordinary activities of our world would have been in their world even though it was made up of perfect men.

And in this perfect world at any time sin could enter. If sin appeared the preternatural and supernatural gifts would disappear, and children would inherit a wounded nature. That is what happened.

## **God's Providence**

Order is in evidence in God's world. With regularity the world moves on through the days, the years, the centuries. It moves on intelligently yet it has not intelligence. It is moved by Divine Intelligence.

We can come to this conclusion not only from the study of the world but from the study of God. As God is infinite Goodness He would not create and then let His created world go on by chance. He cares for His world by governing it. God is also infinite Intelligence so He plans every detail of the universe. As infinite Wisdom made the world's plan its execution could not fail. Human plans often fail for men's intelligence is limited and they cannot know everything that the future may bring to mar their plans. But there can be no hindering infinite Wisdom's plans and no blocking their execution. Carrying on the government of the world is done by God's Providence.

The order in the world comes from the nature of things. God registers His directions in these natures. We call them nature's laws. Nature's laws do not push God out of the picture. They show forth a divine Governor of the universe.

Chance is no explanation of world order. Chance presupposes order. It is apparently the upset of order and acts in a field of causes which can be blocked by other causes. Chance mystifies man but not God. It is not running counter to God's plan, but is part of His mysterious plan for the activity of nature.

## **Nature's Laws**

Science does not make nature's laws but finds them. An all-powerful and all-wise God has made them. Nothing in nature causes order but everything is a part of that order. The order, as the universe itself, comes from God and not from itself. It goes back to God in developing its perfection and thereby imaging its Creator.

The world depends upon God not only for the first moment of its existence but for every moment of its existence. If the world and anything in it separated from the God-ordained



order annihilation would follow. Men can violate charity's order and defy God by sin. By this they do not avoid God's government but meet justice's order which seals their choice of everlasting suffering. Punishment is as much a proof of ordered government as is reward.

The detailed government of the world is so tremendous that only a divine Intelligence could handle it. Because God is the Creator and Governor of nature, things take place through natural causes. Not alone does God govern but He governs through men. This shows the sureness of His power and how He reverences creatures.

### **Man's Power to Know**

From God man gets his power to know. In knowing man is not by himself for God is with him, the First Cause of all real things. It is a reality to know. We know truth, not independently but as creatures dependent on our Creator in each step of knowledge. God alone can penetrate the mind of man and work with that mind. Only because of this divine action can the human mind work at all. We know truth and rightly say that knowledge is ours. But God is the cause and support of our real knowledge in a real world. For He is the God of all reality.

In like manner God acts on the human will. If freedom is real then in its every step it depends on the Cause of all reality. This divine action does not impair our freedom. Without it there would be no freedom for without it we would be helpless, incapable of living and willing. This of course is a mystery.

There is no reality within the person acting and the act unless God works within the person. All things are moved by God in keeping with their natures. Necessity moves all creatures except man who moves freely to his objective. Man's action is his and God's. It is his because God supports the powers He has given man, and it is God's since He is the First Cause of everything that is real. God's part in man's freedom is a guarantee that it is real.

As wonderful as is the working of God within our minds



and wills, it is ordinary. It is an every day mystery. It is the extraordinary that fascinates us and we want to know can God do the extraordinary. He surely can. He Who made nature's laws can work outside of them. The Gospels show us abundant proof of that.

Miracles startle us because of the fact that they do not happen every day. While we wonder at the miracle we should likewise wonder at God's ordinary works. For the Lord of Heaven shows His omnipotence in the ordinary as well as in the extraordinary.

### **Angels and Men in God's World**

Dionysius declares that "inferior things are led to God by their superiors, according to a divine unalterable law." This fact is the basis of the humility and nobility of every creature. Superiority spells responsibility. Inferiority is a claim on superiors' aid and not a right of superiors to inferiors' service. The greatest bring the least to God for talent carries with it social responsibility.

The first instance of creatures sharing in world government is found in the angelic world. There are nine choirs of angels, the highest being the Seraphim. In these choirs there are three hierarchies ranged according to their gifts and offices. In this world the subjection of lower to higher is a law. It is for the higher to give truth and love and for the lower to receive the same. There is inexhaustible truth and love to give and receive.

### **The Angelic School**

The angelic world is like a school, the greater angels share their knowledge with the lesser. "Each heavenly essence communicates to the inferior the gift derived from the superior," according to Dionysius.

There is no weariness in teaching, no effort in learning, no blocks to knowledge and the flow of truth is continuous. The law works out, namely that the lesser is led to God by the greater.

Every man in our world has something to give his fellows of truth and wisdom, but not in the angelic world where the lower angels cannot teach the higher. The lower angels have something to give the higher angels even though they have nothing to teach them. The angels can talk to each other and to God.

In the matter of love the higher angel is more restricted than in the matter of truth. Truth moves every intellect but love does not move every heart. Only God can sway the angelic or human will. In the matter of love both angel and man may be helpful and persuasive. But neither can move another's will.

In freedom there are no degrees. Angels and men are equally free in the matter of love. Love is always a gift. It cannot be commanded or bought.

### **The Fallen Angels**

There is a basic order of higher and lower in the world of the fallen angels. But as a punishment the lowest blessed angel can dominate the highest of the fallen. Superior demons do not share their grasp of truth with their inferiors. They are bitter and hate everything and everybody. Their life is all hatred. Help and kindness are unknown among them. There is talk in Hell, too, but deceitful, lying talk.

### **Angels Belong to the Natural Order**

The angels belong to the natural order and so have a share in the government of the world. In keeping with the law that demands the superior's help for the inferior, they more than any creatures should share in world government.

Plato and Aristotle sensed a deep truth when they credited the angels with governing the heavenly bodies. This would not detract from the explanation that science gives of the movement of sun, stars, tides and winds. Angelic administration would not interfere with the self-sufficiency of the natural forces. Nor would such power on the part of the angels do away with natural laws. Like generates like in nature. Angels



generate nothing. They cannot change natures. But their power to move physical bodies is beyond any power in the world.

### **Angelic Power Is Not Miraculous**

Great as is angelic power it is not miraculous for miracles belong to God alone. He is the One Being outside Nature and is the Cause of all things in Nature. As the angels are part of the natural order they cannot interfere with the natural order. The wonders that the angels can work far exceed our knowledge and our powers, but they are not outside angelic natural powers. They do not partake of the miraculous.

The wonders that Satan can work are real. St. Augustine calls them "lying wonders because he will deceive men's senses by phantoms and so he really does not do what he appears to do; or he will perform real wonders to lead those who believe in him into error."

This strategy of Satan is centuries-old and by it he deceives men. He blinds men by wonders that are above human powers so that in their blindness they will do his bidding. Men become victims of this strategy by indulging in superstitious practices like spiritualism in order to gain knowledge of the future.

If we remember that the angels can produce any physical effect on our senses that can be effected by any physical agent, then we can see the danger of indulging in superstitious practices. The angels, good or bad can reach any depth of our memories and imaginations. And we are incapable of defending ourselves against angelic invasion. God's mercy protects us through the ministry of the good angels.

### **The Angels Are Teachers**

As the angels can without effort penetrate our senses, and it is through our senses that we gain knowledge, they easily are great teachers of men. The angels can put truth before us and bolster our intellects. The angel always remains a teacher for only God can penetrate our minds directly. The angels can help us learn but we must dig for the truth we want.



The angels, like men, cannot touch our wills and so are incapable of putting love in our hearts. Only God can do that. Man is always sovereign over his intellect and his will. The angels can stimulate our senses but they cannot budge our wills. We are free and no outside force can drive us against our wills.

### **Scriptures' Testimony**

God sends angels to men as we know from Scripture. An angel came to our Lady, St. Joseph, Zachary and many others. Angels are always with us as our guardians. To every man God says: "Behold I will send My angels who will go before thee." They have this part to play in the general plan of the universe. As superiors they bring inferiors to their perfection. St. Jerome's comment on this truth is: "Great must be the dignity of souls for each one to have an angel to guard it from its birth." And St. Thomas says: "As life's journey is hazardous each man has a guardian angel to protect him. When he reaches the end of his pilgrimage he will have no guardian angel, but in God's kingdom he will have an angel to reign with him, in Satan's kingdom a devil to torment him."

### **The Nature of Guardianship**

From the dawn of life to its setting this guardianship lasts. To that guardianship the angel bends all his powers, never relaxing for a moment during all the days of life. This is a favor given every man because of his humanity and not on account of his faith or sanctity.

No man was ever without a guardian angel. Guardian angels were necessary for Adam and Eve who were in danger from demons even though their souls were well ordered within. Angelic guardianship is given to the whole human race, and while it is no guarantee of eternal life, it does shield men from evils. It is the angels' function to prevent the devils doing all the evil that they would.

All through life each one of us is waging warfare with the devils. "Your enemy the devil roams about like a roaring

lion seeking whom he may devour," St. Peter tells us. So the good angels stand guard over us. Before angelic power we are as helpless as children. We need the power of our good angels to defeat our enemies. Because we have the free choice of Heaven or Hell, our good angels strive to enlighten our intellects, so that truth may lead us along the right path. The devils' tactic is to darken our intellects with lies and deceits, so that we will stumble and fall. How grateful we should be to our guardian angels!

Our own wills can defeat angelic power. For we are always free to sin. While our guardians belong to the lowest choir of angels yet their power is greater than anything in the world and any devil in Hell, since the devils are subject to all good angels, as partial punishment for their sin. We nullify angelic protection by every sin.

### **Our Life's Battle**

Our battle in life St. Paul tells us "is not against flesh and blood but against Principalities and Powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places." We are no match for these spirits of evil and we would be doomed to inevitable defeat did not God check the devils' power and strengthen us with His heavenly cohorts.

Even though the devil hates God and man, he fits into the pattern of divine government of the universe. Instead of prince of the world in reality he is God's servant and man's, too. His campaign of hate and disorder is made to serve God's purpose for while tempting man he is really schooling him in virtue. In the divine plan the devil's onslaughts work out for the perfection of those he is striving to ruin.

### **Temptation's Meaning**

To refine and build up virtue God allows man to be tempted. In temptation a man proves his love for God as he battles against it. For the devil temptation is a weapon of destruction. He not only tempts men but goads them on to



tempt others. When he succeeds, man becomes his slave, and begins his Hell on earth, gaining misery for himself and for those he has betrayed.

Knowing man thoroughly, the devil sees every image that is in man's imagination and memory. The only limit to his knowledge is that field of intellect and will, where only God and man himself can enter. He cannot then override our control. Our sins are not his but ours. In God's mercy he is held back by our guardian angel.

Many of our sins Satan has nothing to do with, even as an occasion. They are entirely ours. That is not true of our good deeds, for the angels share in them and they are attributable to God's power. Without God's aid we cannot get near Him. With no aid at all we can sink into sin.

St. John Chrysostom says "the devil does not tempt man for as long as he likes but only for as long as God allows, and then He orders him away because of our weakness." The help of the good angels and God's mercy make temptations valuable for man, for thereby he grows strong in virtue, and gains increase in grace and a claim to everlasting life. The attacks of Satan can never defeat the unity of guardian angel and man.

Another good effect of temptation St. Ambrose points out: "The devil is afraid to continue tempting as he shrinks from frequent defeat." Defeat is hard on pride and Satan is all pride. From this pride stems a stupidity urging Satan to attack the holiest men and women, only to be beaten back ingloriously. Here God's mercy and justice are shown, for His mercy permits more of the diabolic power where it cannot win, while His justice punishes the devil's pride by repeated repulses.

### **The Physical World**

It is clear that God governs the physical world. All we have to do is to examine carefully the chemical, plant and animal world, and we discover a detailed arrangement of all forces that keeps the physical world in balance.

Long before our times men were aware of the marvel of



cosmic order and of the sufficiency of Nature. The truth that like generates like was known centuries ago. In his time St. Augustine taught: "Certain seeds are hidden in the corporeal things of this world. These seeds are the active and passive principles from which living things are generated." All these principles Augustine called seminal virtues.

These virtues, according to Augustine, "as typical ideas are first in God's Word. Secondly they are in the world's elements where they were produced in the beginning as in universal causes. Thirdly they are in those things which are produced in the passing of time by universal causes, for example in this plant or that animal as in particular causes. Fourthly they are in the seeds produced from animals and plants. And these again are compared to further particular effects."

It is no new discovery that the moon influences the tides or that the sun's light and heat affect the development of different forms of physical life. We no longer hold to the error that the lower forms of life were spontaneously generated by the sun. The sun, moon and stars affect man's body as they do all physical natures. That does not mean however that they determine his going or can reveal his future. A man is soul as well as body and the truth and love that color his life result from his own efforts and are not forced on him from without.

Astrology is still with us due to Satan's cleverness and human gullibility and cowardice. It blames the stars for man's evil deeds. Men are not responsible for their actions because certain stars gazed upon their birth. It takes all the credit for man's good actions. This is all wrong. The fact is men are not doomed by fate to an inescapable destiny, but there is divine Providence leading man not to ruin but to responsible control of his life's actions.

The material world with all its wonders carries a minor role in world government and that by necessity. Material things act in orderly manner as if they had intelligence. The Intelligence by which they act is outside of them. They are moved and play but a small part in the story of the universe which is man's salvation. These material things are for man's use, his servants to do his will. This great material world is

an inferior creature existing only for its superior, man. Unless we recognize man as master of the universe we cannot fathom the universe.

### **Man Not Sovereign Lord**

While man is master he is not sovereign lord of his universe. He is steward and the universe has been given him for working out its supreme value, the unending life of each individual man. Nature does not jump at man's command. He can neither create, annihilate, nor change any nature. He must live in the world as God made it. It is not within his power to make it over again.

In every age there have been theories contradicting these truths, stories of mysterious powers of destruction, for example the powers of witches. Then there are the powers claimed by spiritism. The strange performances of spiritism may be trickery or may be effected by diabolic influences, but the souls of the departed cannot have a share in them. The soul without the body cannot move a physical thing. Only God could enable a separated soul to do the things that spiritism claims are done, and surely God would not be a sharer in the weird doings of spiritism.

Neither angels nor men have power to change the natures in the universe. Nor can they be created or destroyed by angelic or human power. The angels are bodiless spirits and their power extends over all bodily things. Our soul is a spirit but restricted in its power to one body, the one which it infuses with life. If we move anything it is because we use our physical powers or other physical powers to do the moving. Angelic power extends over the physical universe and can move anything in the universe. The fact is men are only humble servants in world government. They have powers that require hard labor and years of effort before they get their effects.

### **Men Are Masters of the Universe**

Yet men are really masters of the universe. Everything else that has a place in the world is driven while men choose their course of action and direct the forces of nature as they



will, making them obedient tools for human service. Men do share in world government and their share is great but it is always human and dependent upon God.

However men's powers do not reach the world of the angels. They are beyond human reach and it is only because God gives us supernatural powers that we can know them and can be loved by them.

The keenest human intellect knows nothing that is not already known by the least of the angels, and known much more thoroughly. Men can however make their heart-thoughts known to the angels.

### **The Foundation of Man's Glory**

Neither in the angelic world nor in the physical world do men contribute to world government. Their contribution is in the world of their fellow men. It is true that men are kings of the universe and humble creatures of God the Creator. This truth is the basis of men's glory.

Men have the power of generating their kind and this is a noble power. Procreation means sharing in God's creative power. For by this act the material is formed by the parents to receive the soul that comes straight from God's creative power. Parents should be happy for the share they have in so great a work. It is theirs to fill the earth with heavens' citizens, and to sacrifice themselves for the children God has given them.

### **No Man Lives Alone**

Every man's life makes its impact on others' lives as he pilgrimages onward to eternity. This impact means an influence for good or evil, a thrust toward Heaven or toward Hell. No life is lived alone. The resulting effects of our lives in other lives is mostly indirect. Our kindness and goodness are felt in others' lives and our example is followed. And our evil deeds likewise are felt in the lives of others. Good or bad example indirect though it may be, is always telling. By it



saints have sanctified whole communities while evil doers have ruined them. Of the two the evil doers have won more followers for the paths they follow are so much easier at the start. "No man is an island."

### **The Attraction of Goodness**

The fineness of a saint's life, the serenity in the face of a good man, the radiant happiness of an unselfish woman attract people whose hearts are hungering for these things. Such appeals play a big part in molding human lives. The concrete picture of goodness cannot fail to attract men.

Our part in world government comes from what we can do for our fellow men. This is our effective part. It is by teaching truth that we play our important part in world government. All teaching is not restricted to the classroom but the classroom reveals the power of the teacher. One generation of corrupt teachers can corrupt a whole nation, giving men falsehood instead of truth. The same can be said for the power of good teachers. Teaching is effective because every individual guides his life by the amount of truth he has acquired. There are various ways of attaining truth, but however it is attained, if a man is to live he needs truth.

### **The Teacher's Importance**

The importance of the teacher is evident from the angle of the person seeking truth and from the angle of the truth he is seeking. By himself a man learns slowly and with great labor, and the truth he gains will be sprinkled with errors. Yet man from life's beginning is desperately in need of truth. Without truth's light man's life will be a tragic stumbling in darkness.

The teacher's task is to let in the light of truth to him who is seeking it. He takes the student and giving him a known truth guides him into the truth unknown. He furnishes the material of knowledge and removes any hindrances, and the rest of the effort is up to the student. The student must acquire knowledge, no teacher can pour it into him.

## **Our Lord the Great Teacher**

Man's supreme privilege is to bring his fellow men to truth. This is how he shares in the government of the universe. So it is that Christ spent so much of the brief three years of His apostolic life on earth in teaching. And that is why He said: "For this was I born and for this I came into the world that I should bear witness to the truth." And speaking of His disciples He said: "You shall have the truth and the truth shall make you free." Without truth man cannot live. Man was created for the light of truth's kingdom. Unless he gains truth he will die in the darkness of error.

## **What Is Happiness?**

God in His love has made man an image of Himself and given him a share in the government of the world. "Let Us make man to Our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over . . . the whole earth" (Genesis 1).

From the beginning of history we find man ever striving to master himself and the world given him by God. But no matter how man acts, wisely or foolishly, the world always gives glory to God as He is its Supreme Ruler.

As we see man in action, ever striving, ever toiling, we wonder what is it that spurs him on in all his actions. The answer is that all men are seeking to be satisfied; they are searching for happiness. Happiness is the object of all human striving.

The search for happiness is the common plane on which all desires, all ambitions meet. The child, the grown-up, the rich and the poor are all alike in their quest for happiness.

As man's desires are boundless nothing within him or outside of him will give him complete satisfaction. He cannot be satisfied by any particular good as appealing as it may be. Only the Universal Good, God will completely satisfy his yearnings. God is the final object of all man's desires, and happiness means the soul possessing God.



## **The End of the Quest**

Only the intellect's vision of God can end man's quest for the Source of all truth. Only He Who is All-Good can satisfy man's will in his quest for the good. This is happiness and nothing else is. Man cannot attain this vision of God through his own power. But God tells us He will make it possible for us to see Him and enjoy Him and thereby gain true happiness. "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared we shall be. We know that when He appears we shall be like unto Him, for we shall see Him just as He is" (1st Epistle of St. John, iii. 2). Through this gift of God we shall be enabled to see God Himself.

## **Perfect Happiness**

Perfect happiness means seeing God as He is in Himself. Man's intellect and will rest in the sweet possession of the Infinite Intellect and Will. That is Heaven essentially. After the Resurrection our bodies will share in the joys of intellect and will. There will be other incidental joys, too, such as the companionship of our friends. But the essential joy is the Beatific Vision, seeing God as He is.

Of course God could have created us not merely with the tendency to the happiness that is seeing Him as He is, but with the actual enjoyment of this happiness. As He did not do so it is within each man's choice to use his free will in gaining perfect happiness. While it is God's gift it also depends on man making proper use of his free acts. Man freely decides to gain perfect happiness. God shows him the way.

## **The Means to Happiness**

Human acts are the means to Happiness, the Vision of God. Man in his journey from time to eternity, must walk the path of goodness to reach Eternal Good. That is the right road just as the wrong road is the way of sin. The guidepost pointing out the right road is Law. What urges man to his journey is Grace.



## **The Way to Man's Destiny**

As man knows his destiny, the Vision of God, he knows the means of reaching that destiny. The proper use of his freedom is the means. He must give proper direction to his free acts. In the course of a life man must make many free choices. Freedom is a spiritual power releasing man from the pressure of the material. But this freedom must be guarded against inside and outside enemies. Freedom's inside enemies are fear, concupiscence and ignorance. Man's freedom can be weakened or destroyed by these enemies. The outside enemy of freedom is force. This outside enemy can stop a man from carrying out his decisions but it cannot prevent him from wishing to carry them out. Force cannot crush the will's freedom.

Concupiscence or desire influences the will. The prisoner in his desire for freedom will lie. Yet his lying is voluntary. When desire becomes so strong that a man does not realize what he is doing, then it can destroy freedom.

Ignorance can destroy freedom. Freedom is built on man's knowledge of his objective and the means that lead to that objective. Ignorance stops a man from seeking both the right objective and the right means. Ignorance may be voluntary or involuntary. Involuntary ignorance excuses a man from responsibility. Voluntary ignorance does not, because it does not crush out a man's freedom but leads to the abuse of freedom.

Man must conquer these enemies in his quest for happiness. Mastery over human acts comes from knowledge of the true meaning of these acts. Only this mastery leads man to his final objective.

## **The True Meaning of Man's Acts**

The inner freedom of choice does not alone determine the true meaning of a human act. The conditions in which a man acts is also a determinant of its true meaning. For health's sake it is right to eat meat. It is wrong for a Catholic to do so on Friday. The main circumstances affecting our human acts are discovered by replying to the queries: "Who, what, where, by what helps, why, how and when?"

We have seen then, that a man's destiny is determined by the use he makes of his free will. The action of his free will can be affected by fear, desire and ignorance as well as by the circumstances in which it takes place.

## **The Interaction of Intellect and Will**

To grasp freedom's meaning we must understand the interaction of intellect and will in a human act. Four truths must be kept in mind in studying the freedom of a human act. 1—The will always follows the intellect. 2—Good is always the object of the will's quest. 3—In the act of choice freedom is found. 4—The human act's guidance force is command.

The will is a tendency to good. But until the intellect points out what is good the will cannot grasp for the good. The will is a blind faculty. And yet the will must move the intellect into action. This is puzzling yet true. All through life's experience we find this interaction of will and intellect.

The will always seeks good. Even when it seeks what is bad, it does so because the bad appears good to the will. In seeking good the will's tendency is natural and spontaneous. From this angle the will is not free. It can only tend toward the good or the seemingly good. The will is so moved by God and so it is not free in its spontaneous tendency to good.

Where is the will's freedom? In man's choice of the means he selects to grasp the good. And it is the command of the intellect to the will, telling it, "this is good, seek it," that is the driving power of man's actions. Man would never again gain his objectives unless he commanded himself to go into action. While command is the intellect's action, it presumes the will's action to freely seek a definite good in a particular manner.

Right living so as to finally attain perfect happiness is a matter of free choice and command. Man reaches God, and so gains supreme happiness when he freely chooses those things that lead him to God, commanding the actions that are necessary for the choice.



## **The Foundation of Morality**

The morality of an act means its rightness or wrongness. There are various theories about the foundation of morality. Some claim that morality is based on custom or convenience. Men follow a code of conduct because they have discovered that it is a convenient way of living. The will of society determines the moral code and changes it when it sees fit. It is not a fixed code for right today may be wrong tomorrow.

Others name human authority as the basis of morality. This may be the authority of the State, the Church, civil or ecclesiastical law, the head of a family, or the authority of the individual to govern himself. The sanction of this authority is convenience or custom.

Some, too, claim that men's actions flow from physical or chemical forces within them, or they are driven by psychological forces that are subconscious, or they are pressured by socio-economic forces. This of course destroys all morality by making man the slave of these different forces.

## **The True Basis of Morality**

The preceding theories of morality are false. For man is free and he acknowledges authority because he sees that it is a good thing and can point the way to happiness. Besides man is a particular kind of being for whom some things are good and some are bad. Custom or convenience cannot be the basis of morality but it must be something that is concerned with the suitability or unsuitability of things or actions for man as man. Answer the question, "what should this thing be," and you determine rightness or wrongness, good or evil.

What is suitable or unsuitable for a creature depends on what a creature is. When it has what is in accord with its nature then it has something good. When it is wanting something that it should have then we say it is defective or evil. A fish should have fins for it is made to swim. It is defective without fins.

We know that man is brought to perfect happiness by his controlled free actions. These actions will be good or bad in



as far as they are suitable or unsuitable in respect to his destiny, the securing of perfect happiness.

Man's reason recognizes what is suitable or unsuitable for man in his quest for happiness. It is reason that sees the objective of all human acts, that is happiness in general. It is reason, too, that sees that some actions will point to the objective while others will not. Reason's judgment of the suitability of an action to bring man good is the immediate rule for actions. Reason's judgment is the foundation of morality.

### **The Basis of Good or Bad Actions**

Reality is the basis of reason's judgment. The nature of a creature determines the appropriateness of any particular good for that creature. Some actions are good for man because they lead him to his destiny; others are not good for him because they lead him away from the objective for which his nature intends him. The human mind does not create reason's judgment. It discovers the quality or appropriateness or the contrary in reality.

However reality only reflects an infinitely perfect Being, God Himself. Finally then, actions are good or bad in as far as they conform to God's idea of what they should be. Back of the law of human reason stands in God's Mind the Eternal Law.

In God's Mind the Eternal Law is built on the natures of things as they reflect His own perfection. The Eternal Law for human actions is built on man's nature and the nature of human actions as far as they reflect God's image in man. Reason's judgment on the morality of human actions is a participation of man's mind in the Eternal Mind of God.

### **Evaluation of Goodness and Badness**

Human reason evaluates the goodness or badness of an act by estimating the suitability of the act from the angle of the act's object, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding it.

The object of the act is the natural purpose achieved by the act. The object of physical exercise is to build up a healthy body. The basic determining factor of the morality of

an act is its object or purpose. Reason sees that some acts are good because they have a good purpose while others are evil as their purpose is evil. To do any of the spiritual or corporal works of mercy is always good. To violate God's Law is always evil.

But the object alone does not determine the morality of an action. Man in acting can guide the natural purpose of the act to a further objective. To practice to be a good marksman is a good object; but to be a good marksman the more surely to kill someone is evil. A naturally good purpose can be made evil by an evil intention. Though an evil action can never be made good by a good intention.

### **The Force of Circumstances**

The morality of an act can also be determined by its circumstances. Circumstances can help make an act better or worse. To pray for a friend is good, but to pray for an enemy is better as it is more difficult.

Reason judges an action good or bad on three counts; the object, the purpose, and the circumstances of the act. After reason pronounces on the goodness or badness of the act, then the will says yes or no to carrying out the act. After that follows external action itself or no action according as the will has chosen.

In every external act there is a natural purpose and a human purpose. A man enters a store to rifle the cash box. The natural purpose of his act is to enter the store. This may be good or bad. However the human purpose of stealing is bad. But when we think of the will we see that the will's internal act and the end are the same. Because objectives are the concern of the will. So the good or bad of will action is determined by its objective.

### **The Will's Intention**

Human action receives its form from the will's intention. This form which is interior must be evaluated by the form which reason's judgment proposes. A man entering a store to



pay a bill is doing a good act, for reason tells him it will help him reach his destiny. But reason tells a man who enters a store to steal that his action is bad for it leads him away from his destiny.

Of course back of human reason deciding the good or evil of the will's action is God's eternal Law. Divine Knowledge is reflected by human reason. Man is on the right path as long as he follows reason's judgment. And his objectives will be in keeping with God's Will.

The external action commanded by the will is either good or bad. If it is bad in itself the will's intention cannot make it good. When the action is good or indifferent then the will's intention can make it good or bad.

The pronouncements of God and of human reason on the morality of human acts rest on reality. An act is good that leads a man to his destiny, and bad when it deflects him from that destiny. When a man follows the dictates of right reason in his actions he will finally gain his destiny, perfect happiness. And every man has the power to guide all his actions toward securing his destiny, happiness in the Beatific Vision. He does this by right reason and good will. This is within every man's power.

## QUESTIONS

### LESSON I

(Pages 1-2)

In what does human splendor consist?

Each living creature has a living principle. Explain.

How does the animal soul differ from man's soul?

How do our souls do things above the physical?

Do our souls tire?

Explain the wonder of man's soul.

Man is less than the angels and greater than the universe. Explain.

If man is merely a body, what responsibility has he?

Is the body to be despised?

We live a life different from the rest of the universe. Explain.



## LESSON II

(Pages 3-4)

How is man God's masterpiece?  
Are our senses like the animal's senses?  
What controls passion in the brute?  
What controls passion in man?  
How do human passions reach their perfection?  
The saint is the man of passion. Explain.  
If passions control a man, what does he become?  
What is the wonder of a man?  
What makes or unmakes a man's life?  
What makes our lives happy or miserable?

## LESSON III

(Pages 4-5)

We must know before we can love. Explain.  
How shall we know God in eternity?  
What gifts did our first parents have when they were created?  
Was their knowledge unlimited?  
Our first parents received preternatural gifts. Explain.  
What did the gift of order do for our first parents?  
What did the gift of impassibility accomplish for them?  
What did their creation in sanctifying grace mean?  
Were all their gifts only for themselves?  
Was the world of Adam and Eve a human world?  
Could sin enter the perfect world of Adam and Eve?  
If sin could enter this perfect world, what would it effect?

## LESSON IV

(Pages 6-7)

The world moves on intelligently without intelligence. Explain.  
Why should not God allow the world to move on by chance?  
What does God's Providence mean?  
What are Nature's laws?  
Does science make Nature's laws?  
How does the world depend upon God?  
If the world separated from God-ordained order, what would follow?  
By sinning do men escape God's rule?  
God governs the world through men. Explain.  
Does man know truth independently?

## LESSON V

(Pages 7-8)

Who is the cause and support of our real knowledge?  
What does man's freedom depend upon?  
Man's action is his and God's. Explain.  
What guarantees man's freedom?  
Why can God do the extraordinary as well as the ordinary?  
Does God show His omnipotence only by miracles?

## LESSON VI

(Pages 8-9)

What fact is the basis of the humility and nobility of every creature?  
Name the law of the angelic world.  
Why is the angelic world like a school?  
In the matter of love the angels are more restricted than in the matter of truth. Explain.  
Are there degrees in freedom?  
What is the life of the fallen angels?  
Do the angels have a share in world government?  
What did Plato and Aristotle credit the angels with?

## LESSON VII

(Pages 10-11)

How does angelic government affect Nature's laws?  
Why is angelic power not miraculous?  
Do the angels interfere with the natural order?  
What does St. Augustine say of Satan's wonders?  
How do men become victims of Satan's strategy?  
What protects us from the bad angels?  
Why are angels great teachers?  
What powers of man can the angels penetrate?  
What does Holy Scripture tell us of the angels?  
Quote St. Jerome on our guardian angels.

## LESSON VIII

(Pages 11-12)

What does St. Thomas say of our guardian angels?  
Why is every man given the favor of angelic guardianship?  
What is the angels' function regarding the devils?  
Quote St. Peter on our battle against evil spirits.  
Contrast the tactics of the good and evil spirits.

How can man defeat angelic power?  
To what choir of angels do our guardian angels belong?  
How great is their power?  
What does St. Paul say of our battle in life?  
Is man a match for the powers of evil?  
How does the devil fit into the divine plan for the universe?  
Why does God allow man to be tempted?

### **LESSON IX**

(Pages 13-14)

What does man prove in conquering temptation?  
What happens to man if he yields to temptation?  
How far can the devil penetrate into man's powers?  
Has Satan connection with all our sins?  
Are our good actions entirely our own?  
How are temptations made valuable for man?  
Quote St. Ambrose on temptation.  
How do we see God's justice and mercy in temptation?  
What proof have we that God governs the physical world?  
Quote St. Augustine on "the hidden seeds."  
What are St. Augustine's "virtues"?

### **LESSON X**

(Pages 14-15)

How do the sun, moon and stars affect man's body?  
Do they determine man's actions?  
Do they reveal his future?  
What is astrology and why is it still with us?  
How does Providence answer astrology?  
What part do material things play in world government?  
What part does man play in the universe?  
Is man sovereign lord of his universe?  
What purpose does the universe serve?  
Can man change the world that God has made?  
What is to be thought of the powers of witches?  
What of the phenomena of spiritism?

### **LESSON XI**

(Pages 15-16)

Have angels and men the power to change the natures in the universe?  
How far does angelic power extend?  
How far does the power of man's soul extend?



Men are masters of the universe. Explain.  
How are we able to know the angels?  
How do men contribute to world government?  
What is the basis of man's glory?  
What does procreation mean?  
What is the privilege of parents?  
No man lives alone. Explain.

## LESSON XII

(Pages 16-18)

How are our actions felt in others' lives?  
The concrete picture of goodness attracts men. Explain.  
What is man's important part in world government?  
What is the power of the teacher?  
Why is teaching effective in human living?  
How may truth be acquired?  
From what angles may the teacher's importance be seen?  
How important is truth to man?  
Explain the teacher's task.  
How did our Lord prove the importance of teaching?

## LESSON XIII

(Pages 23-24)

What has God's love done for man?  
Why does the universe always give glory to God?  
What is the spur to all human activity?  
Why will nothing within or outside a man satisfy him?  
What alone will satisfy man and give him happiness?  
Can man gain his quest by his own power?  
What is perfect happiness in its essence?  
What has man to do with gaining happiness if it is God's gift?  
What are the means to happiness?  
What have Law and Grace to do with man's happiness?  
How is man's freedom connected with his destiny?  
Name the enemies of freedom.

## LESSON XIV

(Pages 25-26)

Explain the influence of desire and ignorance on freedom.  
What is the difference between voluntary and involuntary ignorance?  
How are the circumstances affecting a human act discovered?  
How is a man's destiny determined?

In studying the freedom of a human act, what four truths must be kept in mind?

How does the will depend on the intellect?

Does the intellect act without any help from the will?

From what angle is the will not free?

Does the will ever seek badness?

In what does the will's freedom consist?

What is the driving power of man's actions?

How does right living come about and what does it lead to?

## LESSON XV

(Pages 27-28)

What does the morality of an act mean?

State some false theories on the foundation of morality?

Refute these false theories.

When does a creature possess something good?

What does reason see in all human acts?

How is man brought to perfect happiness?

How are actions good or bad?

State the foundation of morality.

What is the basis of reason's judgment?

What does reality reflect?

On what is the Eternal Law built?

How does man's mind participate in the Eternal Mind?

## LESSON XVI

(Pages 29-30)

How does reason evaluate a human act as good or bad?

What is the object of a human act?

What determines the morality of an action?

How can a naturally good purpose be made evil?

How can circumstances affect an action?

On what three counts does reason judge an action good or bad?

In every external act there is a natural and a human purpose. Explain.

What determines the good or bad of will action?

How does the will's intention affect the form of an act?

What is back of reason deciding the good or bad of an action?

What knowledge does reason reflect?

Can the will's intention make an act good or bad?

The pronouncements of God and reason on the morality of an act rest on reality. Explain.

How does man finally attain his destiny?

Why is it in every man's power to achieve his destiny?





