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**Judaism, Islam, and Christianity
in Mediaeval Europe, Difference and
Unity: The ‘religions of the Book’ and
Their Assimilation of Hellenistic
Philosophical Theology**

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**I. INTRODUCTION:
THE ORIGINS OF THE MIDDLE AGES IN LATE ANTIQUITY**

The question of multiculturalism and religious freedom in respect to mediaeval Europeans must be thought about in radically different terms than at present, especially in Europe and the Americas. Nowhere during the European Middle Ages did religions and cultures exist in relation to what we call a secular state regarding itself as indifferent to, or at least tolerant of, cultural, and religious variety. This is not to say that there was not very great cultural, and religious variety. I no more than evoke that variety by mentioning Grottaferrata in Tusculum about twelve miles southeast of Rome, the last of the very many Catholic monasteries of the Greek rite which preserved the religious culture of Italy as *Magna Graeca*, a linguistic and cultural reality which endured for two and one-half millennia, or by noting that, in

secluded parts of Sicily, Arabic is still spoken by the remnants of the mediaeval Islamic conquerors of that island, which is as much off the coast of North Africa as it is at the tip of Europe. These remains were a great deal more than relics of dying remnants in the Middle Ages, as we may recall by remembering the extraordinary cultural and intellectual richness of the University of Naples founded in 1224 by Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Sicily and Jerusalem, *Stupor Mundi et Immutator Mirabilis* (1194-1250),¹ where Thomas Aquinas († 1274) first read Aristotle, according to the commentaries of the great Islamic commentator, lawyer, judge, philosopher, and theologian whom we call Averroes († 1198). James Weisheipl notes that in the thirteenth century “Latin, Moslem, and Jewish culture mingled freely in Sicily in a unique way that was peculiarly Sicilian,”² and he might have added Greek and German to the mix. Spain, the home for a long period of the great Jewish physician, judge, philosopher, theologian, and commentator on the Law, Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), to whom Aquinas owed a very great deal, was also a place of such meetings. The *Reconquista* in Spain reminds us that neither mediaeval Spain nor Sicily after they became Christian preserved their subject Islamic communities.

No doubt later speakers will address the question of whether a secular state indifferent to religion is possible, real, or desirable. Current denunciations of the so-called “religion of secular humanism” presuppose that it is not. In any case a religiously indifferent secular state was not attempted until the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the period about which I have been asked to speak shares with human

¹ On whom (and on the culture of his Sicilian court) see Thomas Curran, “Response to Robert Crouse, *Stupor Mundi*: Xerxes, Charlemagne, Frederick II,” in *Iconography: The Use of Art in Christian Worship*, ed. Susan Harris (Charlottetown: St. Peter Publications, 2004), 89-102 at 97-102.

² James A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D’Aquino* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 15.

history before those revolutions the assumption that the good of both religion and state demand their unity. Because, as St Paul puts it, “The powers that be are ordained of God,” (*Romans* 13:1 set by the *Book of Common Prayer* as the Epistle for Epiphany IV), the good of state and society requires that the truth about the divine ordinances be known. The relations are reciprocal, as the *Prayer Book* reminds us. The great intercession at the Eucharist prays for the established rulers, but the Church equally asks that rulers fulfill their duty to maintain “thy true religion and virtue” (*BCP*, 75). The “Bidding Prayer” with its concern that the worship of God be “acceptable” to him, admonishes rulers to remember “the strict and solemn account they must one day give before the judgement-seat of Christ,” and prayer for “true religion and sound learning” in places of education (*BCP*, 62-64) recollects the pre-revolutionary order.

As the Roman Empire demonstrated, the pre-revolutionary unity of religion and state need not create a problem in respect to multiculturalism and religious freedom. Insofar as the societies, cultures, and religions included within the Empire were willing to submit to Roman law and to accommodate the Imperial cult as the conditions of peace and prosperity, the Empire not only accepted their diversity, but also accepted their gods and rites within its own worship, as the Pantheon in Rome, so sacred as to remain structurally intact until the seventeenth century, reminds us.³ The result of the general acceptance was cross-fertilization, ever-greater inclusion, and a considerable but never total assimilation of cults to one another. While the urban cults of the Greco-Roman gods provided a kind of general system for the civilization, much else was brought in: local

³ The worst spoiling was at the hands of the Barberini Pope Urban VIII who robbed the bronze roof for the sake of the baldaquino of St Peter’s: thus, the barb: “What the barbarians dared not do, the Barberini did.”

deities and heroes, and, indeed, what were regarded as the old religions, those of Persia, Chaldea, Egypt, and even Judea,⁴ for example. What was formerly excluded as wild and barbarian came in as the prized most ancient wisdom, the pristine theology (*Prisca Theologia*). Producing a concord of the revelations and cults for the sake of communal peace and the cooperative goodwill of all the gods was a matter of the highest practical and theoretical importance for the Empire. Theoretically, two systems are most important in Antiquity: the Stoic and the Neoplatonic. A third, the Peripatetic (the name given to the school of Aristotle), will become crucially important for the religious questions in the Middle Ages, not only because it and the Neoplatonic tend to assimilate one another, but also because the Peripatetic becomes the vehicle for conveying Neoplatonism. The Stoic produced concord by a reductionist and generally rationalist and naturalizing allegorization. In this process, the Stoics developed techniques for the interpretation of myth which will be picked up both by the pagan Neoplatonists and by their Christian contemporaries and successors.

Even more important is the concordance of religions and philosophies produced by the Neoplatonists, and especially by Iamblichus (living in present day Syria † 325) and his successors, culminating in Proclus (head of the Academy in Athens † 485 and Damascius, its last head, expelled by the Christians in 529). Henry Saffrey has outlined the coming together of religion and philosophy in Proclus. Corresponding to the monotheistic impulse in religion, there was a profound unification of all things under one absolute cause. Theology, according to Proclus, is “to see, as the One supremely sees them, the processions of the gods toward the things which are, and the differences between beings from the

⁴ Thus Numenius of Apamea (flourished 160-180) supposed that the doctrines of the Brahmans, Jews, Magi, and Egyptians agreed with Plato, indeed that Moses must have gotten his teaching from Plato. Christians returned the compliment later by supposing that Plato got his teaching from Moses.

perspective of the gods.”⁵ If the One in its absolute transcendence of all else and its sustaining immanence in all guarantees unity, the many gods which the One generates, and the diverse forms under which they manifest themselves and act, provide for the inclusive diversity. As Saffrey puts it, when recording the origins in Proclus of the mediaeval development of theology as science: “Totality and order are the two marks of science. Proclus finds fourteen kinds of divinity to which he gives philosophical names...”⁶ Thus philosophy and religion were assimilated toward one another in “theology as science,” a genre which received its greatest development in the Middle Ages. Theology as science provided a medium in which multicultural diversity and religious differences, with their potential for destructive conflict, were set within a common rationality.

Theology as science arises out of the unity of religion and philosophy in pagan Antiquity and enables the survival of both aspects of Hellenic culture after the Christianization of the Empire. Saffrey describes how philosophical paganism continues in the late Ancient World:

Thus, when the Christian Emperors forbade the pagan cults, shut the temples and carried away the cultic statues in order to transform them into decorations in their palaces and gardens, pagan prayer and liturgy became interior prayer and domestic

⁵ Proclus, *Platonic Theology*, I.3, p. 17.6-7 (Saffrey-Westerink).

⁶ H.-D. Saffrey, “Les débuts de la théologie comme science (III^e-VI^e),” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 80:2 (Avril, 1996): 201-220 ; reprinted in H.-D. Saffrey, *Le Néoplatonisme après Plotin*, Histoire des doctrines de l’antiquité classique 24 (Paris: Vrin, 2000) 219-38; English translation by Wayne J. Hankey: “Theology as science (3rd-6th centuries),” *Studia Patristica*, vol. XXIX, edited by Elizabeth A. Livingstone, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 321-39 at 335-336.

liturgy, best of all philosophical activity itself, by its own proper aim, is worship rendered to the gods.⁷

Future mediaeval forms unifying philosophy and religion are inaugurated and anticipated by Proclus:

Proclus (Saffrey writes) organised the studious life as a kind of monastic life...the program of study as part of a true life of contemplation and prayer; it was he who viewed the philosophy of Plato as a “mystagogy,” as an “initiation into the holy mysteries themselves...installed, for eternity, in the home of the gods on High.”...That is why...the spirituality of Proclus heralds the spirit of mediaeval philosophy.⁸

Before we can pass from late Antiquity to the Middle Ages, indeed, before we can pass from the inclusive multiculturalism and religious freedom of the Roman Empire to their mediaeval shapes, we must confront what the Empire could not assimilate because it refused to be included within the imperial religion. Neither Judaism nor Christianity was willing to include itself within the Roman Imperial religious synthesis. And, although it confronted, not the pagan Empire, but its Christianised successor, neither has their sister religion of the Book, Islam, showed

⁷ Saffrey, “Theology as science (3rd-6th centuries),” 336.

⁸ H.-D. Saffrey, “From Iamblichus to Proclus and Damascius,” in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality*, ed. A.H. Armstrong, World Spirituality 15 (New York: Crossroads, 1989), 250-264 at 264, French version “Quelques aspects de la spiritualité des philosophes néoplatoniciens de Jamblique à Proclus et Damascius,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 68:2 (Avril, 1984): 169-182 at 182: See his “The Piety and Prayers of Ordinary Men and Women in Late Antiquity,” 195-213 in the same volume.

herself to be any more accommodating. The Middle Ages may be defined as the coming together of “the religions of the Book,” Judaism, Christianity, Islam, on the one hand, and the antique Greek and Roman culture, mediated spiritually and intellectually primarily through the Neoplatonic and the Peripatetic traditions, on the other. In the Middle Ages, the revelations conveyed in the Biblical traditions inaugurated by the Torah, replace the pagan religious deposit within the Neoplatonic-Peripatetic concordance of religions, of philosophies, and of religion and philosophy. The problematic in respect to multiculturalism and religious freedom in the Middle Ages is set by the continuing unity of religion and state together with the *exclusivity* of these religions, on the one hand, and the systematic *inclusivity* of the Hellenistic culture which they have in common, on the other. Of the three religions of the Book, Christianity is the most completely Hellenised and so we turn back to it to observe possibilities inherent in the mediaeval enterprise.

The process of assimilation of philosophy and religion to one another in theology as science enables the preservation of pagan philosophy and religion within Christianity. One of the two most influential of ancient Christian theologians, so far as the spirituality, theology, philosophy, and institutional life of the Christian West is concerned, Dionysius the Areopagite (sixth century), thought about Christianity in Proclean terms. Saffrey comments:

This development should not surprise us at all, if we just wish to recall that the gods of the Greek pantheon, that is the traditional enemies of Christianity, occupy no more than an inferior rank in this system, and that there is therefore room for a Christian interpretation of part of the Proclean hierarchy.... Thus the angels form a heavenly hierarchy, like the gods of the Proclean theology; the Church is also an

ecclesiastical hierarchy analogous to the celestial hierarchy. To speak of God is to say his names and his names express the infinitely numerous manifestations of God in reality. It is also to be united to him, and our author composed a mystical theology.⁹

As St Bonaventure († 1274) puts it in his *Journey of the Mind into God*, a work culminating in mystical language quoted from Dionysius, which Dionysius in turn had derived from the last head of the Platonic Academy, Damascius: “the Heavenly Spirits are called Intelligences by the philosophers and Angels by us.”¹⁰ Following the lead of Augustine, Aquinas sides with Plato against Aristotle in respect to the spiritual world insofar as Plato gives it a much larger population both in kinds of spiritual beings and in the numbers of each kind. By means of Platonism the spiritual agency of saints and demons, as well as of angels, in the governing and salvation of the world is explained for Augustine and Aquinas.¹¹

Saffrey sums up the result of the exchanges between philosophy and Christianity in the first five centuries like this:

So far as pagan theology is expressed in the traditional terms of the official civic cults and that of the Emperor, the only possibility is to have opposition between these two theologies. But, when pagan theology has ceased to be the religion of the State, and when it has formed itself into a scientific theology, then it offers a new space to Christian theology. This metamorphosis occurred in the Neoplatonic school in Athens;

⁹ Saffrey, “Theology as science (3rd-6th centuries),” 337.

¹⁰ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, II.2.

¹¹ Wayne J. Hankey, “Thomas’ Neoplatonic Histories: His following of Simplicius,” *Dionysius* 20 (2002): 153-78 at 170.

this is why we cannot underestimate the importance of Proclus' theology in the history of Christian theology. This theology as science will know its full flowering in the thirteenth century West.¹²

Nor did the process stop in the thirteenth century. In his "Bringing the theological traditions into accord: a characteristic of Athenian Neoplatonism", Saffrey carries us to the great Christian Neoplatonists and Peripatetics of the Renaissance, Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, writing:

Ficino himself attempted to bring the philosophers into concord by a return to the *Prisca Theologia*. Further still, Pico della Mirandola and his disciples...will compose *De Concordia mundi totius* and *De perenni philosophia*, two themes tied to the Italian Renaissance which would enable them to inscribe in works of art their hope and their cult of perfect Concord.¹³

Having reached this wide perspective on the period from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance, I am able now to outline the body of the paper and to reformulate its problematic. In fact there are two ways in which Judaism, Christianity and Islam share common ground through which they can interconnect positively: 1) because they are all "religions of the Book," and 2) because they all assimilate the Hellenistic heritage (or are

¹² Ibid., 339.

¹³ H-D. Saffrey, "Accorder entre elles les traditions théologiques: une caractéristique du néoplatonisme athénien," in *On Proclus and his Influence in Mediaeval Philosophy*, ed. E.P. Bos and P.A. Meijer, *Philosophia Antiqua* 53 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 35-50 at 49-50; reprinted in H.D. Saffrey, *Le Néoplatonisme après Plotin*, 143-158.

assimilated to it) in various forms. Both of these ways also divide them. We shall examine both the dividing and unification in the two ways.

II. RELIGIONS OF THE BOOK

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam can all be called ‘religions of the Book’ because of the essential place the Torah, the Bible, or the Quran has for each of them, though it is not the same place either for each in its differences from the others or within the various forms of each religion (there is, for example, a difference in the relations of community, liturgy, and Holy Scripture between Magisterial Protestantism and Tridentine Catholicism). Further, there is a connection between each of the three books, a connection which may or may not be recognised by the religions which adopt them. Christians recognise their dependence on the Jewish Scriptures. In contrast, a Jewish scholar writes: “for Islam ... the text of the Jewish Bible (likewise the Christian Gospels) is taken to be a corruption of divine revelation, which the Quran restored to its pristine form. [Unlike Christianity] Islam does not depend upon the Hebrew Bible to attest to its own truth.”¹⁴ However, there are, in fact, indubitable influences, negative and positive, of both Judaism and Christianity on the formation of Islam. Mark R. Cohen writes: “Developed Islam bears substantial similarities to rabbinic Judaism (strict monotheism; reliance on a divinely revealed scripture that must be ‘interpreted’ by experts; daily prayer; certain fasts, and dietary laws, to name a few).”¹⁵

The connection of Islam with Christianity can be suggested by what Islam negates: the Trinity (Allah neither begets nor is begotten), the

¹⁴ Mark R. Cohen, “Medieval Jewry in the World of Islam,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 209.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 195.

Incarnation (Mohammed is definitively the Prophet, not the Son), its Jesus is Docetic, Islam is iconoclastic and rises as the Iconoclastic Controversy tears the Byzantine Empire apart. Islam was welcomed first in those parts of the Byzantine world which were most at odds with Orthodox dogma and Nestorians, regarded as heretics because they denied that Mary was “the Mother of God,” *Theotokos*, who had established themselves in the Persian Empire in their flight from Orthodox persecution, were important media for the acquisition of Greek culture by Islamic intellectuals. We are however left with the irony that, on the one hand, “pious Muslims reject all outside influences [on Muhammad], accepting literally the Quran’s claim of direct divine revelation,”¹⁶ on the other hand, the notion of a “people of the Book” derives from Islam. Thus, Islam supplies us with a notion nearest to the idea of a community established from within revelation itself between religions of the Book.

The concept of peoples of the Book enabled Islamic mitigation of the intolerance natural to monotheists. As Mark Cohen puts it:

Exclusive by nature, monotheists declare all others (including other monotheists) to be infidels....[However,] Jews (and Christians) in the world of Islam benefited from legal toleration as 'protected people, (*ahl al-dhimma*), a status awarded to the so-called People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*), who had received a scripture revealed by God....As one of two, sometimes three or more *dhimmi* groups (Islam assimilated Persian Zoroastrians and Indian Hindus into the *dhimmi* category), Jews were not singled out for special consideration.

¹⁶ Ibid.

This meant that the natural Islamic (monotheistic) discrimination against infidels was diffused.¹⁷

Mediaeval Christians did not reciprocate this identification of a community with Muslims by means of sacred scripture. In the Western Middle Ages, dialogue with Islam required the development of another way, the one we shall treat in the second main part of this paper. In the introduction to his *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*, generally known as the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Aquinas writes:

Some of the Gentiles, such as the Mohammedans and the pagans, do not agree with us in accepting the authority of a Scripture by which they could be convinced of their error. Thus, against the Jews we are able to argue by means of the Old Testament, while against heretics we are able to argue by means of the New Testament. But the Mohammedans and the pagans accept neither the one nor the other. We must, therefore, have recourse to natural reason, to which all men are forced to give their assent.¹⁸

A feeble Christian equivalent to the Islamic doctrine of the People of the Book, that is, a reason for toleration established from within revelation, is the so-called witness doctrine developed by Augustine († 430) rooted in the *Epistle to the Romans* (11.26-27).¹⁹ Augustine develops Paul's notion into a reason for preserving the Jews as witnesses to the truth of Scripture

¹⁷ Ibid. 198.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 1.2.

¹⁹ For the role of the doctrine in saving the Jews in Catholic Europe, see James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 208-219, 270ff.

precisely because they are evidently being *punished* for understanding it literally rather than spiritually. An Augustinian scholar writes that, according to Augustine:

The Jews failed to understand that everything in their Law pointed to Christ (*Contra Faustum* 12.2-3). As a result, they misunderstood their Scripture, and their temple was destroyed and they were punished with exile and subjugation. Therefore, like Cain, they bear the mark of shame which insures their survival.²⁰

As with Cain, it is a crime against God to kill them, but, like Ham, they are enslaved, and, like Esau, the Jews are subjugated to Jacob, the Church. The witness the Jews provide requires both their preservation and their subjection to victorious Christians. Michael Signer puts it like this:

The diminished status of the Jewish people serves [as Augustine thinks] a larger purpose for the church as they become witnesses to the victory of the Christian faith. The “witness doctrine”...asserts that through the Jewish people salvation came to the pagans who recognised Christ. Like Origen and other earlier Christian writers, Augustine defended the Hebrew Scriptures borne by the Jews as proof of the veracity of Jesus as saviour. [Augustine writes]: “The Jews are a ‘scinaria,’ a desk for Christians, bearing the Law and the Prophets, testifying to the doctrine of the Church by disclosing in the letter what Christians honour [mystically and spiritually]

²⁰ Michael Signer, “Jews and Judaism,” in *Saint Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 471-2.

in the sacraments. From the Jewish manuscripts we prove, Augustine says, that these things were not written by us to suit what happened, but were long ago published and preserved as prophecies in the Jewish nation” (*c. Faust.* 12.23 and 13.10).²¹

The doctrine of Augustine, which became the general mediaeval justification for preserving the Jews, was by necessity less generous than the Islamic doctrine of the People of the Book. As Cohen writes:

[For Islam] no *special* law for the Jews developed..., as it did in Christendom, where by the high Middle Ages Jews were considered “serfs of the royal chamber,” the *special* “property” of monarchs or barons or towns. Sometimes the Church asserted exclusive power over the Jews, invoking the old patristic doctrine about the “perpetual servitude of the Jews.”²²

Moses Maimonides, from the Jewish perspective, identifies what revelation requires Jews, Christians, and Muslims to hold in common. It is of the greatest interest, first, that the unity of God is not for him one of the common doctrines, because it may be doubted that Christians are really monotheists, and, second, that a matter which had been disputed internally by Jewish, by Christians, and by Islamic thinkers, as well as by pagan philosophers, and was also in dispute between Jews, Christians, and Muslims together, on the one hand, and pagan philosophical theologians, on the other hand, namely whether the world is eternal, is asserted by Maimonides as common:

²¹ Ibid. 472.

²² Cohen, “Medieval Jewry in the World of Islam,” 198 (the italics are mine).

There is no doubt, he writes, that there are things that are common to all three of us, I mean the Jews, the Christians, and the Moslems: namely, the affirmation of the temporal creation of the world, the validity of which entails the validity of miracles and other things of that kind. As for the other matters that these two communities took the trouble to treat and were engrossed in—for instance, the study of the notion of the trinity into which the Christians plunged and the study of the Kalam into which certain sects of the Moslems plunged...these are things that we do not require in any respect whatever.²³

As also with the Islamic and Christian instances I have mentioned, what Moses Maimonides takes from revelation as establishing community with other religious groups is actually able to be chosen from that within which he differs from them. (I shall have reason to mention the Kalam or Mutakallimun below.) Further, because the scripture gives a revelation which is “out there,” so to speak, known, given, the world for these scriptural monotheists tends to be divided between believers and unbelievers, the faithful and the infidel. Aquinas, typically, teaches that unbelief is the greatest sin.²⁴ In relation to a known, given, explicit revelation, those who differ become those who *will to reject* the *known truth* and the *evident good*. Difference moves quickly to become error, and from error to become heresy or, worse, apostasy, punished by death.²⁵ The Book, or the notion of a common revelation, provides, then, a very limited basis for a community within which there is some room for cultural diversity and religious freedom.

²³ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. S. Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), lib. 1, cap. 71, p. 178.

²⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2-2.10.3.

²⁵ Aquinas, *ST* 2-2.11.3. Islam also punished apostasy by death.

In fact, differences between the versions of the Book define and sustain differences between communities. These are differences for which groups and individuals both fight to the death, and, insofar as rejection of the known revelation is seen as wilful evil, torture and violence either to weaken the will or ultimately to eliminate the evil appears to be the only course. The same Augustine whose “witness doctrine” provided a basis for preserving Jewish lives, is known as the “Hammer of Heretics” because his justification of torture to weaken the will of heretics was used to justify coercion in forcing religious conformity.²⁶

Besides the Torah and the Quran, each major Christian tradition in the mediaeval period already had a different version of the Book. Some of these differences derived from language differences: the Oriental (or Orthodox) Churches had Bibles in Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Slavonic, etc., whereas the Western (or Roman) Church had a Latin Bible, the Vulgate. The linguistic differences, and the cultural differences which generally accompany them, can be of great importance. In 1054, with the Great Schism, the Christian Church broke across the Greek-Latin divide. The content of the canon can also divide believers from one another. Although there are differences in the books accepted by Christians as canonical from the Old Testament because of the differences between the Alexandrian Greek *Septuagint* and the smaller Hebrew Palestinian scripture, there seems not to be an issue about the contents of the Bible in the Middle Ages. As is well known, at the end of the period, Bibles came to vary in content as well as in language, because the several Christian communities of “the Book” placed different books in their Bibles. At the Reformation, the Catholic Church continued with its larger canon and with the Latin Bible. In contrast, the Protestants both assisted the rise of nationalism by translations into the modern languages, and also increased the differences

²⁶ See Thomas’ use of texts of Augustine in Aquinas, *ST* 2-2.10.8.

between Western Christians by making the smaller Palestinian Torah the basis of their Old Testament canon. Still, in our period and for the questions before us, the linguistic differences are the most important.

As a matter of emphasis, Islam and Judaism are less Hellenised than is Christianity. Their sacred scriptures remain in Arabic and Hebrew respectively and practice determined by law is primary. In contrast, the specific Christian Scripture is Greek, indeed, the *Septuagint* was the version of the Jewish Scripture mostly used by the Apostolic and the Patristic Church. This has momentous results. As Jaroslav Pelikan puts it in respect to the New Testament: “It remains one of the most momentous linguistic convergences in the entire history of the human mind and spirit that the New Testament happens to have been written in Greek...the Greek of Socrates and Plato.”²⁷ To return to the point from which we began this consideration of the religions of the Book, in part because its Book was Greek, the Church was fundamentally shaped in its war with the Hellenistic philosophical schools, especially the Neoplatonic ones.²⁸ As a matter of emphasis, in comparison with Islam and Judaism, the Church is more a theological community united by the doctrines in its creeds than a practical community dependent on the judgments of experts in the sacred law. Although the formation of Christianity within the Hellenistic world contributes to its differences from mediaeval Judaism and Islam, Hellenism also provides a common ground between all three.

III. THE COMMON HERITAGE

²⁷ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism*, Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen, 1992-1993 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) 3.

²⁸ Pierre Hadot, “La Fin du paganisme,” reprinted in Pierre Hadot, *Études de philosophie ancienne*, L’ane d’or (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998), 341-74.

I begin with what many regard as the best instance in the mediaeval circumstances of multiculturalism and religious freedom, namely the way in which Judaism and Islam met within Arabic culture. As I have already suggested, the Muslims rapidly acquired the culture of the Mediterranean generally; this included philosophical culture acquired both from the remains within their territories of the Hellenistic schools, especially the Neoplatonist and Peripatetic, and also from Christians, orthodox and heretical. The Islamic thinkers translated the Greeks into Arabic, the language of their sacred book, and gained a knowledge of Hellenic and Hellenistic science, philosophy, and theology far in advance of anything the Latin West would have until after the Renaissance. The fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the flight of Byzantine scholars to the West, enabled a great leap forward, but Islamic scientific and philosophical culture was far superior to that of Christian Europe until well into the early modern period. We must remember, for example, that, although the Arabic Islamic thinkers used and assimilated the dialogues of Plato in their own political, philosophical, and theological writings, the dialogues were almost entirely unknown to as well educated a thinker as Thomas Aquinas. It was only in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the Latin West acquired **from the Arabs** a substantial knowledge of the philosophical tradition, especially, the works of Aristotle and of the commentators on him. It is not surprising then, that in this period Jewish culture became embedded within Arabic Islamic culture so that, for example, Jewish philosophy was a species of Arabic philosophy: Moses Maimonides wrote the most influential work of mediaeval Jewish philosophical theology, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, in Arabic.

A sign and agent of this coming together of Jew and Muslim was the translation of the Torah into Arabic by the “great head of the Babylonian

yeshiva of Sura, Saadya Gaon († 942).²⁹ It quickly attained canonical status. He also produced an Arabic commentary on the text and the first Arabic prayer book. Significantly for the continuation of the Hellenistic union of philosophy and religion in this period, “Saadya is also responsible for pioneering Jewish religious philosophy in Arabic.”³⁰

Saadya adopted from the Arabic Islamic philosophical theology of his time the dialectical method, “Kalam,” of which both Moses Maimonides and Averroes (among others) will subsequently be critical. Maimonides praises the intentions of the Mutakallimun (a name for those using this method), but he finds their solutions radically flawed. They are atomists of the divine will who, as Maimonides puts it: “abolish the nature of that which exists” (*Guide*, 2.19). The result of their reduction of causation to particular acts of the divine will is endless particularization. Maimonides represents Aristotle as fighting opponents of the same kind: “those of his predecessors who believed that the world has happened to come about by chance and spontaneously” (*Guide*, 2.20). With the Mutakallimun, against positions he represents as Aristotelian, for example, that the world is eternal, and that creation proceeds by a necessary emanation of a chain of single intellectual substances as much like to one another as possible, Maimonides asserts particular acts of the divine will by which the world had a real temporal beginning, variety enters creation, and miracles occur. Emanation and its law (“from the one and simple comes nothing but unity”)³¹ need to be supplemented. Maimonides writes: because even with “thousands of degrees [of emanation], the last intellect would indubitably still be simple” (*Guide*, 2.22). Another cause is thus required, namely, “a purpose and a will directed toward this particular thing” (*Guide*, 2.21), “the

²⁹ Cohen, “Medieval Jewry in the World of Islam,” 203.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Maimonides, *The Guide*, lib. 2, cap. 19, pp. 302 and following; lib. 3, cap. 13, p. 449.

will of the one who wills” (*Guide*, 2.22).³² Nonetheless, Maimonides wants no reduction to will alone. He also strongly opposes the notion of the Kalam that the temporal creation of the world can be proved by reason, and thus the assimilation of revelation to reason or reason to revelation. On behalf of Aristotle and philosophy, Maimonides is constantly attacking within his own intellectual world those who would dissolve cosmic order. Despite his criticism of Kalam, Moses Maimonides is one of the heirs of Saadya as was his son, Abraham († 1237), whose interests demonstrate still more fully the interpenetration of philosophy and religion and of the Jewish and Muslim cultures in this period. Abraham, although trained in Peripatetic philosophy, “cultivated...a Jewish form of Sufism” an Islamic mysticism.³³

In his essay “Mediaeval Jewry in the World of Islam,” Mark R. Cohen shows how Greek philosophy provided a space within which religious groups could both preserve their differences and find community:

Philosophy was studied by Jews, Muslims, and Christians in interdenominational settings, where the particularities of each religion hardly made a difference. In fact, the Jews—the elite of course—participated in this as well as other intellectual endeavours as near-equals with Muslims in what has long been called ‘the Renaissance of Islam’ in the tenth century. In the words of Joel Kraemer, ‘[c]osmopolitanism, tolerance, reason, and friendship made possible the convocation of these

³² See A. Hyman, “From What is One and Simple only What is One and Simple Can Come,” in L.E. Goodman (ed.), *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, Studies in Neoplatonism 7 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 111-135 at 117; L.E. Goodman, *Jewish and Islamic Philosophy. Crosspollinations in the Classic Age* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 97-98.

³³ Cohen, “Medieval Jewry in the World of Islam,” 204.

societies [of learning], devoted to a common pursuit of the truth and preservation of ancient wisdom, by surmounting particular religious ties in favor of a shared human experience.’...This world of shared intellectual discourse could exist because, in origin and content, much of it was neither Islamic nor Jewish nor Christian: it was Greek. Moreover, Arabic was not just the language of the dominant, and hostile, majority religion, but also the linguistic medium of mathematics, logic, and medicine, subjects that we call (and they felt were) secular.³⁴

I hope to show that Greek philosophical culture, precisely in the form in which it was conveyed to the Latin West in the thirteenth century from the Arabic Islamic and Jewish thinkers, also helped create the beginnings of a secular intellectual life there.

In a book published last November, *Raison et Foi: Archéologie d'une crise d'Albert le Grand à Jean-Paul II*,³⁵ the great French student of mediaeval philosophy and theology, Alain de Libera, sums up much of his own and other recent French and Swiss scholarship on faith and reason in the Middle Ages, the establishment and nature of the university, the beginnings of an intellectual life independent of the control of the Church, of which an instance is found in Dante, and the connection of these with Arabic philosophy and its reception in the thirteenth century. The book concludes with a plea to save the university from the contemporary religiously inspired attack on the autonomy of reason. It shows that, in the thirteenth century, this independence is established by the way Albert the Great and his student Thomas Aquinas work out the relations of theology and

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Alain de Libera, *Raison et Foi: Archéologie d'une crise d'Albert le Grand à Jean-Paul II*, L'ordre philosophique (Paris: Seuil, 2003).

philosophy in their reactions, positive and negative, to Arabic Aristotelianism associated with Averroes. It also shows that the separation they work out is condemned in an ecclesiastical censure of 1277 and that it is not the position which triumphs in the Middle Ages. Nonetheless, because it brings us closest to the Arabic Muslim philosophical culture in which multiculturalism and religious freedom flourished best in the Middle Ages, I shall devote the remainder of this paper to sketching Thomas' position, its antecedents, and its interplay with contemporary positions.

For Aquinas, there is an account of being as being and of all its kinds, including God, which the philosophical sciences give and in relation to which theology as sacred (or revealed) doctrine must justify itself.³⁶ The very first article of the first question of the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* asks "whether it is necessary besides the philosophical disciplines to have another teaching." The first objection in the whole system proposes that: "whatever is not above reason is fully treated in philosophical science. Therefore, besides philosophical science, there is no need of any further knowledge."³⁷ The philosophical sciences providing this complete account are attributed to Aristotle, but because of the Islamic Arabic mediation of "The Philosopher," the philosophical world is established over against, and maintains a separation from, what is made known by religious revelation. As Alain de Libera puts it, the Arabs mediated the texts of Aristotle to the Latins as "a total philosophic corpus,

³⁶ Aquinas, *ST* 1.1.1 *obj.* 2.

³⁷ Aquinas, *ST* 1.1.1 *obj.* 1; for the significance of this beginning within Thomas' world, see Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002) 12-14.

into which the whole of Hellenistic thought, profoundly neoplatonised, had surreptitiously crept.”³⁸

This Neoplatonising of Aristotle was owed in part to the suppression of the Platonic schools within the Byzantine Christian Empire. Hellenistic Neoplatonists united philosophy and Hellenic religion too closely, and their criticism of Christianity was too successful, to be tolerated by Imperial Christianity. In the conflict with Christianity, the Neoplatonists remained confident that the civilized culture, inclusive truth, and rich spiritual life of pagan Hellenism would return once the currently ascendant novelties of a narrow barbarism had had their day.³⁹ The response of philosophy in the Byzantine Christian Empire was to convey the Hellenic intellectual tradition through commentary on Aristotle. Aristotle’s works were less identified with the Neoplatonic religious programme than were Plato’s. Fortunately, the greatest commentaries on his works were by this time those made by the Neoplatonist Simplicius, one of the last students of the Academy, who wrote his magnificently learned and inclusive books after the expulsion from Athens. It was the Aristotle of this concordance of the schools whom the Arabs acquired from the Greeks and whom they passed on to the Latin West by their own splendid commentaries. Crucially, the whole project presupposed that Plato and Aristotle had been

³⁸ Alain de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 20. For brief description of this Aristotelianism, see idem, *La querelle des universaux: De Platon à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Des travaux (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 117 and 68-124. See also Ewert H. Cousins, “The Indirect Influence of the Koran on the Notion of Reason in the Christian Thought of the Thirteenth Century,” *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Filosofía Medieval*, 2 vols (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979) i, 651-656.

³⁹ See A.Ph. Segonds, “Liminaire” in *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne. Actes du Colloque International de Louvain (13-16 mai 1998) en l’honneur de H.D. Saffrey et L.G. Westerink*, éd. A.Ph. Segonds et C. Steel, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 1, XXVI (Leuven / Paris: Leuven University Press / Les Belles Lettres, 2000) ix-xxv1 at xix-xxi.

reconciled, a work which the Neoplatonists had been undertaking since Porphyry († 303).⁴⁰

The total theoretical system conveyed by the corpus of Aristotle understood through the concordance of the Neoplatonic and Peripatetic traditions has for Aquinas a matching totality in human power. The virtues are extended through all the steps from the human to the divine according to a schema borrowed by Aquinas from the Neoplatonists.⁴¹ Having established that humans have natural habits caused in them by their acts,⁴² in contrast to these he asks “whether any virtues are infused in man by God.” The necessity of infused virtues is consequent on their providing the means to a higher end: “there are some habits by which a man is well disposed to an end exceeding the power of human nature.” This end is not to be confused with ends within his powers, rather “it is the ultimate and perfect happiness.”⁴³ The moral virtues are contradistinguished from the infused theological virtues: “It must be said that theological virtues are above humans... Therefore, they are not properly called human, but super-human or divine virtues.”⁴⁴ For Aquinas, the one true human good, happiness enjoyed by loving contemplation of the divine, is given in two

⁴⁰ G. Endress, “The New and Improved Platonic Theology. Proclus Arabus and Arabic Islamic Philosophy,” in *Proclus et la Théologie Platonicienne* 553-570 at 556-558, Luc Brisson, in *Philosophie grecque*, sous la direction de Monique Canto-Sperber, en collaboration avec Jonathan Barnes, Luc Brisson, Jacques Brunschwig, Gregory Vlastos, 2^e éd. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998) 636, and 687-692 and Hankey, “Thomas’ Neoplatonic Histories,” *passim*.

⁴¹ See Wayne J. Hankey, “Political, Psychic, Intellectual, Daimonic, Hierarchical, Cosmic, and Divine: Justice in Aquinas, Al-Farabi, Dionysius, and Porphyry,” *Dionysius* 21 (2003): 197-218.

⁴² Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.51.1 and 2.

⁴³ Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.51.4 *corpus*.

⁴⁴ Aquinas, *ST* 1-2.61.1 *ad* 2: *Dicendum quod virtutes theologiae sunt supra hominem ... Unde non proprie dicuntur virtutes humanae, sed super-humanae, vel divinae.*

ways: one by philosophy which accomplishes its work in this present life, the other by way of revelation, whose goal is not enjoyed until we are *in patria* (our heavenly homeland).⁴⁵ Although the first way is imperfect, the second and perfect way requires what the first accomplishes. Thomas puts it thus in his most complete treatment of the sciences, philosophical and revealed, and of their relations, the *Super Boetium De Trinitate*:

Human happiness is two-fold: one is imperfect, which is while we are on the way, about this The Philosopher speaks. This consists in the contemplation of the immaterial beings separated from the world of change by means of the habit of Wisdom. It is, however, imperfect, and of such a kind as we can have while journeying toward our homeland, so that the essence of these substances separate from matter is not known. The other perfect happiness is in the homeland, where God himself will be seen through his essence and the other substances separate from matter will be seen. This happiness will not be by way of some speculative science, but rather, through the light of glory.⁴⁶

Perfect felicity just as much requires the ordered efforts which pursue the imperfect happiness for which we strive by our natural powers as it also

⁴⁵ Denis J.M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1997) and Kerr, *After Aquinas* 119-120 may be right that we cannot extract a purely philosophical ethics from Thomas' theology because he interpreted Aristotle's ideas for human happiness in Christian terms, but it is crucial that Aquinas did not understand himself to have done so and, therefore, gave a real necessity and a real power to natural virtue.

⁴⁶ Aquinas, *Super Boetium De Trinitate*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: v. 50 (Rome/ Paris, 1992) 6.4 *ad* 3, 171 lines 176-185.

exceeds our own powers. The knowing which philosophy seeks will be perfected in us after this life: our proper human aim and labours are presupposed not destroyed. Thomas is explicit about this:

It must be said that the gifts of grace are added to nature in this way, namely that they do not destroy nature but greatly perfect it; hence the light of faith, which is infused in us by grace, does not destroy the light of natural reason with which we are endowed.⁴⁷

For Aquinas, the light of nature is divinely given to us.

In the *Prima Pars*, Aquinas says that we see and judge all things in God, because “this natural light of reason is a certain participation of the divine light.”⁴⁸ The whole massive Second Part of the *Summa Theologiae*, describing the human in its desire for happiness, both in terms of what nature understands, seeks, and does, and also in terms of what grace gives, is set under the idea of the human as “cause of its own works,” because it is *imago dei*. Because we are self-moved, Thomas must treat the world humans make by beginning with human purpose and the single human end, happiness. Thomas tells us “knowledge of the truth, considered in itself, is good.” He uses Aristotle to argue that the human good consists in the perfect knowing of the highest truth⁴⁹ and writes: “the study of philosophy for its own sake, is both allowable and praise-worthy, because the truth which the philosophers grasp, is revealed to them by God, as the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.3 *corpus*, 98 lines 114-118.

⁴⁸ Aquinas, *ST* 1.12.11 *ad* 3: *ipsum lumen naturale rationis participatio quaedam est divini luminis*.

⁴⁹ Aquinas, *ST* 2-2.167.1 *corpus* and *ad* 1.

Epistle to the Romans 1.19 says.”⁵⁰ The authority of the same text demands that the existence of God “is proved by the philosophers with unbreakable reasons.”⁵¹ Thomas understands Aristotle and Plato to teach this insofar as they maintain that our knowledge of God is a certain participation in the divine self-knowing. This doctrine Aquinas finds in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* as well as in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and he takes it to be the condition of metaphysics as knowledge of divinity.⁵²

Many of the structures and the concepts employed by Aquinas in internally ordering and relating religion and philosophy are derived from Neoplatonism and, especially, insofar as he differs from Augustine and embraces Aristotle, from the tradition of Neoplatonism originating with Iamblichus which passed by way of Proclus and Damascius, to its most influential and authoritative Christian propagator, Dionysius. Dionysius is still venerated as St Dionysius in the Orthodox Church and, indeed, a Roman Catholic church dedicated to him may be found on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. Iamblichus brought together philosophy and religion, both so as to preserve their difference and also so as to show their mutual necessity.

In this, Iamblichus did among the pagans what Philo Judaeus († 50) inaugurated for the people of the Book, making at the same time a major

⁵⁰ Aquinas, *ST* 2-2.167.1 ad 3: *studium philosophiae secundum se est licitum et laudabile, propter veritatem quam philosophi perceperunt, Deo illis revelante, ut dicitur Ad Rom. 1.19.*

⁵¹ Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: vol. 22, pars 1,2,3 (Rome 1972-1975), ii, 10.12 *corpus*, 340, lines 137-39: *rationibus irrefragabilibus etiam a philosophis probatum*; and Aquinas, *ST* 1.2.2 *sed contra*.

⁵² See Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, ed. M.R. Cathala and R.M. Spiazzi (Turin / Rome: Marietti, 1964), 1.3, pp. 18-20 §§ 60-68; idem, *In librum Beati Dionysii de divinis nominibus expositio*, ed. C. Pera (Turin/ Rome: Marietti, 1950), 1.1, pp. 7-11, §§ 17-39; idem, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: vol. 47, pars 1 and 2 (Rome 1969) ii, 10.11, 587-88, lines 60-164.

contribution to what we call Middle Platonism and to the formation of the Christian (though not the Jewish) interpretation of scripture in the Patristic period and Middle Ages. His acceptance of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy determine that, for him and for his Christian followers, the representation of God in the Torah must be interpreted in terms of incorporeality, immutability, impassibility and perfection—an idea which will equally determine how the God of Scripture is understood according to the “Thirty-Nine Articles” of the Church of England. The first of them lays down that “There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.” This notion of God is the greatest gift of Platonism to the monotheistic religions. Significantly, for Philo, the Book of Genesis teaches that creation is eternal, a position which for him unifies the truth of philosophy and of scripture.⁵³ Platonised, Jerusalem becomes the city “above, free, the mother

⁵³ What Philo taught on this question is difficult to uncover because he says apparently contradictory things: both writing that the world is not eternal and that the Divine thinking, which is always creating it, is inseparable from the eternity of God. Certainly the sensible image of the eternal world in the divine ideas is temporal, but the ideas themselves are co-eternal with God, as is the matter which will embody them. The tradition struggles with this question reaching different positions: notable among them are those of Augustine, Eriugena, Aquinas, and Descartes; see Wayne Hankey, *God in Himself, Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae*, Oxford Theological Monographs / Oxford Scholarly Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987/ 2000), 101-102. To understand the position of Philo, we must see him as engaged in the conflict which endured throughout Antiquity between Aristotle and Plato on this question. An exceptionally good account is found in Philo of Alexandria, *The Contemplative Life, The Giants and Selections*, trans. and introduction by David Winston, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York, Ramsey, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1981), 7-21; on the discussion in Antiquity, see Proclus, *On the Eternity of the World, De Aeternitate Mundi*, Greek text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Helen S. Long and A.D. Macro (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), which

of us all,” (Galatians 4:26 set for the Fourth Sunday in Lent, because this is the goal of the Christian journey) the life of the ideas in the divine mind. Neither Crusades nor any other violence will conquer or guard that Holy Land.

One of the heirs of Philo, St Augustine of Hippo, is for the Latin West an indispensably important part of the integration of Christianity and Platonism, especially in respect to the other main Neoplatonic tradition, the one associated with Plotinus and Porphyry. Christianity and Platonism are so intimately united in his writings that Robert Crouse has recently concluded that:

Augustine, also [as well as Aquinas], must be understood within th[e] ‘continuous Neoplatonic tradition’; not simply as using Plotinus or Porphyry, but as effecting a profound conversion of Platonic theology.⁵⁴

Christianity and Platonism are so thoroughly unified in the Patristic period that the Platonic and Aristotelian understanding of the divine nature becomes an essential part of Christian doctrine (see Appendix below). In contradistinction from the Arabic-Islamic and Jewish tradition, according

shows the concordance of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics within the Platonic tradition, but also demonstrates that the dispute about the eternity of the world is internal to late ancient philosophical theology generally and is not a dispute between pagans and Christians. On Aquinas, see Hankey, “Thomas’ Neoplatonic Histories,” 172-75.

⁵⁴ R.D. Crouse, “*Paucis mutatis verbis*: St. Augustine’s Platonism,” *Augustine and his critics*, ed. R.J. Dodaro and G.P. Lawless, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999) 37-50 at 43 quoting Wayne Hankey, “Denys and Aquinas: Antimodern Cold and Postmodern Hot,” *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, edited by Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones, Studies in Christian Origins (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 139-184 at 173.

to Augustine, the incorporeality of God and of the human soul were generally taught to and believed by ordinary Christians, and the scriptures were interpreted allegorically in sermons for the people (*Confessions* 6.10.21; 6.14.24; etc.). Augustine himself could only come to such an understanding of God and the soul and thus, ultimately, to conversion to Christianity by way of a long philosophical journey culminating in a conversion to Platonism which conveyed to him a positive conception of incorporeal substance, but he attributes this necessity to his stubborn pride (*Confessions* 3.5.9 ff. and 7 *passim*). On the contrary, for the Arabic-Islamic and Jewish tradition of philosophical theology (I am thinking of such figures as Al-Farabi [† 950], Moses Maimonides, and Averroes), although the true rational understanding of God and the human were united with religious representation in the founding teachers like Moses and Mohammed and in their immediate followers, during the course of time, the rational understanding came to be lost. It can only now be restored by the study of philosophy. Without true philosophy, the scripture will be understood literally and the doctrines of the incorporeality and unique unity of God are forgotten. Nonetheless, these Islamic and Jewish thinkers demand that care be taken not to expose the mass of believers to philosophy or to allegorical interpretation because they are only capable of literal belief; to attempt more will turn them into infidels.⁵⁵

The Arabic philosophical tradition and the Latins, after the twelfth century, are strongly influenced by the Iamblichan-Proclean Neoplatonism. This enables and compels both an embrace of Aristotle and a greater separation of philosophy and religion, as well as their mutually recognised necessity for one another, than the amalgam of philosophy and religion which came to the West through Augustine produced in the Middle Ages.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Averroes, *The Decisive Treatise*; Maimonides, *The Guide*, “Epistle Dedicatory” and “Introduction to the First Part,” Pines translation.

For Iamblichus, “the philosopher is not only a theologian (one who reveals the divine) but also a theurgist (one who performs divine acts).”⁵⁶ As I have indicated, for Aquinas, the necessity and possibility of moral virtues, which lie within our natural powers, inheres in a philosophical knowledge of reality, and in a desire for happiness which falls short of what he as a Christian regards as the “ultimate and perfect human beatitude.” As well as a philosopher, it is clear that Aquinas was, like Iamblichus, a theologian. His principle works are *summae* of *sacra doctrina*. He was also a priest: his eucharistic piety was celebrated and he was associated with the same kind of marvels that fill the biographies of the heads of the Neoplatonic schools. Like Iamblichus, he was observed levitating.⁵⁷ Miracles and what we call the supernatural are active here. Nonetheless, for both Iamblichus and Aquinas, philosophy retains its integrity. The key for both is the Neoplatonic principle that the same realities are repeated at different levels according to different modes.

What moved Iamblichus to theurgy, the Neoplatonic equivalent of Christian sacraments, namely, the conviction against Plotinus and Porphyry⁵⁸ that the individual human soul is altogether descended into the realm of change, requires him to embrace both theurgy and the work of philosophy for ascent toward the One. His *Protrepticus* is an exhortation to the philosophical life with all its intellectual disciplines and moral virtues. In contrast, his *De Mysteriis* contains both that upon which philosophy

⁵⁶ Carlos Steel, *The Changing Self: a study on the soul in later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius and Priscianus* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1978), 157.

⁵⁷ On Iamblichus, see M. Edwards, *Neoplatonic Saints, The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus by their Students*, Translated Texts for Historians 35 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), xxix; on Aquinas, Guillelmo de Tocco, *Vita S. Thomae Aquinatis* c. xxxiii, 107, in *Fontes Vitae S. Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. D. Prümmer (Toulouse, 1911).

⁵⁸ Gregory Shaw, “After Aporia: Theurgy in Later Platonism,” *The Journal of Neoplatonic Studies* 5:1 (1996): 3-41 at 24.

depends and what is beyond it. Philosophy which is subordinate to theurgy as a way to union with the divine is contrasted with what Augustine will later call “the pagan sacraments” as “logical” and “theoretical.”⁵⁹ With Iamblichus, exactly as for Aquinas, the philosophical sciences were essential to the self-knowledge by which the soul would uncover her innate participation in the divine knowing, and, as for Aquinas, with Iamblichus, philosophy was the human activity in the ascent.⁶⁰ Iamblichus developed the curriculum of the Neoplatonic schools in which commentary on the treatises of Aristotle was an essential part of philosophy. Contact with the gods beyond where philosophy, limited by the bounds of the discursive mind, could reach, “must be initiated by the gods themselves.”⁶¹ Of these practices and judgments Aquinas was also an heir.

Because Iamblichus maintains the limits and distinctions, he has a strong sense of the need for *paideía*, with its moral effort, subordination, and work. The *Protrepticos* teaches that “humans are principles of their actions,” a description of the human which Aquinas repeats exactly, having derived it from the Byzantine Christian theologian John Damascene († c. 750), and makes essential to our being the image of God. The philosophical journey has its own path, methods, disciplines, satisfactions, and goals. Giving the human soul that for which it is made, philosophy is for the human as human. Truth is the highest operation of the highest part

⁵⁹ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis* [Des Places] 2.11, 96,13-16, cf. 2.11, 97,2-4. Known to us as *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*, it was written by Iamblichus under the pseudonym of “Abammon,” presented as an Egyptian priest, and its original title is *The Answer of the Preceptor Abammon to the Epistle of Porphyry to Anebo and a Solution of the Doubts contained in it*. There is an 18th century translation into English by Thomas Taylor. For a comparison of Augustine and Iamblichus on grace see Hans Feichtinger, “Oudeneia and *humilitas*: Iamblichus and Augustine on Grace and Mediation,” *Dionysius* 21 (2003): 123-160.

⁶⁰ Shaw, “After Aporia,” 26.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 27.

of the soul; therefore, our ultimate human goal *qua* human must be contemplation.⁶² As with Aquinas, for Iamblichus, intellectual activity is an end in itself; it is “a part of virtue and felicity: for we affirm that felicity either is from this or is this.”⁶³ Iamblichus repeats Aristotle, just as Aquinas will do: “In a perfect and free activity itself there is a pleasure, so that theoretic activity or contemplation is the most pleasant or delightful of all.”⁶⁴

There is, however, for Iamblichus, a yet higher union with the divine. Precisely, as power or act of the human as human, philosophy is denied the capacity to bring about true union. Knowledge is not the whole of virtue and of happiness, but a part of it.⁶⁵ All philosophy is based on a prayerful relation to god, and its ultimate goal is to “follow god.”⁶⁶ Although it reaches true contemplation, philosophy is moved by a further desire, one that draws the soul closer to god, yearning for a higher contemplation than the theoretical where its activity and end are no longer divided. This beatitude is prepared for humans by the gods.⁶⁷ Philosophy is the way to that perfect end and anticipates it, but the human activity which it requires must finally give way to an activity towards us and in us of the gods. Ultimately, the soul can only have perfect felicity when separated from the body; she must in the end be receptive and must not oppose the liberation

⁶² Iamblichus, *Protrepticos* [Des Places] 7.6, 72,22-73,9. There is an English translation, Iamblichus, *The Exhortation to Philosophy*, trans. Thomas M. Johnson (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1988).

⁶³ Ibid. 7.8, 73,24-26.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 11.7,88,1-8.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 7.8, 73,22-26.

⁶⁶ Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica* 18.86; 28.137. Pythagoras serves as a mediating human “divine guide” whose life we are to follow. See Feichtinger, “Oudeneia and *humilitas*,” 133 and 138ff. and Dominic O’Meara, *Pythagoras Revived: Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, Clarendon Paperbacks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁶⁷ Iamblichus, *Protrepticos* 3.10, 47,27f.

from the body.⁶⁸ The ultimate goal lies in the soul's association with the gods, in returning to being and revolution in communion with the gods, as she was before the soul's incarnation.⁶⁹ Aquinas will agree with Iamblichus that, while we are in this present body, we cannot enjoy perfect human happiness.

The tradition of Christian Platonism which comes to the Middle Ages through Augustine does not give this Iamblichian and Thomist ordered separation and relative limitation in respect to one another of philosophical reason, grounded in what belongs to human nature, on the one hand, and the gracious operation of the gods drawing us to higher union, on the other. Augustine had spoken of Christianity as "true philosophy."⁷⁰ Following him, when philosophy is identified with wisdom, and when faith gives us the same content but in a form inadequate to reason, we arrive at Anselm's faith seeking understanding, which silently quotes Augustine.⁷¹ The silence of St Anselm († 1109) in respect to authorities is intentional; understanding surpasses what we know on authority. When, in its inward and upward quest for God, the soul finds its deiform rationality, it knows, through the structure of its own reasoning, the content of faith according to necessary reasons. The existence and attributes of God, the Trinity, and the Incarnation become a series of truths known rationally.⁷² The

⁶⁸ Ibid. 13.12, 97,17-22.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 3.10, 47,25-28; 3.11, 58,8-19.

⁷⁰ Augustine, *Contra Julianum* 4.14.72; see *De Vera Religione* 5.8.

⁷¹ Eriugena, *De divina predestinatione* I, PL 357-358 [*Treatise on Divine Predestination*, trans. Mary Brennan, Notre Dame texts in Medieval Culture, v. 5 (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998) c. 1, § 1, pp. 7-8] and Anselm, *Proslogion* c. 1 [Schmitt, v. 1, p. 100].

⁷² See Anselm, *Proslogion* c. 4 [Schmitt, vol. 1, p. 104] in respect to the existence of God; the *Monologion* deduces the Trinity and the *Cur Deus Homo* the Incarnation. For method, see the *Prologus* of the *Monologion* [Schmitt, v. 1, p. 7]; in the *Prologus* of the *Proslogion* the requirement of deiformity is made. For an analysis of the logic of

Augustinian party in the Middle Ages will always insist that *philosophy must teach what faith contains*. There can be no existence of philosophy separate from revealed theology and the Church must maintain control over philosophical life. For the Augustinian party in the Middle Ages nothing like the independence of philosophy in ‘the Islamic renaissance’ could be allowed and they tried to crush the innovations of Aquinas which repeated the kinds of separation of philosophy and religion which Iamblichus and the Islamic-Jewish tradition had developed. Postmodern neo-Augustinians and neo-Calvinists repeat among us at present the positions of these mediaeval reactionaries.⁷³

Aquinas dealt with the massive invasion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Aristotelian corpus of sciences by treating philosophy in the opposite way to his Augustinian predecessors. For the Arabic philosophers through whom the philosophical corpus was transmitted, prophecy belonged to representation and to a faculty inferior to reason. Thomas followed both them and his Augustinian predecessors by distinguishing between the modalities of faith and reason. This done, he turns the tables in respect to both. For the first time in the Latin Middle Ages, a theologian engaged the philosophers on their own terrain as a separate, limited, and subordinate sphere, and, in opposition both to the

the quest see Wayne J. Hankey, “*Secundum rei vim vel secundum cognoscentium facultatem*: Knower and Known in the *Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius and the *Proslogion* of Anselm,” *Medieval Philosophy and the Classical Tradition in Islam, Judaism and Christianity*, ed. John Inglis (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002) 126-150 at 134-141. For a view of the effects of this method on Anselm’s treatment of Jews, see Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword*, 284-89; he interprets Bosco, the dialogue partner in *Cur Deus Homo*, as a stand-in for the doubters of the Incarnation, the Jews.

⁷³ See F.A. Schaffer, *Escape from Reason* (London, 1968) and Wayne J. Hankey, “‘Poets tell many a Lie’: Radical Orthodoxy’s Poetic Histories,” *Canadian Evangelical Review: Journal of the Canadian Evangelical Theological Society* 26-27 (Spring 2004): 35-64, together with the reply by Jens Zimmerman in the same volume.

Arabs and the Augustinians, Thomas made a humbled but quasi-autonomous philosophy into the servant of revealed theology.⁷⁴ In the mediaeval university this difference of knowledge and method involved a difference of place. The Faculty of Arts was “the city of philosophers”⁷⁵ which has a measure of self-government. Practicing philosophy as commentary according to methods he learned from Greek and Arab Neoplatonists and Peripatetics, Thomas rectified philosophy philosophically, that is from within its own logic and history.⁷⁶ He was valued within the city of philosophy and, indeed, denounced by his Augustinian adversaries for having conceded too much to it and his teaching was condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See Alain de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale*, 2^e éd. (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1993) 411; Wayne J. Hankey, “Why Philosophy Abides for Aquinas,” *The Heythrop Journal*, 42:3 (2001): 329-348; on Aquinas, *ST* 1.1.5 *ad* 2, see R.D. Crouse, “St. Thomas, St. Albert, Aristotle: *Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae*,” *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso nel suo settimo centenario*, i (Naples: Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, 1975) 181-85.

⁷⁵ I. Aertsen, “Aquinas’s Philosophy in its Historical Setting,” *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. N. Kretzmann and E. Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12-37 at 24 and see 20-21.

⁷⁶ For what he did, and how he did it, see Thomas d’Aquin, *L’Unité de l’intellect contre les Averroïstes suivi des Textes contre Averroès antérieurs à 1270*, texte latin, traduction, introduction, biographie, chronologie, notes et index par A. de Libera, 2nd ed. (Paris: GF-Flammarion, 1997) and Hankey, “Thomas’ Neoplatonic Histories.”

⁷⁷ See Fergus Kerr, ‘Thomas Aquinas’, in *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. G.R. Evans (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) 207; *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277*, nouvelle éd. du texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire par David Piché, Sic et Non (Paris: Vrin, 1999) art. 89, p. 107; F.-X. Putallaz, R. Imbach, *Profession philosophe: Siger de Brabant*, Initiations au Moyen Âge (Paris: Cerf, 1997) 171-172 and Alain Boureau, *Théologie, science et censure au XIII^e siècle. Le cas de Jean Peckham*, L’âne d’or (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999).

In return for giving philosophy an autonomy, as with Moses Maimonides, faith for Aquinas now knew things philosophy could never reach. The dignity of *sacra doctrina* and its difference from a philosophical science, even the highest, required that the sacred theologian maintain his distance. In Aquinas' view, the demand of his Augustinian adversaries that things which only faith could know—the temporal beginning of the world, the Trinity, an universal, individual, and immediate providence, the Incarnation—be rationally proved brought error and disrepute to theology and undermined confidence in the crucially necessary work which philosophy really could accomplish. He found this argument explicitly in Moses Maimonides, and Aquinas certainly learned from the intense debate on the relations of scripture and philosophy carried out within mediaeval Islam and Judaism generally.⁷⁸ Thomas' *sortie* into philosophy's *camp de Mars* in the Faculty of Arts was crucial to the expansion of the mind of Western Christendom that made it the mother of secular modernity. Rudi Imbach and Alain de Libera have shown how the ancient idea of philosophy was retrieved by the laïc intellectuals of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Although Dante is the greatest of them, some of these intellectuals taught in the universities and, even though they were Christian believers, they developed a real independence for philosophy which motivated their manner of life.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* lib. 2, cap. 15ff.; Aquinas, *In 2 Sententiarum* dist. 1, q. 1, a. 5. Aquinas follows the exact position of Maimonides whom he cites at another place in the same article but “semble bien présenter une thèse de théologiens latins, appuyée, dit-il, sur un texte de saint Grégoire.”: Aquinas, *De Aeternitate Mundi*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: v. 43 (Rome, 1976), 55*. See T.B. Noone, “The Originality of St. Thomas's Position on the Philosophers and Creation,” *The Thomist* 60 (1996): 275-300 at 295-299.

⁷⁹ My list of the relevant works would include F.-X. Putallaz, R. Imbach, *Profession philosophe*; Ruedi Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs*, Initiations à la philosophie médiévale (Paris/ Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse/ Éditions du

For Aquinas, within the human world, the sciences are a hierarchy of intellectual abstractions. Constructing them is a common work,⁸⁰ like that of the university, and involves accepting the validity of human, temporal truth.⁸¹ It also involves respecting the individual conscience and the responsibility of each individual for what he or she knows and wills which is a consequence of a philosophical doctrine Aquinas ascribed to Aristotle (wrongly in my view but that makes no difference for its significance in his own thought) and which is not found among the Arabic Islamic and Jewish Peripatetics. It is that the light of the divine thinking, the active or agent intellect, the power, which in God makes and knows the ideas which construct the cosmos, is individuated in each and every human being. In helping the Western Church to accept and develop this kind of human, individual and communal, temporal, creative, philosophical investigation, Aquinas made his greatest contribution to modern secularity and to a space like that described by Cohen as existing during ‘the Renaissance of Islam’ within which multicultural diversity and religious freedom could co-exist with common work. For Thomas, creating and ascending the ladder of the sciences is the work of education, a spiritual *itinerarium* toward deiformity, and an activity necessary for understanding God’s speech to us (*ST* 1.1.5 ad 2). In accord with the Islamic philosophers and Moses Maimonides, he

Cerf, 1996); de Libera, *Penser au Moyen Âge*.

⁸⁰ Aquinas, *Contra Impugnantes Dei Cultum et religionem*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: v. 41 (Rome, 1970), c. 3 (*Utrum religiosus possit esse de collegio seclarium licite*), § 4, A64-A65 [secular here refers to secular clergy, but the principles used by Thomas to make his answer would extend to the university community generally].

⁸¹ Aquinas, *ST* 1.16.8 ad 1: *Veritas autem intellectus nostri mutabilis est*. The objections in those articles of *Questio* 16, *De Veritate* which show that truth is in minds not in things, is multiple, created, and changeable are overwhelmingly taken from Augustine and Anselm.

judges that otherwise believers have supposed, and would continue to imagine, God to be corporeal and mutable.

Very many in the thirteenth century were not convinced that the threat to Christian faith associated with Aristotle's complete philosophical account of reality could be overcome intellectually, nor were they persuaded that Aquinas had made him serve the faith. Thus, from 1210, when a synod at Sens forbade Aristotle's natural (as opposed to his logical) treatises, we have persistent, though ineffective, bans on teaching Aristotle's works. Condemnations followed, most importantly those of 1270 and 1277 by the Archbishop of Paris, which included articles held by scholars for whom the Arab Peripatetic tradition defined what reason knows; some of the condemned propositions touched Aquinas himself.⁸² In 1284, the Franciscan Archbishop of Canterbury, John Peckham, had the Oxford divinity faculty confirm the 1277 condemnation of a list of propositions issued by his Dominican predecessor.⁸³ Two years later, furious about the "destruction and erosion" of "the whole teaching of Augustine," Peckham, with Thomas as well as others in his sights, declared heretical a teaching central to Aquinas which derived from Aristotle.⁸⁴

⁸² For a brief history of the condemnations of the thirteenth-century including those against the Greeks and Eriugena, see de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale* 413-417; also there are *La Condamnation Parisienne de 1277*, art. 89, p. 107; Putallaz and Imbach, *Profession philosophe*, 171-172; J.F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 233-272 and Isabel Iribarren, "'Responsio secundum Thomam' and the Search for an Early Thomistic School," *Vivarium* 39:2 (2001): 253-96.

⁸³ Fergus Kerr, "Thomas Aquinas," *The Medieval Theologians* 201-220 at 208.

⁸⁴ Peckham to the Bishop of Lincoln quoted in Alain Boureau, *Théologie, science et censure au XIII^e siècle. Le cas de Jean Peckham, L'âne d'or* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1999) 31. The crucial passage is also quoted in F.-X. Putallaz, *Figures Franciscaines de Bonaventure à Duns Scot*, Initiations au Moyen Âge (Paris: Cerf, 1997) 46-47, which criticises scholarly characterizations of the supposed "neo-Augustinianism" of

Scholars group as “Augustinian” this opposition which was reacting both against much of what the new philosophy taught and against the moral stance implied by its independence.⁸⁵ They were generally victorious in the Middle Ages. Thomas had to wait until the Counter-Reformation to become generally authoritative, being named Doctor of the Church in 1567.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, he was canonized in 1323 and, in 1325, the Archbishop of Paris annulled the condemnation of 1277 so far as it touched him.

To conclude, it is worth noting that, during and after the life of Aquinas, the ecclesiastical authorities opposed genuinely significant innovation. To a considerable degree in the short term, they identified themselves with a reactionary party. In the longer term, the authorities lost control over Christendom’s self-transformation, and had little choice

thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries and endeavours to “décentrer l’analyse traditionnelle” (17).

⁸⁵ For the complex historiography, see Putallaz and Imbach, *Profession philosophe* and Putallaz, *Figures Franciscaines*. For problems with the designation, see Wayne J. Hankey, “Magis... Pro Nostra Sententia’: John Wyclif, his mediaeval Predecessors and reformed Successors, and a pseudo-Augustinian Eucharistic Decretal,” *Augustiniana* 45:3-4 (1995): 213-245 at 235-239.

⁸⁶ On the distortion of the understanding of medieval philosophy consequent on placing Thomas at its summit, see, for example, Pierre Magnard, “La Recherche en la philosophie médiévale et renaissante,” *La Recherche philosophique en France. Bilan et Perspectives*, rapport de la commission présidée par Pierre Magnard et Yves Charles Zarka (Paris: Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale, 1996) 162-71; Wayne J. Hankey, “From Metaphysics to History, from Exodus to Neoplatonism, from Scholasticism to Pluralism: the fate of Gilsonian Thomism in English-speaking North America,” *Dionysius* 16 (1998): 157-188 at 178-188; Putallaz, *Figures Franciscaines*; de Libera, *La philosophie* 420; for alternative approaches, see Philipp W. Rosemann, “A Change of Paradigm in the Study of Medieval Philosophy: From Rationalism to Postmodernism,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* LXXII:1 (1998): 59-73 at 63-67.

except to embrace the innovations.⁸⁷ In the end, fundamental intellectual and spiritual reform happens independently of, or in opposition to, attempts to control it. Reactionary interventions are more disruptive and destructive than effective. The last chapter of Alain de Libera's treatment of faith and reason is entitled: "Les enfants de Billy Graham et de Mecca-Cola." He sees in both reactionary Christianity and Islam a threat to the multiculturalism, religious and intellectual freedom upon which the university depends and to which it contributes. Our Greek heritage, the Arabic Islamic-Jewish intellectual culture of the Islamic renaissance, and the Albertine - Thomistic balance of philosophy and revelation in the Christian Middle Ages show that Jews, Christians, and Muslims have resources in our past for a better future than reactionary religion threatens.

**APPENDIX ON SOME CONVERGENCES
OF THE BIBLICAL RELIGIONS AND PLATONISM.**

1. *The Presupposed Doctrine of God: Republic II, 379b-381c* (translation by Desmond Lee [Penguin, 2nd revised, 1974], 134-137): the goodness of god which can only do good, the perfection, and consequent changelessness *απαθεια* (*apatheia*) of god, the incorporeality of the divine follows from this. The Ancients, pagan, Jewish, and Christian,

⁸⁷ For remarks, see my "Making Theology Practical: Thomas Aquinas and the Nineteenth Century Religious Revival," *Dionysius* 9 (1985): 85-127; idem, "Practical Considerations about Teaching Philosophy and Theology Now," *Restoring Faith In Reason, A New Translation of the Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II together with a commentary and discussion*, edited by Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (London: SCM Press, 2002), 199-205. The Jesuits were crucial to both the Counter-reformation and the Leonine Thomisms, on the latter, see J. Inglis, *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Mediaeval Philosophy* Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 81 (Leiden - Boston - Köln: Brill, 1998).

proceeded from the assumption that either Plato had taught Moses or Moses Plato.

2. *Republic* V, 476e (Lee, 270): the equation of being, identity, stability, and knowability *εἶναι* (*einai*, in Latin *esse*, which both Aquinas and Augustine will use as the most proper name of God). See *Revelation* 1:4 where Jesus calls himself “the being” (*ὁ ὢν*), thus identifying himself with the “I am who am” of *Exodus* 3:14.
3. *Republic* VII, 518d (Lee, 322): the movement from the cave, from darkness to light, is called “conversion,” requiring someone who has the art of conversion and who returns to the dark from the realm of light. Compare, from among many possible examples, *John* 8:12, “I am the Light of the World” and the equation of the divine Word, life and light *John* 1:1-5 on which see Augustine, *Confessions*, VII.ix (13) (trans. Henry Chadwick [World’s Classics, Oxford University Press, 1992] 121).
4. *Republic* VI, 509b-c (Lee, 309): the *επεκεινα* (*epekeina*), the Good compared to the Sun which is the source of being and knowing but beyond (*epekeina*) both. See *Acts* 17:23 and 34 on the unknown God, I *John* 1:5 (God light without darkness), *James* 1:17 (God unchanging light), I *Timothy* 6:16 (dwells in light unapproachable whom no human hath seen nor can see). Dionysius stresses this view of God.
5. The human self: *Republic* II, 366e (Lee, 113) the inner life of the soul important, not external rewards. The soul is immortal *Republic* X, 608c-613e (Lee, 440-447) and we ought to make our choices in this life relative to its future.

These Platonic doctrines (1-5) are presupposed by the philosophers and philosophical theologians of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The next two (6&7) particularly apply to Christianity.

6. *Hebrews* 1.3: the Son is the *character of the hypostasis of the Father* (*υποστασεως*) this is usually translated Person, but is the same word Plotinus and philosophy generally uses for a primary subsistence of the spiritual world. This notion is essential for the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity.
7. Nicene Creed: the Son is *ομοουσιος* (*homoousios*) NOT *ομοιουσιος* (*homoiousios*), the “same,” NOT “like” substance of the Father, so a philosophical concept comes to define the Incarnation, the essential Christian doctrine defining the relation of the divine and the human.+