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Religion and Reason in the Grasp of Basic Models

SUMMARY

How do religious faith and human understanding relate to each other? On this question there is no consensus, nor has there ever been in the past. The history of Western philosophy confronts us with a complex diversity of views that grew into more or less indisputable standard positions. These positions are not the strict result of theoretical reflection. Their acceptance is largely based on pre-theoretical considerations, the self-evidence of a spiritual intuition or religious motivation.

The different views of the relationship of religion and reason can be grouped into a limited number of basic models or motifs. This essay will discuss seven of them as they arose in the Christian tradition. I will name them as follows: identification, conflict, subordination, complementarity, foundation, authenticity and transformation.

KEY CONCEPTS: *religion & reason, paradigmatic models, ground motive, transformational philosophy*

For the sake of brevity the text focuses on the origins and first manifestations of these models. But we will add again and again fragments of further developments to make clear how resilient these models are. They continue to assert themselves even in new periods of time. Their diversity keeps on challenging us, up to the present day, to reconsider the self-evidence of our own position in the debate on religion and reason.

How do religion and reason relate to each other? In history a great many answers have been given to this question, none of which could ever count on being definitive. Is it then possible to distinguish types of answers to the question? In his well-known book *When Science Meets Religion* Ian G. Barbour, Professor of science and religion, makes an impressive attempt. He presents a typology of models in order to determine the logically possible relations between religion and rational science. Barbour developed a fourfold system: a model of conflict, a model of independence, one of dialogue and one of integration (Barbour, 2000:ch.1). His work has not been ignored as some philosophers have reformulated the system while others have refined it.

The weakness of a systematic point of departure is that the proposed division is not dynamic, not really rooted in lived religion and in the progression of insights; in Barbour it sprouts at least partly from a mental framework. There can be no doubt that such an approach can help to clarify the position of the scholars involved. But the disadvantage is that thereby, first of all, a somewhat *a priori* taxonomy of models arises, to which, secondly, applicable historical examples have to be found. These instantiations become a question of pinching and scraping, of making reservations and introducing further distinctions. After all, the great debates in religious history have conjured up more dynamics and more options than any systematic designer can contemplate beforehand.¹

Another approach, which enjoys my preference, is a historical one. The leading work here

* I am very obliged to Gerben Groenewoud for the critical editing of the text and to Harry Cook for his helpful comments. I thank anonymous reviewers for helpful suggestions. The article has been adapted from a preliminary text (Klapwijk, 2008:19-43).

1 See the objections that Geoffrey Cantor and Chris Kelly develop against Barbour's static and 'map-like' typology in Cantor and Kelly (2001:778).

belongs to the post-liberal theologian of Yale Divinity School, H. Richard Niebuhr. Sixty years ago, he wrote a book which became renowned all over the world: *Christ and Culture*. He was inspired by but not fully satisfied with Ernst Troeltsch' historical analyses resulting in three types of Christianity: church, sect and mysticism. When one consults history carefully, according to Niebuhr (1956:xii), one will discover that Christians have given five types of answers to the problem of religion and culture. He calls these five main types respectively: Christ against culture, The Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox and finally Christ the transformer of culture.

I opt for the historical approach of Niebuhr. Nevertheless, I will not elaborate on the broad relation between religion and culture but focus on a more specific issue: the relationship between religion and reason. In this paper I present seven basic models which, in my judgment, have stamped the main stream of thought in the Western hemisphere.

Let me define here, right from the start, a "basic model" as the ultimate principle or spiritual ground motive which leads a believing scholar into taking up a position with respect to the mutual relationship of religion and reason. I will not suggest that those who adhere to a special model are always fully aware of the pros and cons of their position. In many cases our deepest intuitions and motivations seem to be so self-evident that they function as an unchallenged point of departure for our analyses; in a sense we all are held captive by the ground motive. It is more often than not a paradigmatic framework *within which* the person involved discusses subjects concerning faith and science.

1. The Identification Model

The first model which we meet on the catwalk of the history of philosophy is the model of identification. It came up in the post-apostolic period among the first followers of Christ who had knowledge of philosophy as an unquestionable and nearly impenetrable starting point for all discussions. The model presupposes that both faith and worldly knowledge, even in terms of pagan philosophy, contain a God-given wisdom and that therefore - either openly or concealed - there is continuity between reason and religion. The basic expectation is that the teaching of the ancient philosophers will essentially coalesce with the message of the Christian faith.

In the beginning of the second century we see this search for a hidden identity of faith and reason in the venerable figure of Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165). Justin was a wandering philosopher. Following his conversion he wore the philosopher's mantle as a sign that in Christ he had found true wisdom. He did so right up to the time he was executed as a martyr in Rome. Justin presented the Christian faith as true philosophy, but not in opposition to the philosophy in which he had been taught prior to his conversion. On the contrary, while he presented himself as an apologist for the Christian religion, he was convinced that the philosophy of Plato was in the main compatible with the Bible.

Justin's large and small *Apology* are addressed to the Roman emperor in defence of the Christian religion. He wants to make clear that the Christians in his empire are unjustly persecuted. These people are worshippers of the true God and representatives of true philosophy. He quotes "the philosophers" (prophets) of the Old Testament as proof that Christ is the true son of God. Plato's philosophy agrees with this as Plato derived his knowledge from Moses.

Justin followed the footsteps of the Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria by appealing not only to the Bible but also to an alternative source of knowledge: the *logos* present in the cosmic universe. The *logos spermatikos*, the seminal principle in the universe, is a Stoic concept but Justin did not hesitate to identify this universal *logos* with Christ who came to earth, according to John 1:14: "the Word (*logos*) became flesh." Even the old philosophers

took part in the divine *logos*, which, however, manifested itself most fully in Christ. Thus, Justin's defence becomes a plea for an inclusive Christianity. Christians embrace the true philosophy, but also Socrates and Heraclitus may be called Christians: "those who lived reasonably (*μετά λόγου*) are Christians" (ANF01 178).

Since Justin Martyr the attempt to establish the identity or close affinity between religion and reason has never really been absent. In the Middle Ages we meet this attempt for instance in Peter Abelard (1079-1142), a famous teacher in Paris. There the political and intellectual atmosphere was totally different from Justin's situation in ancient Rome. But Abelard, too, embraced the continuity between human intellect and Christian faith. In his autobiographical work, *Historia calamitatum*, he writes that I am of the opinion "that nothing could be believed unless it was first understood". He also says that one of his primary aims was always "to make the fundament of our faith through human conceptualization understandable (1974:78) - hence, his striving towards convergence and identification. Over against the adage of Anselm of Canterbury *credo ut intelligam* (I believe so that I may understand) Abelard's viewpoint has been well stated as *intelligo ut credam*: I understand so that I may believe. The ecclesiastical authorities condemned these views as being intellectualistic.

Among Islamic philosophers we find a similar approach in Averroes (1126-1198). Averroes was the man who swore by Aristotle as "the Philosopher" and who did much to introduce him into the Latin West. He became known as "the Commentator". However, the model of identification motivates him, much more than Justin, to rationalize religion. Averroes states that truth manifests itself everywhere; but it unfolds only fully in the form of philosophical thought. Religion, revealed in the Koran, is in the eyes of Averroes to be regarded as rational truth adapted to the weak understanding of the great majority. But, whatever the Koran may state, matter is eternal while the individual soul is mortal. In the Islamic world Averroes met with similar disapproval as Abelard.

Nowadays, the tendency to identify biblical and scientific truth, sometimes indicated as 'biblicism', is still in vogue in religious circles. Let me just present a few telling titles. In *Science and the Bible* (Burge, 2011), the physicist Burge pleads for a Christian belief that is, in scientific terms, "evidence based". In *Modern Science in the Bible* (Hobrink, 2010), the biologist Hobrink claims that on the topics of nutrition, venereal diseases, evolution, etc. "the Bible is 3500 ahead of science". And in *Hidden Light: Science Secrets of the Bible* (Medved, s.a.), the Jewish scholar Medved reveals "the scientific principles embedded in the Tanakh".

The identification model is, with all its variants, a challenge for philosophical reflection. Do reason and religion have a common ground and a comparable interest? Or is there a difference of principle between scientific truth and biblical wisdom? What kind of difference is it? Is it that the one rests on divine revelation, the other on rational arguments? Or is it that the one appeals to personal feelings and subjective meaning; the other to irrefutable data and common understanding? Does the identification scheme lead to an intellectualistic distortion of Christianity or does it rather deepen and strengthen religious insights?

2. The Conflict Model

By conflict model we understand such a conception of the Christian faith to be radically opposed to what presents itself as rational truth. Religion and reason are at loggerheads with each other. Imitation of Christ implies an unconditional rejection of philosophy and science or, at least, of all those expressions of rationality which the fallen world displays.

Vestiges of the conflict model can be read in the earliest Christian writings, for example in the writings of Tatian (ca. 120-160). Through the work of Justin in Rome he had become a follower of Christ, but in contrast to his teacher, he rejected Greek culture and science out

of hand. For Tatian the whole of the complex of sciences and arts of the Greeks is of foreign origin, "derived from the Barbarians" (ANF02 65).

The classical example of the conflict model in the Early Church is found in the brilliant jurist from Carthage: Tertullian (ca. 160-235). Tertullian was a real language artist, founder of Latin Christian literature. He rejected the identification model which Justin and others propagated in the church. Only Christianity bases itself on the Bible and it is therefore the true religion. Other religions and the doctrines of the ancient philosophers are heretical aberrations, in fact, the work of demons (thus Tertullian in *De Anima*, ANF03 181).

In one of his major apologetic works, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, the famous passage occurs: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?" (ANF03 246). In *De carne Christi* he writes that "The Son of God died on the cross: it is wholly credible because it is foolish. And he was risen from the dead: it is certain because it is impossible." Statements such as these, sometimes summed up in the expression *credo quia absurdum* (I believe because it is absurd), are often misinterpreted as expressions of irrationalism. In the context at hand, they make clear that according to Tertullian, the Greek philosophers as well as the docetic heretics of his time completely lost track of the truth (ANF03 525).

In the official church, the conflict model did not really gain ground, especially because the church gradually sought closer ties with the Roman Empire. However, within separatist groups the conflict model was forcefully embraced. We see that in the case of Tertullian himself. Having converted to Christianity in 197, he joined the Montanist sect ten years later. When he considered even this sect too worldly, he founded in Carthage the so-called school thought of Tertullianism.

This kind of reaction repeated itself frequently in later times. Known are the separatist movements at the end of the Middle Ages and the sectarian currents during the time of the Reformation which swore by the inner light of God's spirit. Most renowned is the unsuccessful peasant revolt of Thomas Müntzer and the failed experiment of other Anabaptists to establish a kingdom of God in Münster. Since that time Christian sects have lost their political activism. Their exclusivist mind-set expresses itself among Mennonites, pietistic Lutherans and Reformed dissenters organized in private conventicles. Also Quakers and those Christians who strictly adhere to the Sermon on the Mount (the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy after his 'rebirth') are to be found in this company. Often far from unfortunate in business, they turn away from all exterior show of religion and from the world of science and the arts, from polio vaccination and television.

No one has brought the conflict model more sharply to expression than the Danish writer Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). The person who wants to become a Christian, according to Kierkegaard, is confronted with an unbridgeable gap between worldly wisdom and Christian faith, between the possibilities which human understanding can think and the absurd and impossible fact of God's revelation in Christ. Hegel had tried to neatly incorporate divine revelation into a philosophical conception of history—that of the Spirit becoming conscious of itself in and through the increasing self-consciousness that can be noticed in the history of human beings. But Hegel hides the challenging and even scandalous fact that the infinite God has chosen to incarnate Himself in just one finite, human creature, in Jesus. That fact is, according to Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*, the Absolute Paradox. To become Christian, one must crucify reason in an existential choice for faith in Jesus. One must bear one's own personal and rational self to the grave (Kierkegaard, 1985:ch.3).

The conflict model, too, is extremely instructive. It points out that the imitation of Christ demands faith in terms of a complete self-denial. But how? Does faith imply a complete renunciation of culture and erudition? Can it even turn inward into a critique of the believing subject itself? How to interpret Tertullian? Did he believe in the foolishness of the gospel because it was foolish in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans or also in his own eyes? Or

do we have to follow Kierkegaard? For him faith in Christ is an existential choice, an inner conflict with reason, only to be resolved in a capitulation of reason, interpreted as an abandonment of one's deepest self.

3. The Subordination Model

In opposition to the conflict model a third paradigm began to take shape in the Early Church, the model of subordination. I understand by this model the deep conviction that human knowledge and faith are joined in a relation where one is subservient to the other. We find this subservience in the conceptions of Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215) who lived after Justin Martyr and was head of the catechetical school of his home city. This model received an even more pronounced configuration in Origen (ca. 185–254), who succeeded Clement as the head of the school as from 203. Origen, too, struggles with the question of faith and reason. On the one hand, he wants to be a follower of Christ, an ascetic to the extreme. On the other hand, he wants to be a student of Greek literature, an academic to the extreme. How is this double commitment to be united?

In Origen's view faith and reason are both forms of knowing. Still, Christian faith cannot be simply identified with true science or philosophy, as Justin had suggested. Faith and philosophy are different ways in which God walks with humankind. Philosophy is to be seen as a preparatory way of thought. It is the tutor which leads the Greeks on the way to Christ, just as the *Thora* was for the Jews: a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). Like Justin, Clement and Origen call Christ the universal *logos*. However, there is also a difference. According to them, he is the end of Greek philosophy and the standard of the Christian faith. That is, God gave parts of the truth to the nations, but the full truth he revealed to Israel and the Church in the coming of Christ.

The problem of this construction is concealed in the question whether reason, preparatory as it is, has any use when someone is already a Christian. What can Greek erudition add to God's richness heaped up in Christ? The solution was found in the keyword of *subordination*. Greek philosophy, Clement says, is subordinated to the Christian faith. Just as in the time of Abraham, Hagar was servant to her mistress Sarah, so philosophy is the handmaiden to faith. A Christian takes the road of faith but in this way philosophy comes to the aid by deepening faith's insight. Clement followed the previously mentioned Philo of Alexandria, who had distinguished between people who believe on the basis of authority and others who deepen their faith by basing it on rational insight. Faith needs to be deepened by insightful knowledge, called *gnosis* in Greek.

Here, we penetrate to the deeper motivation in Clement's and Origen's work. The Bible says: "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Be not satisfied with the literal meaning of the Bible. Look for its spiritual meaning. That meaning must be dug up with cognitive tools. Hence, Clement pleads in imitation of Philo for a figurative or allegorical interpretation of the Bible, besides the literal one. Consider the appearance of king David to be a figure of the kingship of Christ, and so forth!

Origen goes even farther. In *Contra Celsum*, his *Commentary on the Gospel according to John* and other writings Origen claims that the Bible has a threefold meaning: a somatic, a psychical and a pneumatic (spiritual) meaning. On the way of salvation simple faith based on the literal or somatic meaning of the text is a first step. Do not stick to the biblical stories; fathom their psychical secrets and ponder their spiritual intentions. Faith must become *gnosis*.

Origen was perhaps not a Gnostic in the strict sense of the word, yet he was strongly influenced by Gnosticism. He strove after *gnosis*, intuitive knowledge of God with mystical traits by teaching that there is a divine spark in the human spirit and that the world

emanates from its divine source and returns to this source by way of an ultimate spiritual reconciliation of all creatures, perhaps including even the devil.

In later ages the Church condemned Origen's views as heretical. In my judgement the salient problem of these views lies in the ambivalence of the subordination model. What is really subordinated to what? In principle Origen agrees with Clement that reason and philosophy are subservient to faith and theology. In actual fact the opposite happens. For faith, or at least for fully grown faith, Origen says that you require spiritual knowledge. And in many cases Origen's spiritual insights comply remarkably well with the insights that Neo-Platonist and Neo-Pythagorean philosophers in his day used to offer.

In the Middle Ages Gnosticism revived in Europe, especially in the ascetic and dualistic views of the Cathar movement. There is no room to discuss it here. Also in modern times Gnosticism has sustained a tremendous captivating power. The Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas did much to acquaint the modern reader with ancient Gnosticism; the Dutch scholar Gilles Quispel did much to revive it (Jonas, 1958). Gnosticism revival is fanned by the discoveries of the Nag Hammadi Library in 1945, containing, among others, the Gospel of Thomas and by the recent publication of the Gospel of Judas, all pseudo-gospels from the second and third century, in which Jesus appears as a Gnostic wisdom teacher.

Gnosticism is attractive to modern people. Many have problems with the doctrinal content of Christianity. They cling to the esoteric side of religion. Can faith be subsumed under the hidden treasures of spiritual enlightenment? Let us realize that modern and early Christian Gnosticism differ substantially according to Riemer Roukema. The newer Gnosticism is not as dualistic and inimical to matter as the older variant and it ignores the distinction which the Gnostic Christians made between the supreme deity, father of Jesus Christ, and the lower god of the Old Testament, creator of the material world. Neo-Gnosticism also lacks the ascetic character which marked the early Christian Gnostics. Still, they share the model of subordination (Roukema, 1999).

Through the ages the subordination model has embodied several intriguing questions. The most urgent one is perhaps: Should we not consider human intelligence and theoretical analysis to be preliminary gifts of God? Can they not be seen as faculties of the mind that we, somewhere in life, must leave aside in order to find ultimate fulfilment in spiritual enlightenment and loving unification with the divine?

4. The Complementarity Model

In the time of the Church fathers the sentiment was widespread that rational insight as well as religious knowledge stood in service of the truth and therefore bore upon each other. However, a clear view of this interrelation was lacking. In the models of identity and subordination *gnosis* and *pistis*, Christian faith and scholarly knowledge, could give at one time the impression of one continuum, at another time the semblance of dependence. Moreover, theology and philosophy were not clearly distinct disciplines, but two forms of knowledge which more or less seemed to overlap each other.

Once we enter the Middle Ages, thinking in terms of identification and subordination recedes into the background. The view that science and faith both constitute knowledge remains intact, but the intellectual world feels the urgent need to demarcate. What sense experience receives in images and the active intellect grasps in concepts belongs to the domain of natural reason and philosophy. Anything that exceeds this knowledge and is known only through revelation belongs to theology. It is a perspective which coincides with the political developments of the time. Through the crusades and advancing Islam, the Latin West became newly acquainted with ancient wisdom. The confrontation with the rediscovered works of Aristotle involved a tremendous cultural shock. His philosophy

demanded a fundamental response.

This response demanded that two domains be carefully demarcated, the one of the Church's teaching, the other of the sciences which the ancient world had passed on. A new typological framework presented itself during the high Middle Ages, first drafted in detail by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the great teacher of the Catholic Church. It is a fourth model, the model of complementarity. Since this model flourished in cathedral and monastic schools it may also be called "scholastic". Scholasticism can be defined as the practice of science which complies with the basic model of complementarity.

The model of scholasticism offers a demarcation of knowledge obtained through "the natural light of reason" and knowledge received through "the light of faith". In this sense it is dualistic. Reason and faith are seen as two distinct sources and horizons of knowledge. First of all, there is reason; it unlocks the domain of nature. It discovers the world which is open for sensory experience and reason and which unfolds itself in science and philosophy. Reason is an objective and independent epistemic faculty common to every human person and based on self-evident, rational principles. Rational knowledge of natural reality Christians share therefore with all other people. Hence, philosophers are justified in appealing to Aristotle and other pagan authors.

There is, however, also knowledge of faith. Faith transcends reason; its object is not the domain of nature but of grace. Faith opens itself to the supernatural reality of God's presence as it is revealed in Holy Scripture. Thus faith is not a common human, but an exclusively Christian form of knowing. It is not a separate epistemic faculty but is received through baptism, and its content is summarized in the teachings of the Church and is developed in Christian theology. It is important to realize that grace is here not, as for instance in Augustine, a relationship: God's gracious inclination towards sinful people. Grace has an ontological status; it represents a higher domain, a supernatural or divine order of being.

Thomas wants to demarcate the domain of nature and the domain of grace sharply and at the same time to tie them closely together. Theoretical reflection and divine illumination belong together, but he wants to avoid both forms of knowledge going their own way and that worldly science in the name of Aristotle would undermine the Christian character of the Latin West. The truth of reason as well as the truth of faith springs from God. Thus, they must be held together. They are complementary, directed towards accommodation and synthesis.

In order to realize this elevated ideal of synthesis, Thomas makes use of the thesis *natura praeambula est ad gratiam*. Nature is preliminary to faith and grace (De Trinitate pars I, q.2. a.3, resp.). Natural reason has its own methods and procedures. Tied in with Aristotle, it can provide arguments for the existence of God as "the first cause" or "the highest finality" of all things. With these proofs for the existence of God - Thomas gives five - reason takes on the stature of a "natural theology". This philosophical theology is a rational basis on which Christian theology can elaborate. It functions as a bridge between science and faith.

Thomas also presents a second thesis: *gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit*. Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it (Super Sententiis dist.9, q.1, a.8). Grace is of a higher order but will not be able to ignore the natural, that is, rational insights of the sciences; instead, it must complement them. Christian theology must make good with the accomplishments of philosophy. If the philosopher can prove on the basis of reason that God exists, the theologian can demonstrate on the basis of Scripture that this God became human in the person of Jesus Christ, that God is triune and the creator of the world. In short, the teaching of the Church exceeds but also elaborates on the insights of reason. The knowledge of faith is not irrational, but supernatural and super-rational.

In the Nature/Grace paradigm, extensively developed in Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, reason

and faith are coalition partners. Reason demonstrates that God is the prime cause of all things. Church theology ties in with this demonstration by showing that this God can be found in Christ and in His Church. In turn, the worldly sciences must open themselves to their supernatural perfection. Reason is independent but not entirely autonomous. It is, let us say, semi-autonomous. Should philosophical or scientific arguments at some point not accord with theology, then the truth of faith and theology, which God grants us, holds pride of place.

Thomas's ideal of synthesis was sustained by pious intentions. However, the supposed semi-autonomy of reason turned out to be a disintegrating factor in later Scholasticism. The tensions between Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology got out of hand, especially at the University of Paris. The philosophers there, among whom Siger of Brabant was prominent, were professionally less restrained by the demands of faith in their admiration for the Philosopher and his Commentator, Averroes. They defended their theses by simply distinguishing between the truth of philosophy and the truth of faith. This position led to the accusation that they were defending a *veritas duplex*, two contrary truths. In 1277 the Bishop of Paris condemned 219 propositions defended in the faculty of art. His peer in Canterbury condemned thirty stemming from teaching at the University of Oxford. Far from safeguarding the synthesis, these ecclesiastical condemnations in fact intensified the split that was tangible between faith and reason.

This division came especially to expression in the thought of William of Ockham whose nominalism led him to deny a universal rational order in which nature has an inherent inclination to the perfection of grace. There is nothing intrinsically rational about the trinity or the incarnation. Reason cannot prove the existence of one God and it cannot vouch for the scientific character of theology. The results were disastrous for Thomas's ideal of synthesis. In the late Middle Ages worldly science and Christian theology became estranged.

However, Catholicism continued to maintain the double order of knowledge partly obtained through natural reason and partly through the divine gift of faith. Six centuries later, in the First Vatican Council (1869-70), this teaching gained ecclesiastical stature. In the twentieth century under the leadership of Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson a Thomistic revival arose. Karl Rahner tried to reinterpret the Nature/Grace paradigm in the light of a unified vision. Henri de Lubac developed an integrative "theologie nouvelle" based on Thomas' concept of *potentia obedientialis*, that is, nature's aptitude for obedience to that "which exceeds nature" (De Virtutibus q.1. a.10, ad 13). Edward Schillebeeckx even argued in the words of Jan Aertsen (1991:117): "Thomas ... knew of only one destination for man: to come to God." Yet, in the official teachings of the Church Thomas' doctrine of the two complementary goals of human life sets the tone (John Paul II, 1998:ch.4).

Also within Eastern Orthodoxy, complementarity has been the standard through the ages. Even in the churches of the Reformation this model found its way - perhaps not right away in Martin Luther, who on account of *sola fide* (by faith alone) strongly opposed *die Hure Vernunft*, the whore Reason (Weimarer Ausgabe 51.126,7ff). Even less so in John Calvin, who in his *Institutes* called the light of reason blind, in some respects even "blinder than moles" (Foreword, II.1.9, II.2.18). However, in the work of their successors in Wittenberg and Geneva, Philipp Melanchthon and Theodore Beza, the scholastic paradigm gradually returned.

Today scholastic thought is often described as "supernaturalism". Supernaturalism has become an impressive conception about the *duplex ordo* and the complementary character of faith and reason among catholic, protestant and evangelical Christians all over the world. It confronts us with the question of how religious knowledge is distinct from scientific knowledge. Does faith transcend scientific analysis by being directed towards a supernatural world? Or could it be the case that faith is not complementary but somehow related to the same created reality which the natural and human sciences have as the

object of their investigations? Do we live in one world, but one which can be looked at from different perspectives? Or does the growing independence of the secular sciences since the late Middle Ages suggest a radical reversal in the relationship of faith and reason? Must reason take the lead?

5. The Foundation Model

The tendency towards independence of the domains of nature and grace continued in the Modern period. Secular science and sacred theology each went their own way. Prominent representatives of the new sciences such as Kepler, Newton and Boyle did not deny divine omnipotence; they nevertheless pursued their investigations of nature in a strictly empirical manner and tried to draw strictly logical conclusions. The Holy Congregation of the Index was capable of forcing Galileo to deny the heliocentric views of Copernicus (1633), but the price was high. The reputation of the Church, not of science, was severely damaged. The paradigm of complementarity lost out. Science presented itself more and more like an autonomous business. There arose a climate of methodological atheism: a procedural manner of working *etsi Deus non daretur*, as if God does not exist.

The impetuous advancement of science and technology became the motor of the process of modernizing. Still, modernity had a deeper motive. It was kindled at the spiritual source of the Renaissance which had started in Italy. "*Renascimento*" is rebirth, in fact a religious concept. However, this renaissance was no rebirth through faith in God, but through artistic self-creation. It was a modern type of humanism, religion in terms of an introverted glorification of the human person. Pico della Mirandola confessed this rebirth in the expression *sors animae filia*, fortune is the daughter of the soul. The subject must not resign himself to the fortune which comes upon him; he must generate his fortune (Disputatio IV.4).

Since then this humanistic credo has been called "the turn to the subject". Descartes (1596-1650) took a decisive step by focussing on the *cogito*, the subject characterized as the "thinking I". The person must realize him or herself not artistically but rationally, as a subject that realizes its own freedom through a scientific mastery of the world around him in line with Francis Bacon's credo of "knowledge is power". A new ideal of humanity presented itself in terms of rational self-realization empowered by a new ideal of science: the rational control of nature.

One cannot but see here an immense turnabout. Since Parmenides and Plato philosophy had been ontology, a theory of being, oriented towards the godhead as the perfect form or deepest ground of being. Knowledge was simply a part of being. Descartes sets aside this whole philosophy of being, since the Church fathers reinterpreted in terms of a divine creation order. Human beings can only find certainty within themselves, in their cognitive competency. Reason is the foundation of being; it has to ascertain what is real about the world. Hence philosophy is no longer ontology, a study of the nature of being *qua* being, of a world that includes the human person and nature. Philosophy becomes epistemology, a study of the human being as a cognitive subject, concerned with the surrounding world as its cognitive object. Yet, Descartes is not an atheist. In his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) he posits that "of all the ideas that are in me, the idea that I have of God is the most true, the most clear and distinct". He develops a new ontological argument for the existence of God.

The turn to the thinking subject resulted in the so-called "subject-object split". The knowing subject—in Descartes it is called "*raison*", in Locke "intelligence", in Kant "*Vernunft*" and in Hegel "*Geist*" - posits the world over against itself as the epistemic object. Out of the immediate self-certainty which lies in the evidence of representations in the "inner world" of our consciousness, the mind must bridge the gap towards the things outside, the "outer world". It must become the master of nature, furnish proofs for its existence, even bear

arguments on behalf of the supreme divine being. As a result, the philosophy of the subject puts the whole theme of faith and reason upside down. While the medieval thinkers found in the faith of the Church the ultimate standard for knowledge, that standard is now reason.

This reversal in the standard for knowledge issues into a fifth model, the basic inspiration of Descartes: the robust model of rational foundation. Certainly, the early modernists maintain the distinction between reason and religious faith; most of them are benevolent with regard to the teaching of the Church. Nevertheless, the foundation model implies that reason alone guarantees the credibility of all knowledge. Classical foundationalism demands that all representations in the human mind be epistemically founded in the immediate certainty of beliefs which are basic and self-evident. Knowledge can be innate, as Descartes and other rationalists claim, having mathematics in mind. Knowledge can rest on sense experiences, as Bacon, Locke and other empiricists emphasize. Knowledge can also come to us through prophetic witnesses or religious traditions, as the Church proclaims. But in every case, the ultimate stamp of legitimacy for true knowledge comes from its being based on beliefs which are evident in themselves.

The foundation scheme is not necessarily an exclusive model. In their philosophy of religion scholars suggest far into the time of the Enlightenment that God in his goodness performed miracles and disclosed additional truths for those who are poor in spirit or who lack the light of reason. There must be room for knowledge which is not founded on reason, but is believed on the basis of revelation. Take the biblical miracles or Christ's coming in the flesh. The early modernists like to introduce them as historical preparations for reason, or as visual representations of reason, or as credible supports for a faltering reason.

The question now raised reads: do the natural sciences alone have a rational basis or do the political, moral and religious ideas in which the modern subject tries to realize its freedom and mastery over nature provide a similar certainty? It was a difficult question to answer. The two ideals that originated from modern humanism - the ideal of science and the ideal of person - seem to collide. Science seeks to give causal explanations of nature, not excluding the nature of human beings. But humans use these scientific explanations simultaneously to control nature; their intention is to liberate themselves from the heavy yoke of nature in a free self-expression of the person who exceeds all causal determination.

This conflict in the bosom of modernity between the concept of nature and the ideal of person, between freedom and determination, undermined the trustworthiness of the thinking subject as a solid foundation. The paradigm began to shift. It presented itself as rationalism in René Descartes. It reintroduced itself as empiricism in John Locke. It showed itself as critical idealism in Kant, who discovered the presence of God in the axiomatic presuppositions of reason. It manifested itself as spiritual inclusivism in Hegel who incorporated divine revelation in the historical process of the Spirit becoming conscious of itself in and through to the growing self-awareness of humankind.

In the nineteenth century the collapse of the Cartesian model followed, beginning with Ludwig Feuerbach's rational critique of religion. For Feuerbach religion is merely a projection of the human subject, not based on rational but wishful thinking, not on natural theology but anthropology. God is the unconscious extrapolation of internal, human needs. He is a compensation for the inevitable defects that cling to human beings, an illusionary fulfilment of earthly desires in a heavenly reality. The three "masters of suspicion" – according to Paul Ricoeur in *The Conflict of Interpretations* - Marx, Freud and Nietzsche radicalize Feuerbach's rational critique. Rational critique? Even reason is suspect. Was it really the source of the universal ideals of the Enlightenment era? Reason is opaque, a kind of reasoning in which hidden desires are reflected. For Marx it is the ideological reflection of class interests. For Freud it is the inevitable repression of our sexual drives and Nietzsche holds that it is an instrument of the will to power. This deconstruction is fatal. All certainties falter. The human subject is not only deprived of God, it is also deprived of its own inner freedom and rational

self-assurance.

The foundation model of Cartesian and post-Cartesian modernity raises penetrating questions of its own. Is reason the unshakeable pivot in my existence? Is the human person in the world accurately described as a knowing subject over against a knowable object? Does this duality return in my own existence, for example in the distinction between soul and body? Can reason accept religion? Can it affirm religion, at least partially, as “deism” claims? Can it deconstruct religion, partially or totally, as the critique of religion maintains? And finally: can reason prove its own legitimacy when every argument in favour of it gives the impression to be an advance on that what needs to be proven?

6. The Authenticity Model

Here we approach postmodernism. The postmodern position is a reaction to modernity. But it is also a continuation, for the starting points of modernism - the turning to the subject, the subject-object split, the search for rational legitimacy, and the conflict between the free person and controlling science - are still in place. Yet, they are destabilized to the utmost!

Gone is classical foundationalism. In the postmodern perspective subjects no longer succeed in living their lives on a strictly rational basis. The ideal of scientific control of nature collides painfully with the requirements of a sustainable environment, while the enlightened ideal of the free personality, once translated into success stories on civil emancipation, moral progress and worldwide solidarity, seems to have bled to death in Auschwitz. Granted, there is a knowing subject, but it is “entangled in histories” (Wilhelm Schapp), embedded in the efficiency of a bureaucratic society, perhaps reducible to a package of digitalized data. Even scientific intelligence is bound to “interpretative frameworks” (Michael Polanyi) or “rival paradigms” (Thomas Kuhn). The turn to the subject turns out to be a “decentring” of the subject. The person has become an accidental nodal point, “a fabric of contingencies” (Richard Rorty).

The bifurcation of subject and object is also problematical. Where precisely lies the boundary between the subject and object, the inner world and the outside world? The world has obtained a “ghostlike appearance” (Nietzsche). For things are manipulated, provided with virtual properties, spiced up as gadgets, photo-shopped. The de-humanization of the subject has as counterpoise the de-realization of the world. The borderline between subject and object becomes diffuse.

Do these de-humanizing tendencies mean that the great values of the Enlightenment, such as freedom, tolerance, progress and happiness are lost? Yes and no. Lost are the *grand récits*, the encompassing stories about a new world order. But postmodernists do not say: “anything goes.” They want to hold on to the notions of freedom and justice on a micro-scale. We want to make clear that Auschwitz is injustice! However, our views are fragmented. We may nourish enlightened values, but let us do so in the form of authentic experiences, personal testimonies, a small tale. Our stories may even contradict each other, but so what! My truth does not necessarily have to be yours. The postmodern position is based on authentic self-expressions.

Postmodernism is the demise of the great narratives. In *The Postmodern Condition* Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998) takes the offensive against the “meta-narratives” of modernity. They all lack power of legitimacy. For Lyotard starting point number one is the subject, not in terms of “the” rational thinker with an encompassing view, but in terms of individuals with social perceptions and personal views. The truth of science and the values of freedom, justice and solidarity have to be disengaged from foundational claims; they have to be planted in personally experienced micro-narratives.

Lyotard's second starting point is the diversity of these narratives. This diversity reflects the historicity of finite subjects, the confinement of their views. Macro-narratives immerse the individual experience in totalitarian ideologies. But micro-narratives create openness, attention, understanding and tolerance. "Consensus has become an outmoded and suspect value" (1984:66).

Postmodernity is attractive for those who struggle with the relation between reason and religion. In these circles, it has become a new model, a sixth paradigm. In postmodern discussions the Christian message is often dispatched as a totalitarian meta-narrative that belongs to the Enlightenment period, but Christians inspired by postmodernism see this as an absurd allegation. They like to present their creedal convictions as a micro-narrative, a contribution in which believers show their engagement in science and society by seeking legitimacy not on the basis of rational certainty but out of a sense of religious calling and social commitment.

A salient example of this approach can be found in the inaugural address of Nicholas Wolterstorff at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 1988: "The Project of a Christian University in a Postmodern Culture" (2004:109-34). Wolterstorff criticizes foundationalism from a postmodern point of view. Science is not a universally valid phenomenon, not a system of thought rendered legitimate by some meta-narrative of the Enlightenment. Science is thoroughly human; it is embedded in a societal praxis and determined by histories and traditions. In our postmodern situation being a Christian in science does not imply elaborating a typically Christian system of science. Nor does it, more modestly, imply trying to develop a Christian perspective on science and scholarship. It simply means being faithful to the Christian tradition in presenting the various contributions which one makes in the general scientific discourse. Wolterstorff writes somewhat anachronistically that this postmodernism even expresses the deepest religious intentions of the founder of the Vrije Universiteit in 1880, Abraham Kuyper: "Kuyper was a postmodern in the heyday of modernism" (2004:117). And looking back he characterizes his own book from 1976, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion*, "a part of an important shift in western culture, the rise of postmodernism".²

The merit of postmodernists is that they confront us with feelings of what Jacques Derrida calls *différence* and *historicité*. Authenticity is bound by time, differentiated by the context of life, not to be anchored in universal Reason. Postmodern believers add that religious insights, too, are situated; they cannot be captured once and for all in an overall theological framework. The experiences of Abraham, called from out of Ur, were different from the words that the apostle Paul heard on the way to Damascus. And Augustine's struggle with the Pelagians was unlike the conflict which Luther had with the Pope in Rome.

The postmodern model, too, challenges us to reflect. Its contributions cannot serve as a defence for the rationality of the Christian witness, but it can do so for its authenticity. Yet, the question does arise whether this witness, so long as it is glued to the postmodern philosophy of the subject, can ever be more than a personal voice or a deeply felt viewpoint of a qualified group. Can it ever in terms of Edward Schillebeeckx embody "the story of the Living"? Can it be the witness that He who arose from the dead Himself brings to the world, be it by word of mouth of his followers? Such a witness is only possible when the consciousness of the followers is not strictly subjective, but responsive and interactive, transcending the limitations of the narrator.

It is important to note that Wolterstorff adds that "we interact with a structured reality" (2004:116). In my judgement with this interactionism he perforates the postmodernist model which he simultaneously promotes. The Bible does not picture humans as individuals that give meaning to life just by authentic self-expressions of the subject. It proclaims that

2 Wolterstorff does so in the Dutch version *De rede binnen de grenzen van de religie: Geloof, wetenschap en praktijk* (1993:7).

God is the Creator One who gives structure and meaning to the lives of His people, even a purpose to world history as a whole. The creation account indeed pulls our analyses away from the closure of subject philosophy, as Augustine already discovered. So let us return to the relation of religion and reason for one last time by focussing on a model that is rooted in the Augustinian tradition, but which is, surprisingly enough, also receptive to the postmodern feelings of difference and historicity.

7. The Transformation Model

"[Y]ou have made us *to yourself*, and our heart is restless until it rests in you," are the monumental words which the Church father Augustine (354-430) wrote at the beginning of his famous *Confessions*.³

Augustine's starting point is the religious and responsive character of the human person. A human being is more than an autonomous subject. He or she is created *for and towards* God; that is the meaning of human existence. Religion is not a function of reason. It is the meaningful relation of the whole person to that which transcends him, the innate impulse of the human heart to respond to the voice calling him from Above. This interactive relatedness to God constitutes the unity of the human person, is the deepest motive of the heart, starting point of his existence. Augustine adds in one breath that a human being can also relate himself to some substitute, an idol instead of to God. Such a substitution does not make a person any less religious.

Augustine forges a new paradigm of faith and reason, the final model in our list. He brings both together not in a model of convergence or of conflict, and not in a model of subordination or complementarity either, let alone in a model in which reason renders religion legitimate or creates a subjective narrative. He certainly does not make a furtive attempt to avoid reason's demands. On the contrary, he seeks the philosophical discussion. He strives after an intellectual explication of created reality, but his starting point is: *credo ut intelligam*, I believe so that I may understand.⁴ Augustine presents intellectual arguments, but within a religious framework and perspective.

What had never been done in the philosophy before him, Augustine does in his main work, *The City of God*. In a biblical and theological setting, but using philosophical expositions, he authors a world history, a panoramic view of reality from its inception in Creation, via the Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, to its Consummation. In this history two human communities have developed, the city of God (*civitas Dei*) and the earthly city (*civitas terrena*). "Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves" (NPNF102 XIV.28). In the one city the love of God rules, in the other the love of self. The one is heavenly, the other is earthly or worldly, a contrary state which persecutes the Church and frustrates God's purposes for this world. In the earthly city the destructive powers of the evil one become manifest, in the heavenly city the regenerative powers of Christ.

Pay attention to the distinction which Augustine draws between the city of God and the earthly city. They do not refer to different social groups. They can, in particular, not be identified with the church and the state. They are spiritual realities. They represent, on the one hand, that community of persons who are united in their love for God and each other and, on the other hand, the apostate world, the former typified as Jerusalem, the latter as

3 The Latin reads: "fecisti nos ad te" (NPNF102 I.1.1). The expression is unusual, even in Latin. Augustine probably alludes to Rom. 11, 36. John K. Ryan translates: "... you have made us for yourself" (Augustin, 1960:43). I italicized the words *to yourself*. They precisely express Augustine's view of the non-substantial or relational status of being human.

4 These famous words are literally from Anselm of Canterbury, but derived from Augustine's words: *crede, ut intelligas* (*Sermones ad populum* 43.7.9), that is, believe, so that you may understand.

Babylon. In "Jerusalem" we find not only ecclesiastical but also political figures; think of King David. In "Babylon" we find political but also religious phenomena, think of the pantheon of the Romans. During the pilgrimage on earth the two cities are mixed, as seeds and weeds, but in the end the great harvest will take place and the city of God will triumph.

Here the difference between the Augustinian and Scholastic model is striking. The earthly city is not what the Scholastics called the natural community of the state. Neither is the heavenly city what the Scholastics called the supernatural community of the Church. Augustine knows of no supernaturalism. He is not concerned about a synthesis of Church and State in a Christianized culture. He draws attention to the dramatic struggle between the reign of Christ and the regime of the devil in the heart of world history. The evil one lies in wait "seeking someone to devour" (I Peter 5: 8), but Christ is at work in renewing the world in all its facets. He is not only the reformer of the church; he is also - in terms of Richard Niebuhr - "the transformer of culture".

This religious, that is to say, regenerative and world-changing view of Augustine is also applied to reason. Augustine's starting point is to understand believingly, but this starting point is meant neither synthetically nor antithetically. Faith is not complementary, not an addition to what philosophers argue. And faith is not conflicting, not a rejection of what philosophers claim. o a certain degree Augustine already uses a transformation model. He visualizes it in a theme that was not unusual among the Church fathers (Origen, Jerome): the theme of *spoliatio Aegyptorum*, the spoiling of the Egyptians. When the Israelites began on the great exodus, they followed the advice of Moses to take the gold and silver of the Egyptians (Ex. 3: 21-3; 11: 2-3; 12: 35-6) in order to later melt them down to be fashioned into utensils to be used in the tabernacle (Ex. 35). In the same way, according to Augustin in his *Christian doctrine* (NPNF102 II.40.60), Christians may purify and transform the cultural treasures of pagans for the advantage of the teachings of the Church. In Augustine's view, to understand believingly implies an on-going critical reevaluation of worldly wisdom and philosophy, that is, the willingness to honour and to integrate the moments of truth in knowledge of non-Christian origin within a comprehensive Christian worldview.

Augustine's vision of the two cities and of the Christian religion as being part of God's plan to transform the world and to bring all things to their ultimate realization in the city of God comes back in the Reformation, especially in Calvinism. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is saturated with the transformation motif that we find in Augustine. Calvin rejects the medieval complementarity of religion and reason: it wrongly suggests that reason has a more or less independent position. Scholastic theology states that through the Fall in Paradise reason has merely been wounded and weakened; but Calvin emphasizes that "all parts of the soul were possessed by sin". Especially "the mind is given over to blindness and the heart to depravity". The human person is saved *sola gratia*, through grace alone. Calvin connects this deficiency view of reason with the transformation motif by underlining the biblical words "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Eph. 4: 23). He goes on to aver that even the noblest part of the soul, reason, is "so corrupted that it needs to be healed and put on a new nature as well". And then he unfolds his integrative vision: "Christian philosophy bids reason give way to, submit and subject itself to the Holy Spirit" (1960, II.1.9; III.7.1).

These are fundamental notions in Calvin with far-reaching consequences for culture and society. We see how in nearly all those countries of Europe where Calvinism and Presbyterianism penetrated the reformation of the Church, this reformation was naturally accompanied by transformations of society and renovations in education and science.

The transformation motif returns in the Neo-Calvinist revival to which Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) gave form in the Netherlands. This Neo-Calvinism, often regarded as activist, emphasizes the renewing effect of faith. Faith touches and reforms the whole of life. In his address *Souvereiniteit in eigen kring* (Sphere sovereignty) at the opening of his Vrije

Universiteit in Amsterdam, Kuyper spoke the memorable words: "there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry 'Mine!'" (1998:488). His Stone lectures held at the University of Princeton, *Calvinism*, carry the same message. Faith must be effectuated not only in the reformation of the churches, but also in the transformation or Christianizing of culture, society and science, all in accordance with the orderings which God in his grace has given to the whole of creation.

In the effectuation of this visionary programme a remarkable difference turns up when we compare Kuyper's view and Calvin's. Not the idea of transformation, but the notion of antithesis gets the upper hand. Perhaps I should say: the idea of transformation by means of an organisational antithesis gets pride of place. Calvin followed Augustine's view that the struggle for God's kingdom was a spiritual combat. But in Kuyper the struggle is sooner or later translated in terms of Christian versus non-Christian political parties, Christian versus non-Christian forms of art, Christian versus non-Christian hospitals, schools, labour unions, newspapers and the like. Kuyper's *Stone Lectures on Calvinism* especially emphasize the struggle between two kinds of sciences, Christian and non-Christian. These two are "disputing with one another *the whole domain of life*, and they cannot desist from the constant endeavour to pull down to the ground *the entire edifice* of their respective controverted assertions" (1999:133).

Kuyper has put a heavy stamp on the VU University. His conception has been elaborated by Herman Dooyeweerd and Dirk Vollenhoven, and other followers of what is often called "Reformational philosophy". These scholars represent Augustine's view that in world history a spiritual struggle is going on. They also represent the view of Calvin that at crucial moments this struggle must lead to a reformation of the Church and to radical transformations of political and social life. And they share Kuyper's view that the struggle must be a spearhead in the terrain of academia.

However, at some points the reformational movement has dissociated itself from Kuyper. Its most eminent representatives claim that the struggle such as Augustine meant it is normative, but can never be institutionalized along lines of separate Christian organizations versus non-Christian organizations of the same kind. In *Roots of Western Culture* Dooyeweerd already emphasized that the struggle between the two *civitates* is a spiritual combat. It affects humanity worldwide but it also takes place in the heart of every individual believer (2003:1-4). At a deeper, spiritual level transformation can indeed be seen as decisive for the direction in which the world of learning and rational reflection will develop. At stake is not a closed system of Christian scholarship, much rather an open process of testing and transforming of ruling thought patterns in such a way that valuable insights can be integrated in the promising vistas of the Christian faith.

The transformation motif has a status of its own. It avoids the negative results of a strongly antithetical attitude. It also avoids the synthesizing attitude of those who look for a bridge, a point of contact between faith and worldly wisdom. The motif rejects the duality of such a programme. It wants to make Christian thought receptive to the treasures of knowledge that God has given to humankind as a whole and it wants to contribute to the scientific, social and political discussions of the day by challenging its practitioners to open up new perspectives, rescuing and liberating. In this manner this model testifies to an issue which postmodernists also cherish: the social and historical character of reason. For Christian philosophy becomes a philosophy *in loco*, that is, anchored in the creational and messianic message of the Bible but at the same time provided with insights that may be helpful and occasionally perhaps even directive in the concrete complexities of everyday reality.⁵

5 In Klapwijk (2013:18-46) we elaborated the transformation model in terms of a critical reevaluation and reinterpretation of prevailing views and theories, and in terms of a philosophy *in loco*. In the Epilogue of *Bringing into captivity every thought* we also discuss cases in which the

8. Postscript

In this paper we have been confronted with a fundamental variety of seven spiritual positions that dominated the Christian tradition in giving an account of the pressing relationship of faith and reason. We have also indicated, albeit in fragmentary sketches, how resilient these models were from their beginnings in the history of the Church up to the present time.

It is indeed striking that all the models once they have appeared on the public forum go through their own development, many times with a tendency to moderation or radicalizing. The Mennonites were more peaceful than the original Anabaptists, and Ockham was more radical than Thomas! Striking is also that the models tend to interact. Sometimes the one builds on the other, as, for example, the subordination model can be described as

transformation model gets a counter image in the inverse transformations that non-Christians apply to contributions that Christian scholars offer (1991:241-66).

a specification of the identification model. Without Justin no Clement! But it also happens that the one model defies the other, such as the conflict model over against the foundation model. Without Hegel no Kierkegaard! Sometimes elements of the one will creep into the other and so the expressive contrasts of Tertullian have coloured the organizational antithesis of Kuyper. Be that as it may, all the models discussed in this essay will continue to challenge the Christian position in an open and critical debate on the question as to how to relate religion and reason.

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