

# APPENDICES

# *These Little Ones*

Leo R. Ward

Poor, dear little ones, lean and hungry, seeking,  
not knowing they seek stray wisps  
of wisdom to make sense of their burgeoning lives.  
That was the fix with many at the Sorbonne  
in my native and gracious Paris when

I entered the University a long, long  
time ago. It was the way at colleges  
and universities then, and, God help  
the innocents, it is the common fix now, little ones  
quite unaware of what their hunger means. Yet

wasn't Paris itself long ago said to be  
the city of letters and the "workshop  
of wisdom"?\* In my day the busy and  
productive people were in the School  
of Sciences, one surpassing another,

and soon to be surpassed, few  
of them likely to be distracted  
by a search for wisdom.

They play games with us. Lo here,  
lo there? It was as if they took us  
by the hand and led us up a high

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\*Pope Gregory IX, 1231: "officina sapientiae."

mountain and then hurried us down  
the other side still blindfolded. Searching  
for that deep-buried treasure, my  
dear fiancée Raïssa and I were offered

savorless ersatz: “Scientist and  
phenomenalist philosophy,” “biological  
materialism”—too chaffy and fluffy.  
We sought wisdom, and the eclat of science  
correcting science and soon to be corrected

and superseded by science—this we thought  
a sort of doodling. Youths seeking wisdom  
were displaced persons. The pabulum  
offered them! A cruel and unbearable  
punishment then and now, youths too

immature to know they are starving, their  
tongues lobbing out for a sop to lift up  
their minds and hearts and anchor their lives.  
Come to me all you who hunger and thirst.

Some compassionate angel led Raïssa  
and me to Bergson, “The first to answer  
our deep desire for metaphysical truth,”  
and some extracurricular souls,  
among them the poet Péguy and the merciless

Léon Bloy, kept daring and challenging us.  
Five years later I went to school  
to Thomas Aquinas, a difficult master bold  
enough to ask himself ten thousand questions.

Bergson, Bloy, Aquinas. Yet the wisdom-hunter  
must work out his own salvation, and I  
spent years—thank God I did—sifting the truths  
in our Western heritage from the dross,  
cultural prejudices and hastily formed

imagery, attempting to dredge up at last  
matters worthy of intelligence—scarcely  
a primrose path to some grains of wisdom.

Yet the process led me to sympathize  
all the more with the researches, agonies

and discoveries of modern thought, our  
own minds, with the help of God and work  
and many collaborating friends, finally  
at home in a wisdom resistant to  
seasonal ups and downs. Question after question

raised in this our long day by humanity's  
hopes and fears and suffering, the world-wide  
impasse in regard to freedom, truth and love,  
technology, hot and cold wars. "To  
know"—what is that? what its basic forms?  
The mystic's "hearing"—is this also a form of knowing?

Prodigiously enriched by an affluent past,  
East and West, by science and by living  
in a Christian climate, we must nevertheless  
wrestle with questions as they arise in our  
day and our experience. Philosophy lives

Or dies today, and philosophers are not  
allowed to suppose that the search for  
wisdom is a closed book. Christ is forever  
fulfilling His Father's will. Little ones  
are yet coming and for an endless

tomorrow will keep coming to universities,  
youths scarcely knowing that they are  
unwise, and hungering, all the same,  
for depth, belief, and knowledge.

Around the globe in the 1960s, at  
universities in France, Japan, Israel  
and America, youths were starved, stumbling,  
even more impoverished in matters of political  
wisdom than were the French workingmen,

not one in a hundred youths guessing that  
their revolt was really for faith. Clusters  
of youths must themselves keep rediscovering basic values,

reasons for living. But will there not some  
day be a new type of revolution,

one of truly Christian inspiration, "an integral  
Christianity alive with a pure faith  
and lucid intelligence planted  
in faith guiding us toward  
an integral humanism," philosophy,

the work and wisdom of reason,  
awaking, particularly in the scientist,  
the sense of mystery stammered  
by the atom and the universe!

This bright afternoon in springtime France  
they are readying to dig a grave for me,  
and I am autographing a book,  
"Raïssa et Jacques," for a man just out of jail.