Richard Harvey

# The Influence of Scholasticism on the Thought Structures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam from the Middle Ages until the present

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this paper, the influence of scholasticism on the thought structures of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is a challenging one. We want to consider how a movement that began in the 6th century and ended in the 15th, leading up to the Renaisssance, the Reformation and the Rationalist movements that prepared the way for modern and postmodern thought, had such an effect on the Church, the Jewish people and Islam.

We want, as those committed to sharing the Good News of the Messiah with the Jewish people, with Muslims, and with all nations, to understand how to present the message of the Gospel in the light of changing ways of understanding God, the nature of reality, and our human need. We know that Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners and restore them to a relationship with their creator. To share this, especially with Jews and Muslims today, we have to be conscious of how our understandings of God have changed over the centuries. We have to see how our interpretation of the Bible and our discussion of who God is, how he acts, and how he has made himself known to us, has been affected by movements of thought such as scholasticism. We then have to restore or correct such interpretations in the light of Scripture and a right understanding of its message.

My aim today is to explore what scholasticism is, how it has transformed the thought of the three major monotheistic faiths, and to suggest an appropriate response. As a Messianic Jew, my heart's longing is, like the apostle Paul's, that 'all Israel will be saved' (Romans 11:26). I long for the day when my people will in both repentance and joy recognise their Messiah. So my interest in scholasticism is not just as an academic or as a philosopher, but as an evangelist. I want to know how scholasticism has affected our understanding of the nature of God, particularly the Doctrine of the Trinity. I also want to know how to interpret scripture (hermeneutics) and put forward the claims of Christ (apologetics) in the intercultural encounter between Christianity and Judaism and Islam, so that I may be more effective in sharing this wonderful Good News. With that in mind, let us proceed in our discussion.

## 2. WHAT IS SCHOLASTICISM?

So what is Scholasticism? It is 'The organisation of learning into a rational body of knowledge'.[1] In the 12th century, the clergyman in charge of a school that was part of a cathedral, who had responsibility for the education of Priests, was called a scholasticus.[2] Schola, from which derives the word 'school', originally means 'leisure' in Greek, because it is only when you have spare or free time that you have time to study. It then came to mean any group or company, such as a group of soldiers, monks or students. A school thus became a place of leisure for the pursuit of truth, just as the Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato and Aristotle met in the academy (originally a grove of olive trees in Athens) to discuss at their leisure questions of philosophy.

Seven key questions discussed throughout the period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance were

- the relation of faith to reason,
- the existence of God,
- the significance of names used to speak about God
- the object of theology and metaphysics
- the way we know (epistemology)
- universals[3]
- individuation[4]

Amongst Christians, but also amongst Jews and Muslims, a philosophical and theological tradition emerged in which these problems were discussed, at great length and in great detail. The scholastic philosophers did not consider themselves as philosophers only, but as theologians, many of them with great personal faith and a life of prayer and mystical awareness that went alongside their rational reflection.

The scholastic movement emerged with the development of Universities (such as Paris, Bologna and Oxford, and with the translation of lost works from the Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle, often via Arabic, into Latin. The leading Christian scholastics from the time of Augustine were Peter Abelard, Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great), Duns Scotus, and most importantly Thomas Aquinas, whose Summa Theologica, written in the 13th century, is the most encyclopaedic attempt to summarise theology and philosophy. Thomas understood philosophy to be the ancilla theologiae, the handmaiden of theology.

The scholastic movement continued in both Protestantism and Catholicism, but the Renaissance brought new scientific methods of inductive logic, which undermined a priori knowledge based on faith and authoritative teaching. The emergence of humanism also challenged the theological approach of scholasticism. Scholasticism also influenced greatly the development of Jewish and Islamic philosophy and theology, as we shall see below.

We will focus particularly on the nature of God, but also on the relation of faith to reason, and the differences between Semitic and Hellenistic thought that the scholastics tried to combine. Medieval philosophy, in both Judaism, Christianity and Islam, was concerned to synthesise or harmonise two specific streams of knowledge, the secular wisdom of Greek Philosophy, and the authoritative revealed doctrine of the Bible. The attempt to do this led to a long and rich period of philosophical development

that lasted almost a thousand years. It has been argued that:

> In intensity, sophistication, and achievement, the philosophical flowering in the thirteenth century could be rightly said to rival the golden age of Greek philosophy in the fourth century B.C.'[5]

Three features are present in all the scholastics from the 12th to the 17th centuries. First the principle of reasoned argument or ratio, 'rigourous argumentation and trusted logic and dialectics to uncover, through discussion and analysis, philosophical truth'.[6] Second, the principle of auctoritas, the understanding that earlier philosophers, especially Aristotle, had a special authority and any new reflection had to make reference to and be in dialogue with those who had previously spoken. The third principle was that of concordia, the need to harmonise and coordinate the insights of philosophy and theory with the revealed truths of scripture and theological teaching of the Church Fathers, particularly Augustine, to produce a harmony of faith and reason.'

## 3. ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Whereas Judaism and Christianity began as a religion of small groups, Islam developed as the religion of an expanding empire. Within a hundred years of Mohammed's death in 632 AD, military conquest extended the Islamic world to India, North Africa and Southern Spain. As a result, a variety of different communities came under Muslim rule, and Islam came into contact with the theological systems of Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastranism, and the philosophy of India and Greece. This led Islamic theologians to use philosophical ideas and principles to interpret Koranic doctrines.[7]

Islamic theology was then developed by the Mutakallimun.[8] These were divided into the Mu'tazillites and the Ash'arites. The Mu'tazilites[9] originated in groups that met in Basrah and Baghdad to discuss how Greek philosophical ideas might help to resolve certain theological problems, such as divine unity, and how human beings can be free even though God is omnipotent. They also developed proofs of the creation of the world, using Christian Neoplatonist ideas. The Ash'arites (founded by Al-Ash'ari, 873-935) tried to clarify Koranic doctrines. They denied the existence of any causation except through God, and therefore denied the freedom of human will.

## 4. THE INFLUENCE OF ARISTOTELIAN THOUGHT

Awareness of Aristotle's main works was limited until the Greek texts were provided by Arabic and Hebrew translations, and then brought into the latin-speaking world of the Church. The Realists of the 13th century (Duns Scotus) strengthened their position by using Aristotle's teaching that reality consists of form and matter and the form is invisible except when "realized" or "materialized" in matter. Hence they concluded that its "realization" or actualization demonstrated the reality of the universals in each individual.

### 4.1 The Aristotelian World View and Papal Intervention

Christian philosophers were unconsciously influenced by Plato and

Augustine, so their first efforts to integrate Aristotle's thought led to great confusion. Aristotle based all knowledge on what the sense could perceive and reason deduce, thus eliminating the possibility of super-rational revelation. Augustine taught the eternity of matter, which appeared to rule out the possibility of creatio e nihilo, the Biblical doctrine of creation from nothing. Aristotle taught that the soul was not immortal, whereas Plato taught the immortality of the soul, and the Biblical doctrine stressed the resurrection of the body. Aristotle saw God as the unmoved mover, totally distant from the creation, beyond human capacity to comprehend. He set the creation going, but had no active involvement in its daily ordering. The Biblical doctrine of Providence, and that God intervenes in human history in saving power (the Exodus, the Cross) was difficult to reconcile with this Aristotelian world-view.

Jewish and Islamic teachers were already facing these questions, and Christian scholars learned much from the works of Maimonides, Averroës and others. Their understanding of Maimonides, Averroës (Ibn Rushd) and others, who also had an imperfect understanding of Aristotle, led to poor and incomplete translations of his work.

Around 1215 the Pope intervened in the controversy and prevented study of Aristotle's natural philosophy and metaphysics in Paris, the leading bastion of Aristotelianism. In 1231 Pope Gregory IX modified the prohibition, but at the universities of Toulouse and Oxford Aristotle's works were eagerly studied.

### 4.2 Christian Averroism

It became apparent that Aristotelian thought represented a serious challenge to orthodox Christian teaching. The Muslim commentator Averroës influenced Christian Averroists such as Siger de Brabant (d. 1281) who held the view that both Aristotelian rationalism and Christian Platonism, whilst seemingly in contradiction, were both equally true.

## 5. AN AUGUSTINIAN ARISTOTLE

Other scholars preferred to pick and choose from Aristotle's teaching those parts which seemed compatible with Platonic/Augustinian Realism and its understanding of supernatural revelation. The Franciscans expounded the mystical ideas of Platonism and linked them to the realist approach of Augustine. Bonaventure (1221-1274) taught that scientia [knowledge] could be derived from nature, reason and the Aristotelian logical approach, whereas sapientia is divine, supernatural wisdom which is revealed directly by God as absolute truth. Sapientia is revealed directly from the mind of God to the mind of the receiver by faith, and requires love for God and the will to follow God, not just intellectual understanding. Revelation of sapientia is a supernatural and mystical experience which surpasses knowledge.

### 5.1 Thomism

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) was the most comprehensive and ambitious synthesiser of Aristotelian thought with Christian teaching. He constructed a rational approach to Christianity that was integrated, coherent and systematic, according to the logical and systematic categories of Aristotle. This

meant redefining some key Christian doctrines, which although condemned by some of his contemporaries, has survived to the present day, and still has a powerful influence in Roman Catholicism and beyond.[10]

Aquinas held that there are two types of knowledge of God – natural and special revelation. Natural revelation is received through observation of nature, humanity and conscience, and through rational enquiry. Beyond this knowledge is the special revelation that derives from God's saving acts in history, and especially in the incarnation of Christ. But those events, now recorded in Scripture, can be read and understood by human reason, which then leads to faith. So Aristotelian reason and Biblical faith go hand in hand, as the two wings of a dove are joined to enable the dove to fly. All knowledge of God comes either from evidence of God's activity in nature, which our senses observe and our reasoning understands, or from revelation, which must also be understood rationally. If we confuse the two or do not see how they fit together, this is because our human capacity to understand God's supernatural revelation is flawed through the effects of sin.

## 6. JEWISH THOUGHT

Jewish thought also had a considerable influence on the development of scholasticism, and was affected by it. Ibn Gabirol, a Jewish poet and philosopher living in Moslem Spain, (c. 1022–c. 1058), was known as Avicebron or Avencebrol. His main philosophical work was written in Arabic and preserved in a Latin translation, Fons Vitae (c. 1050; The Fountain of Life). Like Aristotle he stresses the unity and simplicity of God, and in line with Jewish and Moslem thought, the indivisibility of God's nature. God's creatures have both material form and are composed of matter, but also have something of the spiritual material that makes up angels and the human soul. This was attractive to some who used his analysis of a plurality of forms in which both spiritual and material beings could co-exist. Each form of life could be placed in a hierarchy of being. For example, a dog is both a corporeal thing, a living thing, an animal, and a dog, but without a human soul.

The most influential Jewish thinker was Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), or Moses ben Maimon, who was known to Christians of the Middle Ages as Rabbi Moses. In Jewish tradition 'from Moses to Moses there was no-one like Moses.' His Dalalat al-ha'irin (c. 1190; The Guide for the Perplexed/Moreh Nevuchim) reconciled Greek philosophy with revealed religion, but at the expense of the unity of God, the eternity of matter, the lack of a personal Messiah and a rationalist approach to miracles and the supernatural.

## 7. MAIMONIDES ON THE SINGULARITY OF GOD

### 7.1 God in Judaism, Christianity and Messianic Judaism

In both Judaism and Christianity the doctrine of God is central.

> There can be no disputing of the fact that the central idea of Judaism and its life purpose is the doctrine of the One Only and Holy God, whose kingdom of truth, justice

and peace is to be universally established at the end of time.[11]

The Shema (Deut. 6:4) declares the existence, identity, unity and authority of God, as do the first five of Maimonides' 13 Articles of Faith.[12] The Jewish understanding of God is seldom presented as systematic theology, but is addressed philosophically.[13] The being, activity and attributes of God form the outline for this discussion, which includes subcategories of God's unity and singularity, personhood, transcendence, immanence, eternal nature, omnipotence and omniscience. Jewish thought requires discussion of God's revelation, creation, providence and goodness in the light of biblical and traditional sources, and historic and contemporary philosophical questions.[14]

Jewish tradition sees the Trinitarian claim as an unacceptable compromising of the doctrine of the Unity of God.[15]

### 7.2 Echad and Yachid

Arnold Fruchtenbaum gives a definition of the unity of the Godhead that allows for Trinitarian thought.[16]

> Perhaps the best and simplest definition of the Trinity is that there is only one God, but in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons; the same in substance or essence, but distinct in subsistence or existence.[17]

Yet Maimonides' second Principle of Faith excludes the possibility of a plural unity. In declaring that God's unity was unlike that of any other, his choice of the word yachid rather than echad was deliberate.

> The Rambam was well versed in classical Hebrew and surely would have recognized that the word echad is ambiguous as to the nature of oneness and did not always carry the concept of an absolute oneness (Gen. 2:25).[18]

The choice of yachid was deliberate, as the meaning of the word did not have primarily a 'numerical emphasis' but stressed uniqueness. Maimonides employed it to rule out the possibility of one being sharing in the divinity of another.

> Thus to eliminate the ambiguity or any possibility of a plurality or trinity in the godhead he chose to use yachid which conveys an absolute oneness.[19]

Fruchtenbaum does not discuss the context of the Maimonidean project to harmonise Aristotelian thought with biblical revelation, but assumes the choice of yachid is an anti-Trinitarian move.

## 8. HEBREW THOUGHT COMPARED WITH GREEK

Scholasticism aimed not only at harmonising faith and reason, but attempted to synthesise the Greek philosophical method of Plato and Aristotle with the teaching of the Bible. But the Bible is not a text-book of Greek philosophy, rather the authoritative revelation of the God of who created the universe in his dealings with his people Israel and with all nations. Previously Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and particularly Augustine had harmonised the teachings of the Bible with the philosophy of Plato, and the neo-Platonist Plotinus. Now scholasticism, exemplified by Tho-

mas Aquinas in Christianity, Moses Maimonides (Rambam) in Judaism, and Ibn Rushd (Averroës) in Islam, tackled the more ambitious project of making sure that Aristotelian thought became the philosophical foundation on which the truths of Scripture and the teachings of the Church Fathers, Rabbis and Muslim scholars, could be built.

What are the main differences between the original semitic/hebraic thought forms of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) and the new stream of philosophical reflection? It was once fashionable to draw sharp distinctions between Greek philosophy and Jewish and Christian thought.[20] Greek thought believed in the immortality of the soul, Jewish faith in the resurrection of the body. Greek thought is abstract, systematic and theoretical. Jewish thought is concrete, holistic and practical. The Greek view of time is linear – the Jewish view is cyclical. Whilst there is some considerable overlap between Jewish and Hellenistic thinking, there are general differences which the early church fathers attempted to resolve, and which the scholastics refined.

8.1 The Influence of Greek thought

It is helpful to consider an earlier example of the attempt to reconcile Greek Philosophy with Biblical revelation. Philo (20 BC - 50 AD), known also as Philo of Alexandria was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher born in Alexandria, Egypt. Philo used allegory to fuse and harmonize Greek philosophy and Judaism. His method followed the practices of both Jewish exegesis and Stoic philosophy. Philo's works were enthusiastically received by the early Christians, some of whom saw in him a cryptic Christian. His concept of the Logos as God's creative principle apparently influenced early Christology. To him Logos was God's "blueprint for the world", a governing plan.

From the time of Philo of Alexandria (15b.c.e-50 c.e.) the attempt was made to combine Platonic philosophy of forms and idealism with Biblical revelation. Philo's discussion of the logos illustrates how Greek philosophy and Biblical semitic thinking could be blended together. Philo combined the Old Testament idea of the davar YHWH, the word of the LORD, with the Stoic concept of the logos which gives both a philosophical and mystical meaning. David Winston summarises his understanding thus:

> In Philo's philosophy, the Logos is the Divine Mind, the idea of ideas, the first-begotten son of the Uncreated Father, eldest and chief of the angels, the man or shadow of God, or even the second God, the pattern of all creation and the archetype of human reason. The Logos is God immanent, holding together and administering the entire chain of creation..., and man's mind is but a tiny fragment of this all-pervading Logos.[21]

The Jewish people were both open and resistant to the lure of Greek philosophy. The rabbis on one hand said 'cursed be he who teaches his son Greek',[22] but on the other hand experimented with the methods of argument and rhetoric of the Sophists.

In general, the differences between Hebraic and Greek thought, that the scholastics sought to integrate, may be noted as follows:

## 9. HEBRAIC VS WESTERN THINKING - A COMPARISON

| GREEK APPROACH<br>(western) | HEBRAIC APPROACH<br>(semitic) |
|---|---|
| | |
| Life analyzed in precise categories. Western dualism of matter/body/form and idea/spirit. | Everything is holistic. Aspective rather than partitive anthropology. |
| A split between natural and supernatural. | The supernatural and natural can not be split. |
| Linear logic. | Contextual or "bloc" logic. |
| Rugged Individualism. | Importance of being part of group, communal and corporate identity. |
| Identity comes from individual freedom. | Value comes from place in society and family. |
| Man-centered universe. | God/tribe/family-centered universe. |
| Worth of person based on money/material possessions/power. | Worth of person derived from family relationships. |
| Biological life sacred. | Social life supremely important. |
| Chance + cause and effect limit what can happen. | God causes everything in his universe. |
| Man rules nature through understanding and applying laws of science. | God rules everything, so relationship with God determines how things turn out. |
| Power over others is achieved through business, politics and human organizations. | Power over others is structured by social patterns ordained by God. |
| All that exists is the material. | The universe is filled with powerful spirit beings. |
| Linear time is divided into neat segments. Each event is new. | Cyclical or spiralling time. Similar events constantly reoccur. |
| History is recording facts objectively and chronologically. | History is an attempt to preserve significant truths in meaningful or memorable ways, whether or not details are objective facts. |
| Oriented to the near future. | Oriented to lessons of history. |
| Change is good = progress. | Change is bad = destruction of tradition. |
| Universe evolved by chance. | Universe created by God. |
| Universe dominated and controlled by science and technology. | God gave man stewardship over his earthly creation. Accountability to God. |
| Material goods = measure of personal achievement. | Material goods = measure of God's blessing. |
| Blind faith. | Knowledge-based faith. |
| Time as points on a straight line ("at this point in time ...") | Time determined by content ("In the day that the Lord did ...") |

## 10. CONCLUSION - HOW MANY ANGELS CAN DANCE ON A PIN?

The effects of scholasticism can be assessed by discussing the apocryphal question (we do not know whether it was actually discussed) about how may angels could dance on the head of a pin. Dorothy L. Sayers argued that the question was "simply a debating exercise" and that the answer "usually adjudged correct" was that "angels are pure intelligences, not material, but limited, so that they have location in space, but not extension."[24] Sayers compares the question to that of how many people's thoughts can be concentrated upon a particular pin at the same time. The answer, therefore, is that an infinity of angels can be located on the head of a pin, since they do not occupy any space there.

Sayers concludes,

> The practical lesson to be drawn from the argument is not to use words like "there" in a loose, unscientific way, without specifying whether you mean "located there" or "occupying space there."[25]

The attempt of the scholastics to unify the head of the philosophers with the heart of scripture was a bold and worthy one, but produced an 'allow of fact and faith that was not easy to make', and was ultimately unsatisfactory. To unite Christ and Aristotle, as the founders of two systems of philosophy, produced the Aristotelian Western dualism which goes against the biblical world-view and limits the contextualisation of the Gospel that is needed on Jewish, Muslim and other worldviews and contexts. Whilst every generation and every development of Christian thought must use the philosophical resources of its time, we can learn from the efforts of scholasticism, and try to be as effective in our own day in sharing the Gospel within our contemporary culture without losing its truth and power to contemporary thought-forms.

RICHARD HARVEY (Ph.D.) is Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament studies, Hebrew and Judaism at All Nations Christian College in Ware/ London, England. Member of the European Board of Jews for Jesus; Vice-President of the British Messianic Jewish Alliance; member of the Board of Reference, Caspari Centre, Jerusalem.

ENDNOTES

[1] Karl Rahner, 'Scholasticism' in Sacramentum Mundi: Enclycopaedia of Theology (London: DLT, 1968), 360.

[2] Louis Roy, "Medieval Latin Scholasticism: Some Comparative Features" in Scholasticism: Cross-Cultural and Comparative Perspectives, ed. José Ignacio Cabézon (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 19-34, esp. 19.

[3] The term is used in philosophy to signify nature or essence by a general term. What particular things have in common, namely characteristics or qualities, are universals. In other words, universals are repeatable or recurrent entities that can be instantiated or exemplified by many particular things. Plato understood universals to be the basis of general terms, such as the abstract, nonphysical entities to which words like "doghood", "redness", and "betweenness" refer.

[4] Jorge J. E. Gracia, 'Philosophy in the Middle Ages: An Introduction,' A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages, Jorge J. E. Gracia, Timothy B. Noone, eds., (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 1. The problem of individuation is the question, 'what is it, if anything, that makes some object the particular object that it is? What makes this so-and-so this so-and-so? (Gareth Matthews 'Individuation' in A Companion to Metaphysics, eds. Jaegwon Kim, Ernest Sosa, Sosa (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Timothy B. Noone, 'Scholasticism' in A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages, Jorge J. E. Gracia, Timothy B. Noone, eds., (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 55.

[7] Yegane Shayegan, 'The Transmission of Greek Philosophy to the Islamic World' in History of Islamic Philosophy, eds. Seeyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1996), 89-104, esp. 89.

[8] The name given to students of the kalam. The systematic theology that arose in the 7th and 8th centuries as Muslim commentators on the Koran used Greek philosophy and had contacts with Christian theologians to discuss the nature of God, human freewill and other matters. Cf. Majid Fakhry, A Short Introduction to Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Mysticism (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998), 13.

[9] From i'tazala, to separate oneself, to dissent. Its principal dogmas were that God is an absolute unity, and no attribute can be ascribed to Him. Man is a free agent. It is on account of these two principles that the Mu'tazilities designate themselves the "Partisans of Justice and Unity".The third dogma was that all knowledge necessary for the salvation of man emanates from his reason; humans could acquire knowledge before, as well as after, Revelation, by the sole light of reason. This fact makes knowledge obligatory upon all men, at all times, and in all places.

[10] The Papal Encyclical Fides et Ratio says of him:

THE ENDURING ORIGINALITY OF THE THOUGHT OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

43. A quite special place in this long development belongs to Saint Thomas, not only because of what he taught but also because of the dialogue which he undertook with the Arab and Jewish thought of his time. In an age when Christian thinkers were rediscovering the treasures of ancient philosophy, and more particularly of Aristotle,

Thomas had the great merit of giving pride of place to the harmony which exists between faith and reason. Both the light of reason and the light of faith come from God, he argued; hence there can be no contradiction between them.(44)

More radically, Thomas recognized that nature, philosophy's proper concern, could contribute to the understanding of divine Revelation. Faith therefore has no fear of reason, but seeks it out and has trust in it. Just as grace builds on nature and brings it to fulfilment,(45) so faith builds upon and perfects reason. Illumined by faith, reason is set free from the fragility and limitations deriving from the disobedience of sin and finds the strength required to rise to the knowledge of the Triune God. Although he made much of the supernatural character of faith, the Angelic Doctor did not overlook the importance of its reasonableness; indeed he was able to plumb the depths and explain the meaning of this reasonableness. Faith is in a sense an "exercise of thought"; and human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to the contents of faith, which are in any case attained by way of free and informed choice.(46)

This is why the Church has been justified in consistently proposing Saint Thomas as a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology. In this connection, I would recall what my Predecessor, the Servant of God Paul VI, wrote on the occasion of the seventh centenary of the death of the Angelic Doctor: "Without doubt, Thomas possessed supremely the courage of the truth, a freedom of spirit in confronting new problems, the intellectual honesty of those who allow Christianity to be contaminated neither by secular philosophy nor by a prejudiced rejection of it. He passed therefore into the history of Christian thought as a pioneer of the new path of philosophy and universal culture. The key point and almost the kernel of the solution which, with all the brilliance of his prophetic intuition, he gave to the new encounter of faith and reason was a reconciliation between the secularity of the world and the radicality of the Gospel, thus avoiding the unnatural tendency to negate the world and its values while at the same time keeping faith with the supreme and inexorable demands of the supernatural order".(47)

44. Another of the great insights of Saint Thomas was his perception of the role of the Holy Spirit in the process by which knowledge matures into wisdom. From the first pages of his Summa Theologiae,(48) Aquinas was keen to show the primacy of the wisdom which is the gift of the Holy Spirit and which opens the way to a knowledge of divine realities. His theology allows us to understand what is distinctive of wisdom in its close link with faith and knowledge of the divine. This wisdom comes to know by way of connaturality; it presupposes faith and eventually formulates its right judgement on the basis of the truth of faith itself: "The wisdom named among the gifts of the Holy Spirit is distinct from the wisdom found among the intellectual virtues. This second wisdom is acquired through study, but the first 'comes from on high', as Saint James puts it. This also distinguishes it from faith, since faith accepts divine truth as it is. But the gift of wisdom enables judgement according to divine truth".(49)

Yet the priority accorded this wisdom

does not lead the Angelic Doctor to overlook the presence of two other complementary forms of wisdom—philosophical wisdom, which is based upon the capacity of the intellect, for all its natural limitations, to explore reality, and theological wisdom, which is based upon Revelation and which explores the contents of faith, entering the very mystery of God.

Profoundly convinced that "whatever its source, truth is of the Holy Spirit" (omne verum a quocumque dicatur a Spiritu Sancto est) (50) Saint Thomas was impartial in his love of truth. He sought truth wherever it might be found and gave consummate demonstration of its universality. In him, the Church's Magisterium has seen and recognized the passion for truth; and, precisely because it stays consistently within the horizon of universal, objective and transcendent truth, his thought scales "heights unthinkable to human intelligence".(51) Rightly, then, he may be called an "apostle of the truth".(52) Looking unreservedly to truth, the realism of Thomas could recognize the objectivity of truth and produce not merely a philosophy of "what seems to be" but a philosophy of "what is".

[11] Kaufman Kohler, Jewish Theology Systematically and Historically Considered (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 15.

[12] Louis Jacobs, Principles of the Jewish Faith: An Analytical Study (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 14.

[13] Louis Jacobs, 'God' in Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought, ed. Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (New York: Macmillan/Free Press, 1988), 290.

[14] Louis Jacobs, A Jewish Theology (London: DLT, 1973), 20.

[15] Peter Ochs, 'The God of Jews and Christians' in Christianity in Jewish Terms, ed. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, David Novak, Peter Ochs, David Fox Sandmel and Michael A. Signer (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 60.

[16] Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Jewishness and the Trinity (Tucson: Ariel Ministries, 1985); 'Creeds in Judaism' in Mishkan 34 (2001), 40-46.

[17] Fruchtenbaum, The Trinity, 1.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Fruchtenbaum, 'Creeds in Judaism', 43.

[20] Colin Brown, Christianity and Western Thought: From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment (vol. 1), (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 63.

[21] David Winston, Philo of Alexandria, (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 26.

[22] B.Sotah 49b; B.BK 82b-83a; B. Men. 64b (references to tractates in the Babylonian Talmud).

[23] Thorleif Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek (New York: Norton, 1960), 5-9. by Thorleif Boman; Judaism and Christianity – The Differences by Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, Our Father Abraham, by Marvin Wilson, God in Search of Man by Abraham Heschel. Table adapted from Brian Knowles (http://www.godward.org/Hebrew%20Roots/hebrew_mind_vs__the_western_mind.htm)

[24] Hanor A. Webb, 'Why the Scholastics Counted Angels', Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Nov., 1948), pp. 165-168; Dorothy Sayers, 'The Lost Tools of Learning', (Oxford, 1947, available at http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html)

[25] Sayers, ibid.