

learned⁴⁴ from the messengers, but who is the Maker and Cause of them all.⁴⁵ He considers this Maker to stand antecedently in relation to the whole world as he himself, as geographer, stands in relation to his map. And from the relation of the map to the real world he beholds in himself, qua geographer, the Creator of the world—[beholds Him] when he contemplates the reality by means of its image and contemplates, by means of its sign, that itself which is signified. During his speculation he notices that no brute animal—although it seems to dwell in a similar “city” and to have “gateways” and “messengers”—could have made such a map. And, hence, he finds in himself the first and nearest sign of the Creator. In this sign the Creative Power shines forth more than in any other known animal. For an intellectual sign is the first and most perfect sign for [signifying] the Creator of all things, whereas a perceptible sign is the last [and farthest-removed sign for signifying the Creator of all things]. Therefore, the geographer withdraws himself, as best he can, from all perceptual signs [and turns] toward intellectual and simple and formal signs.

24 With the full sharpness of his mental sight [the geographer] takes very intent note of how the Eternal and Inaccessible Light shines forth in these [intellectual, formal signs]. Thus, he sees that the Incomprehensible cannot be seen to exist otherwise than in an incomprehensible mode of being and that this mode, which is incomprehensible in terms of every comprehensible mode, is the Form-of-being of all existing things. This Form, while remaining incomprehensible in all existing things, shines forth in intellectual signs—as light shines forth in darkness, which does not at all comprehend it.⁴⁶ By way of illustration: a single face which appears in different ways in different polished mirrors is not so incorporated⁴⁷ into any mirror (however highly polished) that from both the face and the mirror a single composite is made, whose form is the face and whose matter is the mirror. Rather, while remaining singular in itself, the face manifests itself in different ways—even as a man’s intellect, while remaining singular and invisible, manifests itself visibly and variously in its different arts and by means of the various products of the arts, even though in all these [arts and products] the intellect remains altogether unknown to any of the senses.

By means of the foregoing speculation a contemplator arrives most delightfully at the Cause, the Beginning, and the End of both himself and all other things, so that he reaches a happy conclusion.