

KANT AND SWINBURNE ON REVELATION

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Immanuel Kant's position on special revelation is a matter of debate. Here I discuss Kant's position in detail and compare it to that of Richard Swinburne. I examine both philosophers' views on the assertability of special revelation, its contingency, whether it is necessary, the possibility of error, and appropriate methods of interpretation. I argue that, like Swinburne, Kant finds belief in special revelation to be acceptable, even beneficial, under certain circumstances.

*Introduction*¹

"Any religion which goes beyond the boundaries of unassisted reason is not merely gratuitous; it is also necessarily immoral." Allen Wood on Kant²

"I think that Kant regarded himself as one of those people introduced to the pure religion of reason by the vehicle of special revelation." John Hare³

Immanuel Kant's position on special revelation is anything but clear. His comments on the matter appear so mixed that Allen Wood and John Hare are able to produce ample quotations to support their radically opposing views. In this article, I will attempt to untangle those comments and to come to a clearer understanding of Kant's position on special revelation. To help in that endeavor, I will be examining the views of Richard Swinburne, a philosopher who both acknowledges his debt to Kant and is unambiguously positive about the possibility and benefit of special revelation. Swinburne will serve as a point of comparison, a standard by which to evaluate Kant's views.

One of the controversies surrounding Kant's views touches on his freedom to write explicitly. Kant's work was censored, and not only did he want to have his work published, he expressed a moral obligation to obey the laws of the state and the requirements of the censor (R 7). He would therefore not have been free to express, explicitly, a view such as Allen Wood attributes to him. Indeed, Wood describes Kant's comments as "coy."⁴ Yet while Kant was unable to speak freely, we must assume that what he did say, he did also mean. Arguments from silence are weak at any stage in history. We must compose our account out of the material we



do have, not out of what we do not.⁵

In the preface to the second edition of *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant states that revelation is able to include the religion of reason, while the religion of reason cannot include whatever is historical in revelation. He describes the two as concentric circles, with the religion of reason being the inner circle. Here he, perhaps, implies that the religion of reason is also revealed. In his lectures, he makes the statement explicitly: "Revelation is either external or inward. An external revelation can be of two kinds: either (1) through works, or (2) through words. Inward divine revelation is God's revelation to us through our own reason" (LPT 160, cf. PrR 36). That is, reason is a form of revelation, what Christians often call general revelation. External revelation is special revelation, revelation of divine works or will in history, in a particular place and time, to a particular person or group of people.

John Hare defines "special revelation" as that part of the larger circle which does not contain the smaller circle, the revelation of reason.⁶ However Kant always speaks of a special or external revelation as something which can include the revelation of reason and as having value particularly when it incites someone to make use of reason to come to pure concepts of God (LPT 161, R 79). Therefore, I will use the term in that sense: special or external revelation is that which comes to humanity in a manner other than the simple use of reason. It may contain concepts which reason is perfectly able to derive on its own. Thus the definition consists not of content but of the manner of its original transmission: through reason or through some other means. When I wish to refer to that part of the larger circle which does not contain the smaller, I will use the term "historical revelation" or speak of "statutory" laws or doctrine.

1. Kant *The Assertability of Special Revelation*

Kant never tires of reminding his readers that the transcendental realm is beyond the reach of experience and thus beyond our knowledge. We have no way to know that God exists or to do more than invent concepts regarding his nature (PR 530). Kant applies this difficulty to the verifiability of external revelation: "For if God should really speak to a human being, the latter could still never *know* that it was God speaking. It is quite impossible for a human being to apprehend the infinite by his senses, distinguish it from sensible beings, and *be acquainted* with it as such" (CF 63). Even if one were personally to hear a voice from the heavens, one could not be certain. There is always the possibility of a mistake in appearances (R 175). Kant clearly held we could never *know* that a piece of purported external revelation actually *is* revealed by God.

On the other hand, Kant held that external revelation was possible, within the power and rights of God (LPT 162; R 165, 122). External revelation was something which reason could neither confirm nor deny.

So how is one to respond? Allen Wood argues that Kant believes it to be impermissible for us to accept external revelation. "We might interpret the principle of thinking for oneself more strictly as saying that a belief is not permissible unless it is held on grounds which actually are universally valid

for any rational being who possesses them."⁷ He points out that Kant believed there were no possible grounds for external revelation which were universally valid. Thus, Wood concludes, "any religion which goes beyond the boundaries of unassisted reason is not merely gratuitous; it is also necessarily immoral."⁸ That a belief is permissible only on appropriate grounds is supported in *Religion*: "one cannot by any means start with *unconditioned belief* in revealed propositions (in themselves hidden from reason) ..." (R 152). One may not believe willy-nilly. That is an abuse of reason.

John Hare however finds fault with Wood's strict interpretation. He states that Kant merely argues that we cannot *know* a claim about external revelation to be true. "It no more follows that we should not *believe* in supernatural revelation than that we should not *believe* in God."⁹ Hare is arguing that valid grounds for belief are more inclusive than the valid grounds for knowledge. Surely this is correct. Kant declares that while knowledge of God is impossible, faith in him through practical grounds is unshakable, and moreover, necessary (LPT 40-41). We may, rather *must* accept faith in God on practical grounds.

Kant did not limit appropriate belief in unknowable things to practical belief in the *ens realissimum*. He holds that it is impossible for us to know our own moral disposition, much less that of another, because this disposition is noumenal, not phenomenal. Nevertheless, with reference to the Ideal Man, he states, "For in the absence of proofs to the contrary it is no more than right to ascribe the faultless example which a teacher furnishes of his teaching ... to the supremely pure moral disposition of the man himself" (R 59). That is, even though we cannot know our own moral disposition, we may ascribe the *supremely pure* moral disposition to a particular person (himself the subject of purported external revelation), in the absence of proofs to the contrary.

Surely then, something less than *knowledge* that God himself is speaking to us is required for belief in external revelation. What conditions are necessary? Kant repeatedly mentions two factors: miracle and morality.

Kant frequently refers to miracles as authentication of special revelation. For example, he says "the *historical introduction* of such a religion [a religion of reason] may be accompanied and adorned by miracles in order to announce the end of the earlier religion, which was made authoritative by miracle. It does so to announce itself as the true religion and the fulfillment of the old. ... The person who taught us this new religion may be and have acted in every way as a miracle. The historical account of him may also be a miracle, supersensible revelation" (R 79). For historical belief, the doctrine of the supermundane nature of that person "would indeed stand in need of verification through miracles" (R 120).

Such miracles however would have to be verified through historical inquiry and scholarship, and Kant's hopes for such an inquiry are low. He states that at the time of the event in question, the resurrection, the "learned public," namely the Romans, did not look into the new religion at all until a generation after it occurred and even then did not look into its beginnings. Therefore the early history of the movement is obscure. The miracles are not verified (R 120-121, cf. 154-155).

Moreover, miracles have, in general, limited value for authentication of

special revelation. Miracles can be either theistic or demonic in origin. We could determine that a miracle was not theistic if it authenticated a command which was immoral. We cannot be sure of the opposite however since "the evil spirit often disguises himself, they say, as an angel of light" (R 82). When dealing with miracles, reason has, quite plainly, little power to investigate. Kant goes further to ascribe belief in miracles to superstition (R 48), and ascribes to the reasonable person a rather skeptical attitude toward miracles (R 80, cf. 123). In the *Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant concludes that "No historical account can verify the divine origin of such a writing" (CF 64). That is, miracles can never be compelling grounds for asserting external revelation.

Here, though, Kant does not simply throw up his hands. He goes on to describe what is authenticating for external revelation: "The proof can be derived only from its tested power to establish religion in the human heart and, by its very simplicity, to reestablish it in its purity should it be corrupted by various (ancient or modern) dogmas" (CF 64). That is, external revelation is verified by its agreement with the religion of reason and by its ability to awaken that religion in the human heart.

While Kant admitted that the religion of the Ideal Man may have been introduced with miracle, it is no longer in need of such external aids. "But from now on it is able to maintain itself on rational grounds" (R 79). Historical belief about Christ would require miracles, but practical belief about him is self-verifying (R 120, cf. 150). He declares that to need miracles to verify practical belief about the Ideal Man is to display a culpable lack of moral faith (R 56, 79).

Thus the inability of miracles to authenticate special revelation is covered by the conformity of that revelation with the religion of reason. While verifying the miracles of both the Old Testament and the New is beyond our reach, the New Testament has the "great advantage" of coming not as a statutory but "moral religion, and as thus entering into the closest relation with reason so that, through reason, it was able of itself, without historical learning, to be spread at all times and among all peoples *with the greatest trustworthiness*" (R 154-155, emphasis added). In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, he concludes that the Bible does in fact meet the requirement he posed for it:

The Bible contains within itself a credential of its (moral) divinity that is sufficient in a practical respect—the influence that, as the text of a systematic doctrine of faith, it has always exercised on the hearts of human beings, both in catechetical instruction and in preaching. This is sufficient reason for preserving it, not only as the organ of universal inner rational religion, but also as the legacy (new testament) of a statutory doctrine of faith which will serve us indefinitely as guiding line. (CF 64)

Here he does not make an unqualified endorsement; he does not state that the Bible, as a whole, is straight from the mouth of God. He goes on to say however that "the divinity of its moral content" compensates for whatever is human in its narrative, and thus, "that the Bible deserves to be kept, put

to moral use, and assigned to religion as its guide just as if it is a divine revelation" (CF 65). Though Kant cannot grant that we can know a revelation is from God, he does grant that there can be sufficient practical grounds to accept such a claim. Moreover, he grants that there are such grounds for accepting the Christian Bible as revelation.

The Contingent

Kant's acceptance of the Christian Bible as a credible form of special revelation is not the end of the question. What, we must ask, is the value of such a revelation? Is belief in it morally required? Are its historical and statutory aspects binding? Is it necessary for true religion?

It would be difficult to overstate the importance for Kant of universality. He calls universality "the most important mark of truth" (R 100). He says that "the token of the true church is its universality; the sign of this, in turn, is its necessity and its determinability in *only one possible way*" (R 105, emphasis added). Quite obviously all external revelation falls short of this ideal. It is always particular, always contingent.

Kant recognizes the validity of statutory commandments, that is commandments not knowable by reason *a priori*. He admits that, in addition to being served by genuine morality, God may wish to be served in other ways as well (R 165). He states that the statutory doctrine of the New Testament will serve indefinitely as a guiding line (CF 64). But notice that statutory doctrine is a "guiding line" merely, not an "infallible rule" or something like it. Nor is it universally binding:

For statutory legislation (which presupposes a revelation) can be regarded merely as contingent and as something which never has applied or can apply to every man, hence as not binding upon all men universally. Thus, "not they who say Lord! Lord! but they who do the will of God," they who seek to become well-pleasing to Him not by praising Him (or His envoy, as a being of divine origin) according to revealed concepts which not every man can have, but by a good course of life, regarding which everyone knows His will—these are they who offer Him the true veneration which He deserves. (R 95)

In addition, every service rendered to God which is not directly moral must indirectly serve moral ends (R 165). All others must be abandoned.

For Kant, the statutory never takes precedence over the practical. The universal always has priority over the particular, the moral over the non-moral. To reverse the priority is fetishism, and true enlightenment is to know this proper priority (R 165, 167).

Christology

If the universal always takes precedence over the contingent, what about Christ? How can Kant endorse the Christian scriptures as revelation, containing as they do, references to Christ's saving work for humanity *in history*, and at the same time hold the contingent to be of lesser value than the

universal? To make sense of this, we must look briefly at Kant's Christology.

Kant repeatedly refers to the Ideal Man as *an example* for us. He is the archetype of the human well-pleasing to God, which we are to imitate (R 55-58). We are to "elevate *ourselves* to this ideal of moral perfection" (R 54, emphasis added). We are saved by "practical faith in this Son of God"; only in imitation of this exemplar are we to consider ourselves worthy of divine approval (R 55).

Christians have always considered Christ as an example, but Kant takes this idea further than traditional theology has allowed. He states that if this Ideal Man were to have powers we do not, his value as an example for us would be lessened. If temptation and transgression were impossible for him, his nature would be so different from ours that he could no longer be a model for us. Thus we have no reason to attribute to him any sort of miraculous or divine birth (R 57-58). In addition, the Ideal Man is an idea, an idea which comes down from heaven to humanity, to be sure, but it is an idea which is "completely real, in its own right, for it resides in our morally-legislative reason" (R 54-55). The objective reality of such a person is unnecessary. "Even though there had never existed an individual who yielded unqualified obedience to this law, the objective necessity of being such an one would yet be undiminished and self-evident" (R 56). Thus the Ideal Man is to have no more power for morality than you or I, and in fact, he need never have existed.

Traditionally, doctrine regarding the divinity and reality of Christ has been tied not to Christ as exemplar but to Christ as provision for atonement. How, then, does Kant handle atonement? Following his discussion of the Ideal Man, Kant acknowledges our need for atonement and discusses the manner in which that need might be met. In so doing he uses Christian terminology to discuss a revolution which every person effects *in herself for herself*. While we change our hearts from the evil to the good disposition, we change from the old person to the new. In that process we suffer the punishments which were due to the old person, the guilty person.

And this moral disposition which in all its purity (like unto the purity of the Son of God) the man has made his own—or, (if we personify this idea) this Son of God, Himself—bears as *vicarious substitute* the guilt of sin for him and indeed for all who believe (practically) in Him; as *savior* He renders satisfaction to supreme justice by His sufferings and death; and as *advocate*¹⁰ He makes it possible for men to hope to appear before their judge as justified. (R 69)

That is, Kant takes the narrative and terminology of the Christian story, and rather than making Christ our savior and atonement through vicarious substitution, Kant makes the *moral disposition*, merely personified in Christ, our savior and advocate. As we take on the moral disposition, we make atonement for ourselves. We ourselves must effect this change because guilt is not transmissible, like financial debt; guilt is something "which only the culprit can bear and which no innocent person can assume even though he be magnanimous enough to wish to take it upon himself for the sake of another."

er" (R 66). Christ not only did not remove our sins by his sufferings and death, it has always been impossible for him to do so. Thus Christ need be no more than an idea as an example *and* as our atoning sacrifice. That idea we have in practical reason. All that is of value in Christ *is* universal.

Kant is by no means so satisfied with this account as to think it the answer to every question. He repeatedly refers to the possibility that we may not be able to effect, totally, our own atonement and that God may be required to do something on our behalf. If so, reason tells us that one who has done everything in his power to satisfy his obligation may hope that whatever is lacking will be supplied by God "*in some way or other.*" Reason does not give the manner, and the manner is not important; it is perhaps even beyond our ability to comprehend (R 159, cf. 134). Kant goes on to ask who is the one with greater faith, the one who trusts that God will do what is necessary or the one who absolutely insists on knowing how it is done? Clearly his answer is the former (R 160).

Outside these parameters, expressing faith in Christ does no good whatsoever. He tells us that believing the incomprehensible does not make us better people. While the historical accounts of Christianity may be entirely accurate, miracles in themselves, "it is essential that, in the use of these historical accounts, we do not make it a tenet of religion that the knowing, believing, and professing of them are themselves means whereby we can render ourselves well-pleasing to God" (R 79-80). Only practical faith in the moral disposition, *personified* in the Son of God, is effective and saving faith.

The Necessity of Revelation

For Kant, the historical accounts of Christianity become a teaching tool, a manner of transmitting the universal saving faith of practical reason. In his account of the atonement, Kant uses the narrative and terminology of Christianity to discuss the saving work each person does on his own behalf.

At several points he calls external revelation a "vehicle" for the religion of reason. Statutory doctrines and laws are the vehicle for that which is moral (R 95, 97). External revelation occurs first, in time, to demonstrate to us what we would otherwise have been able to conclude on the basis of reason (R 143, 97). Scripture still remains because of its manner of communicating, the best way of making the religion of reason comprehensible to the unlearned (R 152-153, 169). Kant declares that the Bible is the "most effective organ for guiding human beings to their temporal and eternal well-being..." (CF 63).¹¹

Nevertheless, scripture remains a tool, and belief in its claims to external revelation is not required of anyone. We have already drawn attention to Kant's claim that universality is the most important mark of truth and that external revelation can never lay claim to universality (R 100). It can never, therefore, lay claim to apodictic certainty. He further argues that it is wrong to compel others to believe something about which they cannot be certain. Clergy who have themselves become convinced of the truth of a special revelation may not force others to make the same confession (R 175-176). One may reasonably suppose that Kant held that if it is immoral for clergy to require this, it may also be immoral for God. Special revelation, "being his-

torical, can never be required of everyone" (R 99). Most particularly, it cannot be required of the learned, who see all the problems attendant on confirming it (R 169). His language could not be stronger on this point:

there arise so many doubts [about an external revelation] ... that to adopt such a belief as this, subjected as it is to so many controversies (however sincerely intentioned), as the supreme condition of a universal faith alone leading to salvation, is the most absurd course of action that can be conceived of. (R 169)

That which is not universal is also not required because it is not necessary. While Kant does not dare to specify the means by which God might help people to become what they ought, his "reason has just as little insight as to how something not lying in reason but transcending all reason could be necessary to the welfare of mankind" (LPT 162-163). We need to know what we ourselves need to do for our own salvation, but it is not essential for us to know what God does for us (R 47).

Thus external revelation is a vehicle for the religion of reason. It may introduce the religion of reason, as did, Kant intimates, Christ. It may be a teaching tool for the unlearned. It may be a guide to all, indefinitely. It remains however merely a vehicle. As such, it must be able to cease (R 126). Nothing in it that is not universal can be necessary, and thus all that is contingent in it must be able to pass away. He defines the true church as the community of the universal religion of pure reason. The church militant is that church struggling to disencumber itself from the vehicle of historical religion; the church triumphant is the church after that battle has been won (R 106). The ultimate goal of the true church is to have nothing in it of the contingent. Its doctrine and laws are to be entirely and thoroughly universal doctrines and laws of reason.

Kant appears to waver on whether this change will ever take place, whether the battle will ever actually be won. At one point he writes triumphantly:

Hence a necessary consequence of the physical and, at the same time, the moral predisposition in us, the latter being the basis and the interpreter of all religion, is that in the end religion will gradually be freed from all empirical determining grounds and from all statutes which rest on history and which through the agency of ecclesiastical faith provisionally unite men for the requirements of the good; and thus at last the pure religion of reason will rule over all, "so that God may be all in all." (R 112)

Kant however is not always so confident. Just as he writes that the vehicle ought to cease and that we ought to labor to set pure religion free from its shell, he writes also, "Not that it is to cease (for as a vehicle it may perhaps always be useful and necessary)..." (R 126). Revelation may always be subjectively necessary; because of "a peculiar weakness of human nature, pure faith can never be relied on as much as it deserves, that is, a church cannot be established on it alone" (R 94).

Kant may sigh when he writes it, but he admits that people want something “sensibly tenable” and that a holy book will always be subjectively—thought not objectively—necessary (R 100, 123). In light of that, and for the sake of the unlearned, we ought always to teach the historical narrative as inspiring, but also that true religion consists not in considering what God has done for us, but what we are to do to make ourselves worthy of God’s assistance (R 123).

The Possibility of Error

Kant allows the acceptance and teaching of the Bible as special revelation, including treating its statutory elements as a guide. What, then, is his position on error in the Bible? Does he think its historical and statutory elements could contain error?

Clearly he does. “For even the authors of sacred Scripture, being human, could have made mistakes (unless we admit a miracle running continuously throughout the Bible)...” (CF 66). Error may creep in not only because of the humanity of its authors, but also because of the humanity of its audience. Scripture is a vehicle “designed to fit in with the creed which a certain people already held about [moral faith]” (CF 44). Scripture was written by and for a specific group of people who already held a certain set of beliefs about the law of Moses, and scripture is in continuity with those beliefs. The writers’ own beliefs are influenced by that tradition (for example, Paul wrote about the doctrine of election because of his previous beliefs [CF 66]), and the writers attempt to introduce and make credible the religion of reason to an audience committed to that tradition (R 118, 150).

So its statutory elements can contain error. What about moral elements? According to Kant, whatever is moral is known to reason. Thus, an error in the moral aspect of the Bible must be something which contradicts practical reason. Kant touches on this possibility when in *Religion* he discusses whether or not it is moral to execute a heretic (R 174-175). He states that on rational grounds “that it is wrong to deprive a man of his life because of his religious faith is certain....” He does acknowledge however the “most remote possibility” of an exception: it is wrong unless “a Divine Will, made known in extraordinary fashion, has ordered it otherwise.” As a possible instance of this, he refers to the story of Abraham being ordered by God to “slaughter his own son like a sheep.” However, if such a tenet of the Divine Will is made available to us only through historical documents, which are written, passed on, and interpreted by people, we can never be certain of it. Furthermore the same holds even if the order appears to come directly from God—“it is at least possible that in this instance a mistake has prevailed.” Thus, Kant holds that it is possible for God to order something contrary to what appears to us to be morally certain, but neither Abraham nor anyone else can ever be certain that God has in fact issued such an order. His conclusion is that we are never to act according to special revelation when it commands disobedience to a certain moral duty. While Kant gives us a clear course of action to follow, he opens up the possibility that even in its moral contents, scripture can contain error.

Interpretation of Revelation

Despite the enthusiastic claims of certain Reformers, the Bible is not self interpreting, and Kant's acknowledgment that it may contain errors underscores the problem of right reading. Kant makes frequent reference to the fact that scripture must be interpreted and to the manner in which interpretation is to be done. He notes that there will always be a need for scholars versed in the ancient languages and in the historical period (R 104-105). However such matters, while necessary, are secondary (R 104, CF 66). The primary matter is interpreting what a scriptural text has to say about morality.

If a people has been taught to revere a sacred Scripture, the doctrinal interpretation of that Scripture, which looks to the people's moral interest—its edification, moral improvement, and hence salvation—is also the authentic one with regard to its religion: in other words, this is how God wants this people to understand His will as revealed in the Bible. (CF 67, cf. R 102)

We are to interpret scripture so that it serves as a moral guide and aid to the people. Thus the religion of reason serves as the highest principle of all scriptural exegesis (R 100, 102).

We are to interpret scripture in line with the universal religion of pure reason even when such an interpretation seems, and may actually be, forced (R 101). He offers a number of reasons for the acceptability of this procedure. First, he notes that authoritative texts have always been so interpreted, citing allegorical interpretation of scripture in the church and of the poets in ancient Greek philosophy. He supports his position with scriptural texts. That scripture is to serve as a moral guide he finds established in 2 Tim 3:16: "All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for improvement, etc." (R 102). From the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount (You have heard it said ..., but I say..., Matt 5:21ff), he declares it obvious that interpretation according to the religion of reason is necessary, because literal interpretation (identified with scriptural scholarship) may lead to wrong conclusions (R 148). As for authorial intention being twisted by a forced interpretation, he states that we need only admit the *possibility* that the original author intended such an interpretation. For, he states, the historical element in the text is indifferent and "we may do with it what we like," even when what we like is forcing on it an interpretation which seems alien to the text.

He provides many examples of interpretation based on reason, throughout *Religion*. An extended example is provided in his discussion of the Son of God and the idea of the moral disposition (Book Two, Section One), where he takes Christological terminology and narrative to describe how each person reconciles himself with God. He uses a similar technique to interpret the story of the Fall (R 36-38). Early on, Kant cites Paul in Eph 6:12, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood (the natural inclinations) but against principalities and powers—against evil spirits [*sic*]." While someone reading the text literally might assume that Paul is describing beings

beyond the world of sense and so something that is beyond our knowledge, Kant declares that is not Paul's meaning. Paul intended "only to make clear *for practical use* the conception of what is for us unfathomable" (R 52). That is, Paul makes clear for our moral benefit the reality of our *invisible* enemy, radical evil, which is equally our enemy whether it comes from within or without. For Kant, scripture is not to be interpreted literally. It is to be interpreted according to reason, even when such interpretation is forced.

2. Swinburne

In *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*, Richard Swinburne argues for the possibility of divine revelation. Using that work, I will discuss Swinburne's views in each of the categories discussed for Kant, and in the conclusion make comparisons between them.

The Assertability of Special Revelation

For Richard Swinburne, revelation in general, and Christian revelation in particular, is something someone may rationally assert.

Swinburne acknowledges that if there is no significant prior probability of Christian doctrines, then one must be very skeptical of Christian revelation.¹² Swinburne argues however that there *is* prior probability for such revelation, and he spends much of the book drawing that out. He begins with evidence for God's existence, which he has assessed elsewhere and which he concludes is sufficient, though not overwhelming.¹³ He then outlines what God might do on behalf of human beings and how God might reveal himself to us. Swinburne's account of this prior probability looks very much like what Christian doctrine teaches, for instance that God might become incarnate and live on our behalf a perfect life in order to offer us a means of atonement.¹⁴ At the close of his discussion, he states that "there is some a priori reason to suppose that God will reveal to us those things needed for our salvation."¹⁵ Swinburne does see significant prior probability of Christian doctrine, and thus some prior probability of Christian revelation.

But, even supposing prior probability, certainly not every purported revelation is actual. What sort of tests are we to use to determine that something is revealed? How much evidence is necessary?

Let's begin with the latter question. Swinburne states that if there is evidence that God exists and that he would reveal matters to us, then the evidence required to conclude that a purported revelation is actual is less than what would be required without such prior evidence.¹⁶ In any case, we need not be overwhelmed by the evidence before legitimately committing ourselves to belief. In fact, he states that there is something positive in committing oneself without certainty:

If it is on balance, probable, but no more than probable, that a human has discovered the way to Heaven, then he will manifest his commitment to the goal of Heaven above all things by pursuing it over a

period of time when there is some doubt whether his quest will be successful. Such pursuit will involve a more total commitment to Heaven—indicate more definitely that that is the goal he chooses above all—and so thus also be more worthy of reward.... So there is a priori reason for supposing that the revelation which God provides will ... not be completely evident even to those who have found it.¹⁷

Here and elsewhere he implies that having a “posterior probability on that evidence of more than 1/2” is sufficient.¹⁸ The standard is not certainty. All that is necessary for reasonable assertion is that the evidence makes the revelation probable.

Swinburne can set such a standard because avoidance of error is not his primary purpose. He does not state, as do some, that it is best to avoid having wrong beliefs, rather that it is “good to have true beliefs on important matters.”¹⁹ For example, he states that when we make decisions about the laws of nature, we do so based on available evidence. We could be (and historically have been) wrong about these laws. A reasonable person however “goes by the available evidence” both in making decisions about natural laws and, by implication, on the genuineness of a purported revelation.²⁰ The reasonable person need not wait until a matter is certain before believing it. She may, indeed, make errors, but that does not appear to be of much moment to Swinburne (and that it *ought* to be of as much moment as it is to some is by no means certain). Swinburne’s emphasis on having right beliefs, rather than avoiding wrong ones, lessens the amount of evidence he requires for rational belief.

Nevertheless, some evidence is required. He establishes a prior probability for revelation in general and certain Christian doctrines in particular. That being done, what evidence could show us that a purported revelation is on balance probable?

Swinburne proposes internal and external tests. Internal tests examine the content of the revelation; external tests examine the circumstances under which it was given. Briefly, the internal tests are:

1. The content must be necessary for our deepest well-being, including: moral truths; details about what God is like and has done for us which we need to apply moral truths; and information about the afterlife which we need to encourage us.²¹

2. The content must be true, as far as we are able to determine. It must not contain material that is certainly immoral. It must not contain, as part of its central message, factually incorrect information on history or predictions which prove to be false.²² Perhaps some portion of it is known to be true when the purported revelation is examined. In the 20th century, predictions made about the first century can be assessed for truth or falsehood. Perhaps the examiner finds out later that the content was true. For example, a first century examiner finds that a significant prediction does in fact come true, or a 20th century examiner finds that a way of life which initially seemed pointless proves to be exceedingly valuable.²³

3. Any significant revelation will contain information we are unable to verify. Therefore, truth in what we can verify will be evidence in favor of the truth of what we cannot. The best of this sort of evidence will be content

which predicts something only God could know or do. That is, if a purported revelation contains a prediction that God will intervene in history or nature and that prediction subsequently proves true, this will be significant evidence in favor of the rest of the content of the purported revelation.²⁴

External evidence is:

1. The character and behavior of the messenger. The messenger must be someone who is "generally good" and trustworthy. The messenger's willingness to suffer and even die rather than to deny the message is also evidence in its favor.²⁵

2. The authentication of the revelation by a miracle.²⁶ For example, he states, "bringing to life a prophet crucified for saying certain things is *par excellence* vindicating that message, declaring it to be true."²⁷

While Swinburne will not himself give a final assessment of the evidence (which he believes is best done by historians), he does go so far as to state that the Christian revelation makes a stronger claim to be revelation than the writings of the non-theistic religions, Islam, or even Judaism.²⁸ For Christian revelation to be confirmed as revelation, historical evidence for the resurrection is absolutely necessary. Because, he states, there is prior reason to think that such an event could occur, the historical evidence need not be as strong as it otherwise might. Though he does not vouchsafe to give a detailed assessment of the historical evidence, he names several pieces of historical evidence which are not much in dispute, including the willingness of the disciples to die for the message they proclaimed, and it is clear that he personally finds the evidence to be adequate.²⁹

The Contingent and Christology

Universality does not have the importance for Swinburne that it had for Kant. Whereas Kant elevated to highest place that part of revelation which could be known to all, Swinburne believes that the deepest sort of revelation tells us things that none of us can know: "For revelation seeks to tell us deep things that we cannot find out for ourselves—and it would be a fairly thin revelation if its only role was to suggest things that we could immediately check."³⁰

Part of the important material about which revelation informs us is what means God has provided for atonement, something which is, in Swinburne's understanding, a contingent matter. We "need historical information about how God provided an atonement, and practical information about how we can plead it."³¹

Because that must be revealed to us, and there have been many periods and many different cultures on the earth, God could choose to reveal this information to every culture in every time, or God could choose to reveal it to one culture at one time and to give people of that culture the opportunity of transmitting the revelation to people of other cultures. Because there ought to be only one atonement and because revelation of that atonement is best given in connection with the event, it seems best that there be just one revelation, in one culture and one century.³²

Swinburne sees in this contingency, not the scandal of particularity, but the generosity of God in allowing us to participate in our salvation and to

help our neighbor participate in it.³³ God, in the contingency of his revelation, gives us what Swinburne calls the "opportunity" and "privilege" of a share in the responsibility of teaching each other about God. Swinburne considers participation and mutual help to be of high value.

The Necessity of Revelation

On Swinburne's account, revelation is always needed. Whereas Kant expresses caution about professing knowledge on matters which are beyond the range of reason, Swinburne emphasizes the importance of having true beliefs on important subjects. God and the afterlife are tremendously important subjects and are both beyond the reach of reason.³⁴ We need to know certain moral truths and how to apply them, which without revelation would be obscure and difficult for us.³⁵ Revelation would not be fully adequate if it contained only what could be checked by reason. He writes, "If our need for revelation is as great as I suggested in Chapter 5, it cannot be so easily dispensed with."³⁶

Swinburne does not comment on belief in revelation being required of anyone. Rather, he speaks of what would be sufficient warrant to believe it. He does not discuss what is required of those who live in times or places to which special revelation is unknown or of those who through no fault of their own have received only a presentation of special revelation which is not credible or even of those who *have* had special revelation presented to them in a compelling manner. So, while he emphasizes the importance of revelation in general, he does not state the consequences for the various groups of people who do not believe it.

Perhaps because Swinburne speaks of believing confirmed revelation as something "good" and "important," rather than "necessary" or "required," necessity is not something he claims for it. In the absence however of more explicit comments, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not he finds belief in special revelation necessary for salvation.

The Possibility of Error

Swinburne divides error into two levels of severity, both of which are contained in the Christian Bible.

The first level is error which is part of the language used to communicate the message, but which is not part of the message itself. It is error mixed in with the presuppositions of the person or community expressing the message. This level of error is not a problem. The revelation is to be judged on its intended message; errors which are part of the *expression* of that message but not part of the *content* are to be disregarded. Swinburne cites as examples, false scientific presuppositions that the earth is "flat, square, and stationary."³⁷

The second level of error is more problematic. At this level, the error is a part of the actual *content* of the message. There are genuine conflicts in the Christian Bible, for example between the "rough justice" of Judges and the non-violence promoted in the Gospels.³⁸ While the core of the Old Testament is worthy of respect, "[w]hat however the modern world has

become far more conscious of is that some parts of the Old Testament cannot be treated in this way; for they state (and not merely presuppose) historical falsities, or they represent God as behaving immorally."³⁹ This sort of error is, indeed, consequential. What is to be the response to it?

Swinburne's answer is not entirely clear, and appears inconsistent. His first comments on the matter are given in his chapter on the tests for revelation. He states:

Generally evidence for and against the truth of the prophet's teaching must be weighed in the same way as evidence for and against the truth of any other body of claims.... But in this case [after sifting out erroneous presuppositions which are part of the expression but not content of the message], any falsity at all is enough to dismiss the whole: earthly witnesses in a criminal trial can make a few mistakes without their testimony as a whole being regarded as worthless, but a prophet purporting to have a message from God must be assessed by more stringent standards.⁴⁰

That is, the presence of any genuine error, including the errors of historicity and representations of God acting immorally which he states are in the message of the Old Testament, would prove that the message in which they are contained is not genuine revelation.

Swinburne however does not reach this conclusion in his discussion of the Christian Bible. In particular, he does not make that assertion following his admission that the Old Testament contains such difficulties. Rather, he concludes that such elements are to be interpreted metaphorically. He justifies this move on a historical basis. The Church Fathers, in canonizing the Old Testament, considered it to be interpreted in light of the New, so that "any parts of the Old Testament which could not be taken straight or historically had to be taken in a purely metaphorical sense, a sense forced on the book, not by considerations of the need to make sense of the biblical book taken on its own, but by the need to make sense of it as a part of a Christian Scripture."⁴¹ This sort of interpretation would be required on what he terms a "strong view" of inspiration.⁴²

He provides yet another position, based on a weaker view of inspiration. In this view, the human authors who are the vehicles of divine inspiration are "less than fully pliable. They were not fully open to divine truth, and allowed some small amount of falsity on important matters to infect Scripture."⁴³ The same problem could have affected those who created the canon. In this weaker view of inspiration however our response to the error is the same as it is for the stronger view: a metaphorical interpretation of the difficulty.⁴⁴

Swinburne mentions the strongest and weakest positions on error in the space of four pages. On page 210, he writes that a purported revelation is genuine if "none of it was probably false." On page 213, "I have claimed that there is scope in a revelation for some error and so for some correction of error." Unfortunately, he does not discuss the relationship between the two statements, and they appear to be in contradiction. Perhaps he intends for his readers to accept one or the other of them, but not both. Such an

intention however is certainly better stated than left implicit. Another possible resolution comes from additional qualifiers to his statement that the revelation must have no probable errors. Perhaps only certain elements of it cannot contain errors. Perhaps errors are to be charged to it only after it has been interpreted by the Church and its inconsistencies have been treated. It would be well for Swinburne to be explicit on this point.

Interpretation of Revelation

Swinburne finds value in an uncertain revelation—it affords opportunity for its adherents to demonstrate a greater commitment, worthier of reward. He finds a similar value in uncertainty of expression. If the words of the revelation are taken as the very words of God, then future generations would find it difficult to remove presuppositions from their expressions which applied only to the culture to which the words were spoken.⁴⁵ Future generations would have their hands tied. Instead, there is something to be said for a revelation in which God or his messenger speaks to others, and they write down the message in their own words. Instead of one monolithic voice, the revelation is a combination of many voices, recording the revelation in different ways, “overlapping, stressing different aspects of revelation, and occasionally contradicting each other.”⁴⁶ Such a revelation would afford a wide scope for interpretation and for creatively reapplying the revelation to new situations.

This is, in fact, the sort of revelation we have. In consequence, we are always in the process of interpreting and reinterpreting it for our own time. Christianity is always being refined.⁴⁷

For Swinburne, the community determines meaning. “The meaning of a sentence is a public thing, determined by the publicly accessible criteria of the meanings of words and sentence forms in the language and how context selects among those meanings; not a private thing, determined by the intention of the speaker.”⁴⁸ The public which determines the meaning of Christian revelation is the Christian church. In authenticating Jesus’ teaching by the resurrection, God authenticated the teaching that the Church would be “the vehicle of his teachings” and “thereby guaranteed that its interpretation would be basically correct.”⁴⁹

Recognizing that the Christian Church has split repeatedly, Swinburne spends much of Chapter 8 discussing which church, if any, has the best claim to the title “best continuer” of the society Jesus founded, that is which church is the “true Church.” While he suggests the Roman Catholic Church as a candidate, he also states that there may be no single “best continuer.”⁵⁰ In that case, only interpretations which are agreed to by all churches with reasonable claims to continuity with the original Church would be authoritative.⁵¹

Swinburne provides detailed procedures for interpreting the text, and describing them in any detail would go beyond the scope of this paper. A few points however are particularly noteworthy. Swinburne recommends that we read the Bible in three concentric circles: the smallest unit (e.g., a pericope or poem or other literary unit), the individual book (e.g., Matthew or Isaiah), and the Bible as a whole.⁵² At each level, the context is different,

and that context will affect meaning.⁵³ Reading the Bible as a whole particularly affects meaning, because it changes the ultimate author from the human author of each individual book to God.⁵⁴

When one reads the Bible as a whole, with God as the ultimate author, then one deals with seeming contradictions within the books as one would do with any single book written by a human author: by attempting to harmonize the two readings, if necessary reading one or the other of the contradictory passages metaphorically.⁵⁵ However, unless a metaphorical reading is forced on the text by its context, it is best to read the text in the most natural or literal manner.⁵⁶

In interpreting scripture, the Church need not limit itself to deductive interpretation, but may develop its understanding by inductively making explicit what is only implicit in the text.⁵⁷ For example, deriving a doctrine of the Trinity from biblical texts is quite appropriate.⁵⁸

For Swinburne, what might be considered authorial intention, say from the historical-critical viewpoint, may be helpful in understanding a text, but it does not *determine* a text's meaning. This is so for two reasons. First, meaning is determined by the community, not by the intentions of the speaker or writer. For example, the reading conventions of Jews in the first century determine whether a passage in the Old Testament was messianic and whether or not Jesus fulfilled that prediction; the intentions of its original author are not the ultimate limits of a text's meaning.⁵⁹ This is all the more true when one views the ultimate author of scripture as God, not the human author.⁶⁰ He uses the example of Rom 1:4: Christ was "declared to be the son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." Paul may have had a low Christology, in which Christ was something less than God. He may have believed that Christ was *made* the Son of God at the resurrection. However Paul did not use a word which means specifically and only "made," rather he used the word "declare" (ὁρίζω), which could mean either "made" or "recognized as." Paul "was inspired by God to write things whose meaning was a little different from what he supposed."⁶¹ That is, though Paul's understanding of Christ may have been different from the author of the Fourth Gospel, God inspired Paul to write in such a way that the meaning of his sentence is in harmony with John 1. What Paul himself thought is not determinative of meaning.

Conclusion

Having done the groundwork for a comparison, we find that Kant and Swinburne have much more in common in their views on revelation than their reputations would lead one to expect. Both recognize the necessity of special revelation. Swinburne recognizes that we need it because we need to know matters beyond the scope of reason in order to make good choices in life. Kant recognizes the power of revelation to speak in the language of the people and the security the tangible form of a holy book provides to people who are not wholly satisfied with ethereal reason. Kant and Swinburne both find it rational to accept a tested revelation and provide similar tests—namely, miracle and conformity with moral reason. However they weight these tests quite differently. For Kant, conformity

with moral reason is the ultimate test, and miracle can be dispensed with. For Swinburne, revelation cannot be authenticated without miracle, and though revelation cannot condone what is certainly immoral, Swinburne spends very little time on the subject. Both Kant and Swinburne recognize that scripture may contain error, though Swinburne is equivocal here. Both permit the exegete to force an interpretation on the text, to compel the text to conform to the (legitimate) needs of the community. For Kant, the purpose of interpretation is to encourage people in leading moral lives. Swinburne is concerned to create a dynamic, systematic theology, which is both appropriate for each generation and internally consistent. While both of them give a nod in that direction, neither is terribly concerned about the intentions of the human authors of scripture. Instead, they are concerned that the text be used effectively to meet the needs of the contemporary community. Both realize that, as radical as this may appear, it is nothing new; the Church has approached the scriptures this way from the beginning. The critical similarity between them, though, is that they both recognize that humans, because of their limitations, need revelation and that it is reasonable to believe a purported revelation if it passes certain tests. And in this, Kant goes beyond Swinburne in unequivocally asserting that the Christian Bible does indeed pass.

Their common views however do not negate their differences. As one might expect, their differences are particularly telling. Swinburne is concerned with authenticated interpretation via the Church, as a community, which preserves the original revelation through tradition. Kant is concerned with individual autonomy and each individual's responsibility to decide for himself what to believe and how to read. Kant strongly opposes the sort of ecclesiastical power inherent in Swinburne's interpretive scheme.

Kant values Christian scripture primarily because of its conformity, in his view, with the universal religion of reason. We get closer to its truth as we peel away from it whatever is beyond the reach of unassisted reason. For Kant, external revelation is an aid to internal revelation, the revelation of reason. Going back to his image of the concentric circles, the circle of external revelation is indeed the larger circle, but the only portion of that circle which is genuinely important is within the inner circle, the revelation of reason. The rest is mere "vehicle," or worse, dead weight. Swinburne concludes quite the opposite. He tells us that revelation is meant to tell us what is beyond the reach of reason, that is its purpose.

Their difference here reflects their different attitudes toward the contingent, the particular. For Swinburne, God's relationship with humanity is lived out in history. God provides for our atonement in history, in one culture in one century. God develops our understanding of him and of our relationship to him via a particular community in time. For Swinburne, to recognize this realization through history, this contingency, is merely to recognize the human situation, within, not outside of, time and culture. For Kant, the particular is a danger. It, by definition, is available only to some. If it is necessary for our salvation, then some go without what is necessary. How can a just God withhold what is necessary for someone's salvation? Kant is also concerned with what sort of beliefs can be justly required of

rational beings. One can never be certain that one is hearing a revelation from God. Even with the confirmation of the most extraordinary miracle, even if the host of heaven should appear, singing God's praises, there is always the possibility of error, of deception of some kind or other. Can belief in something uncertain be required? Kant answers emphatically no.

In this particular issue, we see some of what is best and worst in both of them. Kant, a man of the Enlightenment, firmly believes in the capacity of human beings, as rational beings, to rise above the limitations of self and culture to reach the universal. That sort of optimism does not hold in our own period. Swinburne recognizes the limitations we all labor under. We are always subject to the contingent. There are very few universals of reason or anything else, certainly not enough of them to make sound choices in life. Swinburne recognizes that we will always need God's external assistance to learn matters of great importance to us. Revelation is not just a method for teaching us what we could have figured out for ourselves. Revelation is a method of teaching us what we otherwise have no power to grasp and we very much need to know.

But Swinburne, for all his enthusiasm for the goodness and importance of revelation, entirely neglects the question Kant so relentlessly asks: what about those who do not accept this revelation? Is accepting revelation necessary for salvation? Swinburne cannot be excused from answering the question. It is still more a question of our own time than it was of Kant's. Christians and non-Christians alike ask the question. Official Church bodies ask the question. That Swinburne does not is a glaring omission. His Christian philosophy cannot be called reasonably complete until he addresses the issue.

Kant is concerned to make salvation available to everyone. He rightly recognizes the scandal of damning someone for eternity based on something or some lack which was not at all her fault. "The very man who has the temerity to say: He who does not believe in this or that historical doctrine as sacred truth, that man *is damned*, ought to be able to say also: If what I am now telling you is not true, *let me be damned!*" (R 178) Kant knows that the boldest of us would scarcely dare to make such a declaration. But does that make necessary his conclusion that the true church will become the church triumphant only when it rids itself of everything in special revelation which does not belong to the general revelation of reason? Is it not possible that the church will be truly triumphant when all its members know, recognize, and celebrate what God has done for them in history? Do Kant's arguments support his declaration that we cannot be held responsible for believing anything unless it is apodictically certain? Is God obligated to cater to the skeptic? Do we not also have an obligation to respond to whatever evidence God graciously permits us to receive?

Indeed, as Kant points out, we ought to tremble to declare that others or we ourselves ought to be damned on the basis of particular historical beliefs. But still more ought we to tremble not to respond to God's gracious self-revelation. To see something of God and to turn away is dreadful indeed, something for which we cannot hope to excuse ourselves with protestations about apodictic certainty. From all that we are able to understand of justice, if God is just, then he *must* provide for all people whatever

means are absolutely necessary for their salvation. However what is necessary may be provided for us in the form of external revelation and particular historical beliefs. Furthermore, more than the minimum requirements may be available to particular people in time. God may make available to some a greater abundance of goodness, a greater abundance or earlier knowledge of means. God is well within the bounds of justice to require positive use of such means. "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Luke 12:48, NRSV).

Yet, for all his reluctance to require acceptance of scripture of others, Kant's own acceptance of and respect for it is evident. Hare draws out how much Kant's pietistic upbringing provides the paradigm for his religion of reason.⁶² Kant evidently recognizes in scripture the Ideal Man.

Kant remarks, dryly, that scripture is held in high respect most of all among those who do not read it (R 98). His frequent quotations of scripture indicate he is not one of those. Nor do his comments about the pure religion of reason drown out his comments about scripture's power to teach us about God or morality.

At minimum, we may say that Kant holds that belief in revelation, as long as it does not conflict with practical reason and the moral disposition, is acceptable and beneficial:

Whatever, as the means or the condition of salvation, I can know not through my own reason but only through revelation, and can incorporate into my confession only through the agency of an historical faith, and which, in addition does not contradict pure moral principles—this I cannot, indeed, believe and profess as certain, but I can as little reject it as being surely false; nevertheless, without determining anything on this score, I may expect that whatever therein is salutary will stand me in good stead so far as I do not render myself unworthy of it through defect of the moral disposition in good life-conduct. In this maxim there is genuine moral certainty.... (R 177)

But one may reasonably say more. Perhaps the analogy is best drawn from Kant's attitude toward the physico-theological proof. He cannot accept this argument as a proof. It does not answer all questions. Neither does he dismiss it.

This proof always deserves to be mentioned with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and the most accordant with the common reason of mankind. It enlivens the study of nature, just as itself derives its existence and gains ever new vigour from that source. It suggests ends and purposes, where our observation would not have detected them by itself, and extends our knowledge of nature by means of the guiding-concept of a special unity, the principle of which is outside nature. This knowledge again reacts on its cause, namely, upon the idea which has led to it, and so strengthens the belief in a supreme Author that the belief acquires the force of an irresistible conviction.

It would therefore not only be uncomfortable but utterly vain to attempt to diminish in any way the authority of this argument. Reason, constantly upheld by this ever-increasing evidence, which, though empirical, is yet so powerful, cannot be so depressed through doubts suggested by subtle and abstruse speculation, that it is not at once aroused from the indecision of all melancholy reflection, as from a dream, by one glance at the wonders of nature and the majesty of the universe—ascending from height to height up to the all-highest, from the conditioned to its conditions, up to the supreme and unconditioned Author. (PR 520)

Such are Kant's views on an argument he rejects as a proof. It is reasonable to conclude that his views on scripture are similar. It teaches us. It enlivens reason. It, though empirical, is yet so powerful that it upholds reason, sometimes depressed through speculative doubts, and lifts it to the supreme and unconditioned Author. Kant clearly held that one may be introduced to the religion of pure reason through special revelation (R 79). Perhaps John Hare is right in his belief that Kant regarded himself as such an one.⁶³

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR CITATIONS:

- CF *The Conflict of the Faculties*. Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor, trans. In *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- LPT *Lectures on Philosophical Theology*. Allen W. Wood and Gertrude M. Clar, trans. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- PR *Critique of Pure Reason*. Norman Kemp Smith, trans. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965.
- PrR *Critique of Practical Reason*. Lewis White Beck, trans. Third edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1993.
- R *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Philip L. Quinn for his vital assistance on this essay.
2. Allen W. Wood, "Kant's Deism," in *Kant's Philosophy of Religion Reconsidered*, Philip J. Rossi and Michael Wreen, eds. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991), 18.
3. John E. Hare, *The Moral Gap* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 48.
4. Wood, 10.
5. cf. Hare, 43.
6. Hare, 40.
7. Wood, 17.
8. Wood, 18. Although Wood makes this one of two possible interpretations, it is the interpretation from which he proceeds in the remainder of his article, and consequently, I assume, the interpretation he favors.

9. Hare, 47, emphasis his.
10. Previously, on p. 65, he described the good and pure disposition as our Paraclete.
11. He goes on to say "... if only it could be accredited as the word of God" On the following page, in a text already cited, he concludes that it does have sufficient credit.
12. Richard Swinburne, *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 69.
13. Swinburne, 70, 110. See also Swinburne, *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).
14. Swinburne, 71-72.
15. Swinburne, 74. Swinburne consistently uses the terms "to reveal" and "revelation" in the sense of special revelation. He is speaking here of an act of God in history to make a particular revelation to particular people.
16. Swinburne, 110.
17. Swinburne, 75.
18. Swinburne, 213.
19. Swinburne, 73.
20. Swinburne, 92.
21. Swinburne, 86.
22. Swinburne notes that in determining whether the content is true, one must sift out presuppositions which are merely part of the vehicle of the revelation, not its message.
23. Swinburne, 86-88.
24. Swinburne, 88-89.
25. Swinburne, 94.
26. Swinburne, 94.
27. Swinburne, 111.
28. Swinburne, 95-97.
29. Swinburne, 112-113.
30. Swinburne, 88.
31. Swinburne, 73.
32. Swinburne, 76.
33. Swinburne, 72; cf. 70, 74, 76.
34. Swinburne, 73.
35. Swinburne, 89.
36. Swinburne, 88-89.
37. Swinburne, 166-167, cf. 147ff.
38. Swinburne, 177.
39. Swinburne, 183.
40. Swinburne, 88.
41. Swinburne, 184. Swinburne goes on to make a detailed explanation and justification of this procedure. His argument is not essential to this paper. Here, his conclusions are of greater importance.
42. Swinburne, 175.
43. Swinburne, 198.
44. Swinburne, 199.
45. Swinburne, 83.
46. Swinburne, 83.
47. Swinburne, 221.
48. Swinburne, 21-22, cf. 188.
49. Swinburne, 113, cf. 110, 119.
50. Swinburne, 142.
51. Swinburne, 143.

52. Swinburne, 163.
53. Swinburne, 168, 175.
54. Swinburne, 175.
55. Swinburne, 184, cf. 196.
56. Swinburne, 136.
57. Swinburne, 135-136.
58. Swinburne, 137.
59. Swinburne, 114.
60. Swinburne, 114, 192, 194.
61. Swinburne, 192-193.
62. Hare, 48-51.
63. Hare, 48.