

CHAPTER H8

THE AGE OF AQUINAS (1300 - 2ND COMING)

THE THIRD PILLAR OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was a Dominican friar who studied Greek philosophy under Albertus Magnus at the Temple of Reason in Paris. Aquinas came along at just the right time; world events and Catholic politics resulted in the Vatican's decision to go ahead and take the plunge – somewhat apprehensively – and assign Aquinas the huge task of **formally blending carnal Reason with Christianity**. Obviously those were not the words they used, but that is exactly what his task was. It was a daring move because for nine hundred years Christian Rationalists, ever since Augustine, wouldn't come right out and do it – it was blasphemy. Everyone on all quarters – the Maccabees, Ambrose, Augustine, the popes, the Cathari, the Waldenses, the Paulicians – condemned this pagan way of thinking because no matter what label it was given – secular thought, philosophy, independent Reason, Natural Reason, Enlightened thought, Rationalism, classical thought, scientific inquiry, humanism, scholasticism, liberalism, ancient wisdom, common sense, self-evidence – it was still the carnal mind rebelling against God by not submitting to His authority by consulting His Bible. Aquinas was now told to *reverse all of that!*

Christian leaders had been incorporating philosophy for centuries, but having to be subtle about it was proving to be a nuisance and a hindrance to what man thought was right and good. It was generally agreed that Christianity – not God – was holding man back, and it was time to remedy that situation and get on with improving the world. It was now common knowledge that God really did use His Natural Law to shape our common sense, and Natural Law was better than Christianity because it was not only more trustworthy, it was also more flexible. Old-fashioned narrow-mindedness had caused Christians for too long to think Greek philosophy was “pagan.” But now it was thought the Greeks should be admired because they'd possessed the towering intellect to filter out the corrupting influences of Greek mythology and establish a blueprint by which men of all religions could come together in the pursuit of the truth. Accordingly, Aquinas was to make Reason part of Christianity by making it a part of Biblical interpretation, a shaper of doctrine, a way to defend doctrine, a way to share common values, morals, and ethics with pagans in an effort to demonstrate how much truth we share, and a new and valuable tool to aid man as he continued to refine Christianity and shape Western civilization.

After Aquinas combined Greek Reason and Christianity, any Christian who utilized Roger Bacon's carnal way of thinking by saying, “Oh, come on! God gave us brains and I think He expects us to use them!” would be – for the first time in history – right! It would become such an accepted way of thinking in the new Enlightened Christianity it would undermine all authority, including the practical validity of the word of God. For example, if a proper Christian said, “The Bible says we shouldn't do such-and-such” (which should have settled the issue), his Enlightened friends increasingly replied with, “But what's *wrong* with such-and-such?!” With that reply his friends showed they had partaken of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: the true standard in their lives had become what they thought was **right and wrong**, and they merely rendered lip service to *Thus saith the Lord*. We aren't here to be independent heads all deciding what we think is right and wrong; we're here to be obedient servants for whom what God says is the final authority.

The Bible says the way we treat God is the way we'll treat all lesser authorities. Today parents are one of the last bastions of Biblical autocratic authority, but they have almost completely surrendered to democratic egalitarianism: In the old days when one child told his sibling they weren't allowed to do something, the sibling properly responded with, “Who says?” And the answer, “Mommy says”, was all that was required to settle the issue. But today, even when parents directly order their child, “Stop it!”, the spoiled brat insolently whines, “Why?” And when the impotent parent responds with the now-old-fashioned-but-Biblically-proper, “Because I said so!”, the liberated child brazenly rejects parental authority and starts an argument over opinions among equals by demanding, “But what's *wrong* with it?!” In a restaurant I even saw a loudly-misbehaving 8-year-old so anger/embarrass her father he actually banged on the table and said with raised voice and jutting jaw, “Stop it!” She slowly turned her head, looked him right in the eyes, and said with defiant confidence, “No!” Her father got very red...but said nothing more. The issue is *who said so* – authority; right and wrong has nothing to do with it.

Why are authorities like parents, police, and potentates no longer treated with proper respect? The Bible says it's because we no longer respect and fear God. **Ho 10:3** is a good example, but it requires thought to grasp its point: *When the people don't fear God they shall say, We have no bosses; we are liberated from kings and other authorities. After all, if we don't even fear God in heaven, why should we fear what mere earthly authorities can do to us?* Therefore, when Christianity liberated itself from God's authority by exalting Reason over what His Book says, it was inevitable that all lesser authorities would also be rejected: kings were supplanted by democracy, husbands were debased by women's liberation, and parental authority bowed to the equality of children. Western civilization took a major step towards this liberation from authority when the Vatican selected Thomas Aquinas to make Greek Reason part of Christianity.

It was no coincidence that Aquinas was chosen. He was very bright and, having been a student of Albertus Magnus, he was primed for the task. He was a hard worker who turned out prodigious volumes of material. In scholastic and theological circles his work is well known as a synthesis of philosophy and Christianity. Aquinas referred to the authority of the Scriptures whenever they supported Catholic doctrine, and he used the Church Fathers, such as Augustine, when possible when the Bible was silent. But because the Church Fathers had been relatively sparing in their use of carnal Reason, and because Aquinas had to mix philosophy into all of Christianity so the two would no longer be segregated, he had to go directly to the Greek philosophers for the bulk of his work. (Hence the value of his education under Albertus at the Temple of Reason, where Aquinas also became a professor.) To the works of the Greeks he added his own Reason, which he sometimes used exclusively. The result was that, in spite of how it may be advertised in some religious circles, his work contains massive amounts of material that is *exclusively* philosophical in both method and content. It is ironic that Aquinas is still often used as an authority and/or a precedent because *technically his work makes you the only authority you need*. Neither the Bible nor any other authority is needed because Aquinas' main contribution to Western civilization and its Christian denominations was to legitimize the use of Greek philosophy's secular Reason. It is now legal both in court and in Christianity to be ignorant of the Bible; Christians may now live in accordance with what they honestly, humbly, fervently, and sincerely believe is right and good – just like atheists do. And that is why in this Age of Aquinas/Reason, in spite of the fact that most Christians living today are appallingly ignorant of the Bible, they neither fear the wrath of God nor hesitate to open their ignorant mouths and voice their ignorant

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opinions as if they really are independent, legitimate authorities. Because of Aquinas their carnal leaven must be respected as long as they are sincerely convinced they are right, because it just may be in accordance with the Natural Law of the Cosmos that God programmed into all of us by writing it on the tables of our hearts – which means verses like **Je 17:9** are invalid because they are contrary to the Reason God put into us. Because of Aquinas Christianity produced men like Noah Webster who thought, worshipped, and lived according to Reason, according to what was right in their own eyes.

Aquinas' work made morality and ethics "Christian" for the first time and they became an accepted way of life in Western civilization (but not without resistance). Therefore the sexual "morality" of Ambrose and Augustine also began to take root. Aquinas faithfully carried out Albertus Magnus' wish and the pope's order that philosophy be mixed with Christianity...but that Christianity be kept out of philosophy in order to preserve the purity of philosophy. Today we don't realize pagan philosophy – something that was anathema to Christians for one thousand seven hundred years – is a part of Christianity. That's because in the Age of Aquinas *Christianity and philosophy are one*. And that's the way it has been for seven hundred years!

One quick point: Protestants frequently deride the Roman Catholic Church for incorporating pagan things into Christianity like prayer beads, Xmas, eating fish on Friday, etc. And yet the biggest and by far the worst pagan thing Rome made "Christian" was Reason. Why no Protestant outcry? Because today we have just as many hypocrites and vipers at the controls as there were in Christ's day.

The first of Satan's three-pronged attack was to spread carnality to the other angels so they'd follow him. The second was to leaven mankind at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A failed (because its effects were temporary) third prong was his attempt to use Baalam to tell King Balak how he could spread the whoredom of Peor/Reason in the church. That attempt failed because it was too obvious. Satan, a quick learner known for his subtlety, then used the Greek philosophers to spread the whoredom of Peor to the church. But pagan philosophers are *obviously pagan* so where was the subtlety? The subtlety was in wrapping philosophy in sheep's clothing so it would be palatable to Christians by calling it Reason and Natural Law. Those names and the instinctive appeal of philosophy meant it was just a matter of time before Christians took the bait by thinking this way: "God is the Creator. He must have created Reason to reveal His Natural Laws because He said, 'Let us Reason together.' Therefore, Reason and Natural Law aren't really pagan, they're Christian!" Yes, the Natural Law angle worked as planned and Aquinas opened the gates of the church and let the Trojan horse in.

Are you infected with philosophy? Let's check. Do the Magna Carta rebellion, Satan's rebellion, the execution of King Charles I, the American Declaration of Independence, the idea of religious freedom, and the young man's claim that he'd killed King Saul – to name just a few, fill you with a loathing disgust? Would your wife tell a lie and sleep with someone if you ordered her to, like Sarah did with Abraham? Does the very idea of democracy offend you as Satanic? If you say no to any part of those questions you are infected: Your answer of no was *instinctive*; it came from Reason – not God's word, because Biblical authority has been supplanted by right and wrong so that you actually think you have the authority/prerogative to decide what is good and bad. If you are infected there is only one cure. You must live, sleep, eat, breathe, walk, talk, read, study, and meditate on the Bible day and night. If you do that, and believe all of it, and apply it to everything in life – such as the pop quiz you just took – you can be saved. And if you don't, "Get thee behind me, Satan!"

All of that is said to you here in the privacy of our classroom with no malice. I realize most of you, my beloved brothers in Christ, would say no to those questions because you grew up in the church the same way I did: 1) You were told how "spiritual" you are. 2) You were taught *nothing* about any of these topics. 3) You assumed your knowledge and understanding of the Bible were at least adequate, so your Bible study was unfocused and lacked urgency. 4) Your easy relationship with the procedures, doctrines, and people of your church helped reassure you and dull that nagging feeling that there was something wrong – or at least shallow – in your relationship with God.

Christianity has become Rational. We've assumed it is also Scriptural. But as you are beginning to see, Christianity is anything but Scriptural. Society is completely messed up. The world has been turned upside down so that good is now bad and bad is now good. Back to St. Thomas and his work.

It may be that Aquinas thought his mentor, Albertus, lost his written debates with Averroes over the **immortality of pagan souls**. Or it may be that Aquinas had too much integrity to lend credibility to Albertus' specious attempts to validate the Catholic position by inventing lengthy, circuitous ramblings that really said nothing. Whatever the reason, his treatment of this hot and very contemporary topic was shockingly brief and inconclusive. All he added to the discredited arguments of Plato and Augustine was to say the reason man doesn't *want* to die is he *cannot* die – his soul is immortal! That's it! But Aquinas wasn't going to hang himself out to dry by stopping there; he'd learned from Albertus how to weasel out of a jam when he watched his mentor's performance during his "immortality" fiasco. So Aquinas finished by saying *faith* (he did not say *faith in the Bible*) was supposed to take over and defend doctrines only if and when Reason failed. Many disgusted theologians later attacked him for his treatment of the immortality doctrine because it did not appear to be a vigorous attempt to safeguard this "fundamental Christian doctrine." Those theologians were hypocrites because they had never been able to successfully defend the doctrine either. Had they succeeded they would be huge names in Christian history because they would have succeeded where so many Christian giants failed. One account I read said the reason Aquinas' defense was so lame was he did not believe the immortality of the unregenerate soul could be proven. That tends to fit with his "accept it by faith" argument, but because he was a Dominican I'm not convinced he would have let that be known if it were true; back then Dominicans and Augustinians were pretty dogmatic about this issue.

Conservative theologians (who wanted to base doctrines on what the Bible says) said verses like **Ec 3:18,19; 1 Co 2:10-16; Ro 8:7,8; Mt 10:28** proved two distinct kinds of humans exist. The first is pagan, mortal, flesh-only, no different from beasts, and prevented by a lack of God-given spirit life from receiving and knowing the spiritual things of God – a condition that makes them no more subject to the Bible than beasts. The second is Christian, has received spirit life and immortality from God, and has the ability to receive the things of God, which makes them duty-bound to submit to the Bible.

Liberal theologians (those who wanted Catholic doctrines, the traditions of the church fathers, and papal decrees to be the basis for interpreting and explaining the Bible) were pressured by the debates' focus on the Bible to find Scriptural proof of the immortality of the souls of non-Christians. They turned to **Ge 2:7**, which says all men have a God-given "breath of life." They said this "breath of life" is the soul, a supposedly spiritual entity that gives man immortality and the ability to receive and know God's spiritual truths, and that makes man different from beasts because beasts do not have souls, do not have everlasting life, cannot go to heaven or hell, and are alone not subject to the Bible like humans are.

The conservatives humiliated the liberals by pointing out that **Ge 6:17** and **7:15** say animals also have this God-given “breath of life”, and **Ge 7:21,22** clearly shows that all flesh, both human and animal, in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. Therefore Augustine’s theory that pagans have immortal hell-bound souls was not based on the Bible.

The liberals admitted that animals have the breath of life, but said animals certainly do not have souls.

The conservatives then appeared to finally win the argument by pointing out that animals do have souls, and that those souls are mortal and don’t go to hell: **Re 8:9; 16:3; Jb 12:10** say the souls of animals *die*, just like **Ezek 18:4** says human souls are not immortal because they *die* – all of which reaffirmed the doctrinal validity of Ec 3:18,19.

That is when Aquinas saved the doctrine of the immortality of unregenerate souls by making philosophy “Christian.” All of a sudden it was “Christian” for the liberals to use pagan Natural Law to “prove” humans really were different from beasts because when God breathed the “breath of life” into man He was “obviously” *giving man Reason* so all humans could receive and know divine truths/moral values. Man alone had Reason, they said – beasts did not. And Reason “proved” all human souls have everlasting life because humans alone understand God’s “spiritual mysteries” of morality.

It is somewhat ironic that Catholic theologians criticized Aquinas for not finally proving the immortality of the souls of unregenerate humans – because his work would actually rescue the doctrine from its steady slide toward the dustbin of pagan mythology. When the works of Averroes launched centuries of intense debate over whether Augustine’s acceptance of the Greek theory that all human souls have everlasting life was justified by Scripture or not, that focus on the Bible caused the doctrine to look increasingly invalid. Then Aquinas’ work made pagan Reason an accepted part of Christianity. And that rescued the immortality of unregenerate souls by eliminating the need to focus solely on the Bible; it was now Christian to base doctrines upon pagan philosophical concepts – such as what a majority of good men sincerely thought was right.

Aquinas empowered secular society by making it official that religion could not interfere with science, political science, and other philosophic disciplines. The pagan inventions of Nature and Nature’s Laws were now “valid” Christian concepts that ironically empowered secular society by teaching that *all* men now had access to God’s truths via secular Reason. These “Christianized” pagan concepts were an instant hit with closet atheists and deists who wanted to conceal their (lack of) religious beliefs: In the past it stood out like a sore thumb if you referred to “Nature’s God” or “Providence” or the “Creator”, because the ancient pagan philosophers used those and other similar non-specific terms, and Christians were always careful to glorify God in the name of Jesus Christ. Now you could safely avoid specific terms like Christ, the Lord, Jesus, the Saviour, the Good Shepherd, etc., and use Prime Mover, or say, “Fortune smiled on me.” Whoever that is.

Aquinas said even God couldn’t violate the Laws of Nature because God is *subject* to His laws. (Obviously, Aquinas didn’t understand Biblical authority and had no idea what **Mk 2:27,28** and **Mt 12:5** are all about. He was a loser.)

Aristotle had idiotically said about government that the rule of popular law (people make the laws) is preferable to the rule of any single person because the collective good of the mediocre masses outshines even the brilliance and goodness of a single great man. And he said the *purpose* of government should be to promote the “common good” in accordance with Natural Reason (which in democratic terms is defined as *the majority*). And he said the only legitimate source of governmental authority is the people. Aquinas rejected **Pv 28:2** and parroted Aristotle by saying God made “Natural goodness” a part of *all* men equally. That meant when you took equality into account, the majority collectively would have more Natural goodness and wisdom than the minority. (If you want to believe democracy is consistent with the Bible you should be carrying the Revised Standard Version, which alone has a democratic (plural) reading of Pv 28:2.) Aquinas accepted the theories of earlier pagans who claimed the purpose of government was to promote the welfare of the people, and he said a governmental ruler was legitimate in God’s view only as long as the majority of the people approved of him. If Aquinas was right about God’s way being a democratic one, all of the following would mean God’s support for David was hypocritical: Absalom’s successful democratic campaign won the hearts and support of the majority (**2 Sa 15:2-6**); David knew the majority supported Absalom (**2 Sa 15:12,13**); all the elders of Israel agreed the murdering adulterer, David, must die (**2 Sa 17:1,2,4**); a vast Christian army was formed from all cities in Christendom, from the city of Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, to overthrow and kill King David (**2 Sa 17:11**)! These pagan ideas about government, society, and religion had been cautiously bandied about in Christian Rationalist circles for centuries – but now they were God’s truth. They were now part of Western civilization and part of our “Judeo-Christian heritage.” The Modern Age, the Age of Aquinas, was here, and “progress” would quickly follow. And while it was true that Reason was still in its infancy among Christians, and that it would take another two hundred years to mature and bear fruit, the very fact that it was now officially a part of society and Christianity marks this as the beginning of the Age of Reason and the beginning of Mystery, Babylon’s captivity of God’s people. And if we are in the Age of the Gentiles, and the number of the Gentiles is 10, and the Babylonian captivity in the Bible was 70 years, if you take roughly the year 1300 and add 10 times 70 equals 700 years to it, you get roughly the year 2000. Since the year 1300 is just an approximation, and since we think the Second Coming of Christ is imminent, all we know is the Age of Reason/Babylonian captivity won’t end until the Lord Jesus Christ returns, kicks democratic government out of power, establishes a dictatorship, and sets us free by outlawing Reason/carnality in no uncertain terms. And if His rule during the Old Testament is any indication, He will again – at least at the violent beginning of His reign – inflict some spectacularly cruel and unusual punishments on vast numbers of His people to drive home, *again*, the same lessons we covered in earlier chapters. Let them that have ears to hear, hear.

The far-reaching impact of Thomas Aquinas’ work cannot be overstated. (Just look him up in the index of an encyclopedia to get a glimpse of what I mean.) For example, over three centuries after Aquinas’ death, members of the Whig political party in England (who were *Protestants!*) whose ideology held that the power of the people in Parliament should be greater than that of the king, used Aquinas’ teachings as their “authoritative” source and were proud to say, “Saint Thomas Aquinas was the first Whig.” Reason has no denominational boundaries.

Aquinas died in 1274 at age 49 so he never saw how influential he would become, but his works continued to be a hot topic of debate in the Church. During the years it took him to complete them the Vatican again became indecisive – for good reason; its soul immortality stance was pressuring the Vatican to make fundamental changes.

Since its beginning, the Roman Catholic Church had based its teachings and doctrines on Saint Augustine’s work. But the works of Averroes revealed Augustine’s scholarship to be faulty; the Catholic Church should have paid more attention to scholars like Vincent of Lérins (page H6-2) who ridiculed Augustine’s doctrines. But if the Vatican dumped Augustine, it would also have to go back and correct 900 years of accumulated doctrines and traditions. That was unacceptable; it was more important to save face than to admit the denominational founders erred.

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At times the Vatican thought it would be wise to endorse the works of Thomas Aquinas in order to Rationalize Christianity. After all, philosophy and Reason seemed to be the only way to salvage the Church's credibility after Albertus Magnus' failure showed that not all Catholic doctrines could be proven with Scripture. At other times, however, it seemed far too risky to officially adopt the very philosophical Reason that all of God's people had denounced since before the time of Christ. If Aquinas and his work became official, it would be an *enormous* doctrinal shift at a fundamental level: The Church would go from anti-Reason to pro-Reason; from claiming a faith-based reliance on the literal word of God, to a "more practical" reliance on theological scholarship; from a conservative institution trying to preserve the Old-Time Religion, to a "progressive" institution endeavoring to maintain "relevance" and "popular appeal"; from a doctrine-based religion that denounced heresy and punished heretics, to a "love-based" religion that embraced everyone and punished no one. Today's secular scholars who may not understand the above fundamental changes can nevertheless recognize this epoch-changing historic shift by the fact that the Vatican dramatically metamorphosed from an Augustine-based religion into an Aquinas-based religion. For example, I mentioned on page H7-6 that the Augustine-based Dominican Order reorganized and became Aquinas-based. That wasn't done for no reason; it was because the Dominicans enforced orthodoxy: they *had* been defenders of *Augustine-based doctrine* (anti Reason, and pro literal interpretation), but *now* they were champions of *Aquinas-based theology* (pro Reason, and anti literal interpretation). This momentous change from thus-saith-the-Lord-based orthodoxy, to what-decideth-man-based theology was a slow but inexorable process.

Ironically, the canonization of Aquinas and the official acceptance of his work, while bound to have happened sometime, were greatly hastened by the king of France.

King Philip the Fair (1268-1314) of France was Europe's most powerful monarch. And France was the staunchest advocate of Enlightenment through the Reason of philosophy. Remember, both Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas worked and taught in France, not Italy. King Philip the Fair – along with many educated Frenchmen – was infected/Enlightened. As a result he was uppity and frequently disagreed with and resisted the Vatican, an attitude that brought him into direct conflict with Pope Boniface VIII. A power struggle raged for years between the two during which the corrupt Boniface tried to subdue the French king by issuing in 1302 the famous *Unam Sanctum*, a doctrinal papal bull officially declaring, "it is altogether necessary for Salvation that every creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff." (Even though Protestants have for centuries cited this papal bull as an example of how doctrinally corrupt the Vatican was, true Bible believers have known that it is a better example of the fact that – in spite of Protestant lip service to the contrary – Protestantism utilizes what-decideth-man-based theology, not thus-saith-the-Lord-based doctrine: Reread the above quote from *Unam Sanctum* and then read **Ro 13:1-5**.) King Philip had enough: He seized the papacy by military force, had one of his French subjects elected pope, and moved papal headquarters to Avignon, France, where it remained for 72 years (1305-1377), which is close enough to the 70 years Judah was captive in Babylon that many historians refer to it as the Babylonian Captivity of the papacy.

During this time the Roman Catholic Church continued to be hesitant and vacillating on the issue of incorporating philosophy into Christianity. And the rising tide of Enlightened independence was dividing Catholicism along nationalistic lines much as the division of the Roman Empire polarized the church around Rome and Constantinople. The "Babylonian" French pope, John XXII, in a political attempt to please his English scholars, granted formal recognition to Cambridge University in 1318. But it was the other English university, Oxford, that produced William of Ockham.

William of Ockham (1285-1349) was an English Franciscan monk who became the champion of conservative scholars who opposed the use of Reason in Christianity. Ockham believed man has neither the prerogative nor the perspicacity to use his Reason in religion. Reason and religion are enemies, he said. He believed the determination of what is good and evil should be based only on what God says, even if it seems contrary to human Reason and feelings. There is no good or evil unless that determination comes from God because we are not allowed to add to or subtract from the Scriptures. The arguments that say God gave us Reason so He expects us to use it, and those that say God's Natural Laws imbue us with some kind of instinctive moral compass, are wrong, he said, because they come from the human mind rather than God's mind. Man cannot use self-based Reason to find in himself the way of truth (**Je 10:23**). Ockham's brilliant arguments so frustrated Oxford's liberal faculty that they refused to grant him his master's degree in theology when he finished the course. Ockham wasn't always consistent; he did favor the use of the secular mind in areas of the Natural sciences such as political science and government, but not in Christianity. And he did not realize some of the doctrines he believed, which had come from the Church Fathers, were themselves based on philosophy.

Ockham was transferred to liberal Avignon, France, the seat of the papacy, where three things quickly affected his life: First, the chancellor of Oxford University in England while Ockham was there was also transferred to Avignon where he wrote a report denouncing Ockham's conservative position and submitted it to the Enlightened French pope. Second, Ockham's Franciscan Order became involved in an unrelated dispute with Pope John XXII. Ockham sided with his order. Third, Ockham studied three recent papal bulls and found them to be so full of errors and outright heresies that he came to agree with many that the Frenchman, John XXII, was merely a pseudo pope and not chosen by God at all.

The French pope responded by excommunicating Ockham and sentencing him to prison. Ockham had friends, however, who helped him flee to Germany where he lived under the protection of its king, Louis IV (1287-1347), who was also involved in a struggle with Pope John XXII.

Louis IV of Germany had been king in Bavaria, but after some disputes with the pope he found it convenient to adopt the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas that said rulers received their authority not from the pope but from the favor of the people, and Louis was popular with the people. So when the Bavarian king had himself crowned – without papal authority – as ruler over the entire German empire he was promptly excommunicated. Louis IV then enlisted the services of the conservative English priest, Ockham, to use Aquinas' liberal teachings to defend the German emperor's position against the liberal French pope. Because of this power struggle the Enlightened pope temporarily adopted the conservative anti-Aquinas position in order to resist the German king who was now championing the liberal position.

Thus did this German king sow the Enlightened seeds that in a little over a century would result in the German Martin Luther's Protestant rebellion against the Church authorities over him, which in turn would later lead the Protestant churches into embracing the Enlightened principles of democracy.

German emperor Louis IV died in a hunting accident in 1347. Two years later in Munich, Ockham died of the Black Death. Both men had contributed to a defensive siege mentality on the part of the Avignon popes. Many of the English clergy were upset with the way the pope treated Ockham. The Germans rallied around Louis IV. And the Italian clergy resented a

French pope and wanted the papacy back in Rome. Which brings us back to the French king, Philip the Fair, and how he influenced the official Roman Catholic acceptance of the works of Thomas Aquinas.

Liberal Philip the Fair supported an Enlightened Christianity, as did his French pope and many of the French clergy. But Pope John XXII, who was only in this mess because Philip the Fair moved the papacy to France and made him pope, found himself with many enemies. The Italian clergy, both the liberals and the conservatives, resented him because he was French and because he wasn't in Rome. And both the English clergy and the German clergy rallied behind the liberal cause adopted by Ockham and Louis IV. The French clergy knew it would help assert the authority of the French pope if he quickly did something that pleased most of the clergy. Therefore, in 1323 Pope John XXII made the darling of the liberals, Thomas Aquinas, a saint. Officially it was done in recognition of his service to Christianity, but it was really a political maneuver, and as such it was brilliant. It pleased the ideological liberals in England, Germany, Italy, and France. It also pleased the nationalistic elements in Germany who had rallied in support of Louis IV's right to rule independently of the pope. The only group it did not please was the shrinking number of religious conservatives who opposed the mixing of religion and Reason.

The conservatives had been dealt an unexpected blow when Ockham suddenly betrayed them by selling his debating skills to the excommunicated emperor, Louis IV, in exchange for asylum, freedom, and protection from their common enemy, the pope. The conservatives could do nothing but watch with disgust as Ockham turned traitor and began defending some of the philosophical principles in Aquinas' work, thereby giving the hated philosophy a high profile by treating it as a valid Christian ideology. Having been let down by their opportunistic champion, conservatives suffered another blow when they suddenly found the ideology they opposed was the work of an official saint who had been canonized for that very ideology. Not surprisingly, their conservative cause quickly died because they had been outmaneuvered by an intellectually deficient and unpopular French/Babylonian pope who just wanted to get out of a political jam caused by his Enlightened king, Philip the Fair. Another French pope, Urban V, a successor of Pope John XXII, built on John's foundation: Since the ancient works of another saint, Augustine, had long been part of theological curriculums, and since Thomas Aquinas had been *sainted* for making the Greek philosophy that Augustine used so discretely an openly official part of Christianity, Pope Urban made the study of Greek philosophy mandatory for a degree in liberal arts from all schools in Western civilization.

And so it was that a French king influenced the course of Christianity and Western civilization. As for the papacy, it returned to Rome in 1377 and to Italian popes who did not officially endorse the French-made saint until two hundred years later when, in 1567, they made St. Thomas "Doctor of the Church." Today Aquinas is hailed as the man who saved Christianity at the height of its doctrinal crisis when it had seemed Greek philosophy was going to crush Christianity as nothing but another outdated religion that was based on the superstitious writings of ignorant and unReasonable prophets. The work of Aquinas would revolutionize world governments, revolutionize the world's economy, create incredible financial prosperity, revolutionize the structure of the family and of Western society, make science a dominant if not necessary part of life, and cause Christians to *stop* fighting wars to defend and spread Christianity and instead *begin* fighting wars to defend and spread democracy. The incorporation of Reason into society was the most dramatic and far-reaching change in the history of civilization. In the past the direction of thought was from God to man. God figured into everything and controlled everything. But now God, religion, and the Bible were being replaced by Reason. The origin of thought was no longer God, and man began to say and do many things in life with no thought or consideration for God at all. The Age of Reason and the modern Babylonian captivity of God's people were now under weigh with way on.

EARLY RAYS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

John Wycliffe (1330-1384) was a Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher who, like William of Ockham, attended liberal Oxford University. Unlike Ockham who could disagree with the liberal faculty, Wycliffe had to accept the Enlightened curriculum because Aquinas was now a saint. Nevertheless, Wycliffe developed differences with his church and was one of the earliest theologians to apply the new Rational Christianity to everyday life. He believed the church was wrong to have temporal power, paradoxically became interested in politics, and did some work for the king. He was responsible for the first complete translation of the gospels into English, which served as a catalyst for English nationalism. His attacks on various teachings of Catholicism, his English Bible, and his Enlightened views have caused many Protestants to claim him as an early forerunner of the Protestant Reformation.

Although he advocated the popular prevailing view that authorities ruled by divine right (Ro 13:1,2), Wycliffe liberalized it by putting a religious spin on the old Greek theory of "just cause": He said subjects of a king had a right to overthrow him if he committed a "mortal sin", because the sin would mean the king had lost his divine favor. Therefore, rebellion wasn't really rebellion in such cases; it was "justice." Like many scholars of his day, Wycliffe circulated his teachings only among the learned, but a religious group, the Lollards, adopted his teachings, began publicly preaching from the English Bible, and passed out anti-Catholic tracts that contained some of his ideas.

Meanwhile, the Black Death had caused a tremendous labor shortage in England, which caused the economy to collapse. Without food and without prospects for work, the poor wickedly rose up against those better off – usually people in positions of authority. This "Peasants' Revolt" was the first great rebellion of common people in English history. (The Magna Carta rebellion was carried out by nobility.) The peasant rebels murdered and robbed members of the aristocracy, the church, and the government, and vandalized property. A preacher, Henry of Norwich, then raised an army from the indignant population and crushed the rebels.

John Wycliffe was neither the cause of the rebellion nor was he associated with the rebels. But because he was in sympathy with the rebels, and because he was quarrelling with the Church hierarchy, and because one of those murdered by the peasants was the archbishop of Canterbury, the English church banned all of Wycliffe's inflammatory works. For its part the Vatican, horrified at what was happening to society, also banned the Enlightened and insubordinate works of Wycliffe in a futile attempt to dispel the storm clouds gathering over Europe.

Now that Reason was part of Christianity and was included in all educational curriculums, the conservatives, no longer able to avoid philosophy, were surprised at what they found when they studied it. They had somehow expected something so, well, *pagan* and blasphemous that they'd be filled with righteous indignation. Instead they realized with relief and increasing delight that pagan Rationalism was nothing more than the way you and I have lived our lives – before and after we were saved. Did you catch that? In general, the way our minds worked as unsaved Bible-rejecting pagans went through no significant changes when we were saved! Yes, we made some changes to our vocabulary, dropped some old habits and acquired some new

ones, but the fundamental way our minds worked didn't change. And we never thought that was bad because first, it didn't *seem* bad to our still-carnal minds and, second, we never learned anything from our churches to change the way we thought. And *that* is why the conservatives who studied philosophy *found nothing wrong with it* – Reason is *not* offensive to the carnal mind. In order for it to become offensive it is necessary to know, believe, and apply the Bible – including a thorough understanding of the issue of Authority. Only when the importance of absolute authority is understood is it possible to acquire a Biblical view of sins such as independence, equality, rebellion, insubordination, insolence, impertinence, disrespect, clamoring, disobedience, and all of the principles of democracy. If you do not understand authority you do not know who God is.

Conservatives quickly became liberals because they now believed philosophy posed no threat to Christianity and could be used as a valuable tool in the search for knowledge and the betterment of mankind. These men found that the Classical way of thinking (it could no longer be called the *pagan* way of thinking since it was now part of Christianity) broadened their horizons and made them more tolerant as their religious viewpoint opened into a more Natural religion that could only exist with Reason – the unfettered wisdom of an intellectually-liberated mind. All philosophy did, they found, was emphasize the role and responsibility of Reason in the pursuit of truth, and how bad could the pursuit of truth be? Truth is good! How wise were the ancient Classical thinkers! And how courageous they were to espouse humanism even while surrounded by a society dominated by mythological superstition. What inspirational heroes they were! With the ancients for inspiration and with Reason as our guide we, too, could be Enlightened and build a glorious democratic civilization as they did. We could finally know God's self-evident Natural Laws and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The main tenants of the self-evident Natural Law Gospel are love, tolerance, inclusivism, and peace. These ecumenical tenants are enemies of old-fashioned religious doctrine – or “fundamentalism” – because doctrine comes from faith in what is *written* rather than what is *felt*. It is well known that *feelings* are very effective and powerful at undermining the authority of religious-writing-based doctrine. (In 2001 when Western nations were attacked by fundamentalist Muslim terrorists who take the Koran literally, those Western nations did more than respond militarily. They began a well-funded attempt to use the Muslim Sufism movement to undermine Muslim fundamentalism. Sufism, like the feelings-based Charismatic/Pentecostal movement within Christianity, stresses a personal, experiential/miraculous relationship with Allah rather than a doctrinal fundamentalist approach, and it, too, includes emotional ecstatic utterances and gyrations that reduce doctrine to the point that, according to one Western participant: “It didn't matter whether I was Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or atheist.” Even Sufi rhetoric is identical to that of Charismatics. For example, a leader of the Sufis, when asked to define Sufism responded, “I can explain what *love* is until I turn blue in the face...But there is no way I can make you feel it until *you* feel it. Sufism initiates that emotion in you. And through that process, religious experience becomes totally different: pure and nonviolent.” The main message of the Sufis is moderation and the inclusively-vague belief in “love and God.” The West has tried to bring Sufis, moderate Enlightened Muslims, and fundamentalist Muslims together by spending millions of dollars annually on “interfaith dialogs, public diplomacy, and other initiatives to counter extremism” by emphasizing Reason and love, and by diluting faith in the doctrinal validity of taking religious writings literally. In other words, in today's Enlightened Western civilization, Christians who interpret the Bible literally are increasingly viewed as *extremists*.)

Christianity differs from other religions only when the Bible – which alone defines Christianity and our relationship with God – is accepted as a literal foundation for doctrine. I say again; in this modern world of “feel everything, believe nothing”, the written word must be *read* and *believed* in order to keep us from drifting into humanistic ecumenicalism.

In 1437 Johann Gutenberg (1397-1468) developed a printing press with movable type that was soon imitated all over Europe. Bibles were printed, many of them in the vernacular. Over time a curious phenomenon occurred. Countries not having the Bible in their own language either disappeared or became subordinate provinces to the dominant language group in their area. Hence the countries of Sicily, Provence, Brittany, Frisia, Rhaetia, Cornwall, and Prussia were absorbed by Italy, France, the Netherlands, Austria, England, and Germany respectively. On the other hand, even countries that were much smaller than and dominated by larger neighbors survived as sovereign nations if they had a Bible in their native tongue, such as Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Wales, Ireland, the Basques, Catalonia, and Finland.

This all suggests that ever since **Ge 11:1-9** God has used language to prevent the people of the world from becoming united. Without the doctrinal influence of the Bible in the vernacular the people blend into one. This suggests that translating the Bible into different languages has a less obvious benefit – preventing an erosion of the importance of doctrine and the resulting slide into ecumenicalism.

Printing presses caused an increase in literacy, and people began to learn about Vatican hypocrisy and doctrinal and political corruption. Therefore, not only were populations beginning to identify with different language, geographic, and political groupings, they were also starting to view the Vatican hierarchy not only as corrupt, but as corrupt *foreigners*. The word *catholic* was losing its meaning even within the Catholic Church. No longer were Christians *Christians*; they were becoming *Italian* Christians, *French* Christians, *German* Christians, and *English* Christians. The rise of nationalism was dividing Christians, and they would soon be further divided by the rise of denominationalism.

Reason had now been part of Christianity for well over a century. Young Christians were taught that the Age of Reason was a blessing of God, and if they were to participate in this great “Renaissance” they needed to master the ancient Natural wisdom and culture of Greeks and Romans by obtaining a Classical education. The word *Renaissance* is not named for its fruits but for its roots. The roots from which the Renaissance grew were the Greek philosophers whose teachings were again being learned all over the civilized world for the first time since the collapse of the Roman Empire. The Hellenizing of the world was again underway and plunging full speed ahead. The French verb for *revive* was combined with the noun for *birth* to form *Renaissance*. Printing made Renaissance books more readily available so that in the mid-15th century the number of educational institutions grew by leaps and bounds in countries like Switzerland, Germany, England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, France, and Spain. One of the most influential products of these new Hellenized schools was the avid student of philosophy, Martin Luther.