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# FAITH WITHOUT REASON: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN KIERKEGAARD, HUME, PHILO, AND CLIMACUS<sup>1</sup>

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*Héctor E. Ramos-Ramos*

## **Introduction**

We may be skeptical about the validity of all manner of beliefs, but some we hold on to despite having no rational foundation to do so. David Hume would have us retain our trust of certain unfounded beliefs, because they appeal to our natural inclinations. He endorses this position in his *Treatise of Human Nature*.<sup>2</sup> In another one of his works, the philosophical closet drama, *The Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (DNR)*<sup>3</sup>, after debunking a powerful *a posteriori* argument for the existence of God, the skeptical character of Philo hints at the possibility of leaving religious belief in the realm of the irrational. Unlike the prospect of abandoning what Hume calls natural beliefs, letting go of the indemonstrable claims theism makes is easily achievable after whatever foundation they

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<sup>2</sup> Hume, David. *Treatise of Human Nature*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1978., 274

<sup>3</sup> Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1990.

may have is exposed as extremely weak, if not inexistent. Therefore we can follow Hume's advice as made clear in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. We can consider religion an example of sophistry and, so “commit it to the flames.”<sup>4</sup>

Alternatively, we can, as the character of Philo does in Part XII of the *DNR*, conform to a belief in a God through faith in revealed religion while simultaneously acknowledging the "hopelessness of reason" to ground this religious belief.<sup>5</sup> Terrence Penelhum considers this position of Philo's to be merely the posturing of a man who sees a social function in religion, and can, as a skeptic, still "with a clear conscience" pay lip service to fideism, the position that proposes that faith is its own warrant for belief.<sup>6</sup> To Philo, the "true religion" of the faithful is to be abided for its positive effects on human behavior.<sup>7</sup> Yet skepticism about the plausibility of religious belief can support a more committed fideism which acknowledges that the truth of revealed religion challenges reason, as well as an instrumental alliance with fideism. Johannes Climacus, a pseudonymous author created by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, identifies such a fideistic alternative.<sup>8</sup> For Climacus, philosophical inquiry

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<sup>4</sup> Hume, David. *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and the Principles of Morals*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1975., 12.34

<sup>5</sup> Penelhum, Terence. “Natural Belief and Religious Belief in Hume's Philosophy” *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 131 (Apr., 1983), pp. 166-181., 178

<sup>6</sup> “Natural Belief and Religious Belief in Hume's Philosophy,” 178.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> I believe it is important to separate the position of “pseudonymous philosopher” Climacus from that of Kierkegaard. Climacus is a creation of Kierkegaard; his opinions and conclusions about “reason

highlights what philosophy and what argumentation *cannot do* regarding religious belief, however this does not make it groundless or inherently silly to have said belief, but merely proves that it must be grounded in what another Kierkegaardian pseudonym calls “the treasure of faith” in *Fear and Trembling*.<sup>9</sup> Climacus regards the claims of theism in general to be indemonstrable and contrary to the precepts of reason. This is why, for him, faith in religious, specifically Christian, truth is the only way to surmount the incomprehensibility of the absurd unreason of religion.

In the *Treatise*, we have an example of how the skeptic may hold beliefs that have no rational foundation. Furthermore, if Philo can be a skeptic and still instrumentally support religion, surely Climacus can outline how it is possible to have *authentic* faith after it is recognized that theism is indefensible by argumentation. The assertion that faith is the *only* grounding and manner of truly believing in a God involves recognition of the limits of reason, and this recognition may very well set up a foundation for faith. One can have faith even after

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and revelation” and how they are not only parallel, but at odds with each other, ought not to be misconstrued as completely equal to Kierkegaard’s own position on these matters. It is important to note also that while Kierkegaard was a committed Christian thinker, Climacus is openly and decidedly *not* a believer. Perhaps, this is why Climacus can so articulately discuss the offense to reason that is a part of attempting to comprehend the paradox of religious truth. In the same way, let us not conflate Hume’s creation, the skeptical Philo with the author himself. Do we, for example, mistake the ideas of the murderous, article-writing Raskolnikov for those of Dostoevsky?

<sup>9</sup> Kierkegaard, Søren. *Fear and Trembling*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985., 38

perceiving the absurdity of a religious truth, and the "impossibility" of its claims.<sup>10</sup>

### Natural Beliefs

First, I will further discuss Hume's position on natural beliefs, because by assuming it, he explicitly undermines the notion that reason serves as the only justification for belief. Hume asserts that everything one presupposes is dubitable, and our belief in many of these presuppositions is shown to be unjustified by philosophic skepticism.<sup>11</sup> Our natural inclination to believe seemingly self-evident certainties such as statements like "fire warms, or water refreshes"<sup>12</sup> is based on a tendency to accept without question what we would dispute if we were to scrutinize it using the lens of philosophical speculation.<sup>13</sup> For example, Hume argues that it is "frivolous [to] say that every effect must have a cause." Such a claim is improvable.<sup>14</sup> Succession and contiguity are the relations from which we unsoundly attribute causation to events or objects.<sup>15</sup> We appeal to past experiences and base a principle which regulates all future instances in the "ultimate connexion of causes and effects"<sup>16</sup>; we use past experiences to justify belief in that this relation, cause and effect, will continue to be conjoined in objects and instances we have not yet experienced.<sup>17</sup> This is one natural belief we cannot

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<sup>10</sup> *Fear and Trembling*, 47.

<sup>11</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 271.

<sup>12</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 270.

<sup>13</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 272.

<sup>14</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 82.

<sup>15</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 89-90.

<sup>16</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 91.

<sup>17</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 93.

rationally accept. Our minds are beset by many unfounded beliefs of this sort, that can in no way provide, "any solid and rational system"<sup>18</sup>, yet what alternative is available to them when human beings are engaged in the world and must constantly make assumptions and inferences informed by these beliefs? Being "both a skeptic and a naturalist"<sup>19</sup>, Hume knows that our "basic beliefs about matters of fact are devoid of rational justification"<sup>20</sup>, yet also that "we cannot abandon them".<sup>21</sup> Because of how difficult, if not impossible, it would be for human beings to will away these beliefs, we do not do so. The justification for one to continue to put stock in them is their convenience.

I will later clarify the difference between natural beliefs without rational justification and religious beliefs, but first, I will discuss how Hume's character, Philo, in the *DNR* presents religious beliefs as lacking rational justification.

### Arguing for theism

Hume, in the *DNR* "destroyed the philosophical credentials of natural theology".<sup>22</sup> In Hume's time, those who would defend religion from a philosophical standpoint did so through natural theology, that is, demonstration.<sup>23</sup> This is the position of one of his three interlocutors in the *DNR*, Cleanthes. Cleanthes is a natural theologian, who

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<sup>18</sup> *Treatise of Human Nature*, 217.

<sup>19</sup> Penelhum, Terence. *God and Skepticism*. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1983, 123.

<sup>20</sup> *God and Skepticism*, 123.

<sup>21</sup> *God and Skepticism*, 123.

<sup>22</sup> *God and Skepticism*, 131.

<sup>23</sup> Kemp Smith, Norman. "Introduction." *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. David Hume. New York, NY: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1947., 51.



wishes to prove the existence of God a posteriori<sup>24</sup>, that is, from what he considers the obvious marks of design in creation, and hence, the existence of a designer. Another character of the *DNR*, Philo, held by Norman Kemp Smith to be voicing most closely Hume's own opinions<sup>25</sup>, refutes his positions throughout the book. Cleanthes' arguments for the existence of God are analogical. They draw analogies between the works of humans and the works of "the author of nature" whose mind he supposes to bear similarities to the human mind in quality if not in degree.<sup>26</sup>

For Cleanthes it is only natural for us to draw similarities between "human contrivances" such as a house, which requires a builder and a universe which requires a builder, albeit one who is much abler, because of his omnipotence. For Philo, this kind of analogy seems obviously myopic: to depend on our understanding of the "operations of one part of nature upon another for the foundation of our origin of the whole" is a terrible method. He goes on to say that humans, confined to their "narrow corner" of the universe only know a limited number of potential "springs and principles" only one of which is "human art".<sup>27</sup> Philo also states that a sui generis creation like the universe must have an equally unprecedented origin. "And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the human; because we have experience of it?" he asks.<sup>28</sup> The answer is negative.

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<sup>24</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 53.

<sup>25</sup> Kemp Smith, 59.

<sup>26</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 53.

<sup>27</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 58-59.

<sup>28</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 60.

We humans have never seen anything remotely similar to the origin of the universe, and therefore, we cannot reasonably formulate analogies to explain what kind of general principle invariably, or even usually, regulates that manner of phenomenon.<sup>29</sup>

Most of the *DNR* relates the debate between Philo and Cleanthes, with infrequent and negligible contributions from Demea, a dogmatic theist and mystic, who discusses faith in contrast to "reasoning," and rooting its emergence in the human heart, in the power religion has to "appease [the] terrors" of life's ills.<sup>30</sup> For the most part, Demea serves to provide unknowing assent to Philo's arguments, which are intended to bring to the surface the futility of theistic argument. Philo repeatedly refutes Cleanthes, who tries to explain why an omnipotent designer ought to be supposed to explain the origin of the universe, because it is plausible to assume a designer when "contrivance" is evident in the universe.<sup>31</sup>

Philo early in the book considers an alternative to a universal designer that, I think, invalidates the natural theologian's preference for the explanation of contrivance over any other. In Part II, he mentions that other "springs and principles," such as animal reproduction, generate very complex creations in nature.<sup>32</sup> Later, he develops this idea

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<sup>29</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 60.

<sup>30</sup> That Demea is a *sort* of fideist is incontrovertible, but a fideism resembling his is also present in the argument of Climacus. Climacus clearly articulates the inability for human reason to grasp God's unknowable nature, unlike Demea in the *Dialogues*. I will thoroughly explore Climacus's destruction of theological demonstration and his defense for fideism, later in this paper.

<sup>31</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 76.

<sup>32</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 59.



further, and mentions that there are other principles besides design within humanity's "little corner of the world," such as the birth and growth of vegetation<sup>33</sup>, that could be as plausible for an explanation of the Universe's creation.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, there are many others that one can potentially conjecture and that "may afford us a theory, by which to judge the origin of the world".<sup>35</sup>

By successfully refuting Cleanthes's arguments, Philo has stripped belief in a universal creator of its rational grounds. Before addressing the question of how removing the rational grounds for belief in a deity does not weaken faith in revealed religion, but rather provides it fertile ground, I would first like to return to the task of discerning between natural and religious beliefs.

### **Unfounded Natural Beliefs and unfounded religious beliefs**

How is religious belief different from natural belief then? Philo claims in Part XII that false religious enthusiasm is not one of the "familiar motives of human conduct" and must be continually "roused"<sup>36</sup>, unlike intuitive natural beliefs. Yet, this unnatural "principle" of human religion may yet counsel "human conduct"<sup>37</sup>, and it is reason enough for the theist to ignore the shortcomings of "natural theology"<sup>38</sup>, and give religion due support, according to Philo.<sup>39</sup> Religious belief, then, is not as

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<sup>33</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 87.

<sup>34</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 88.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 133.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 138.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

intuitive as natural beliefs, but that does not make it undesirable for one, such as Philo, who is willing to turn a blind eye to both its unnaturalism and the unreason of theism. One's belief in a claim the reasonableness of which is doubtful is, by Climacus's own admission, an "expression of will,"<sup>40</sup>. It is, ultimately, a personal choice of the believer to "[exclude] doubt" and believe the unreasonable by faith.<sup>41</sup>

### **Truth outside of Reason**

In the *Philosophical Fragments*, Climacus describes a type of truth which cannot be understood by reason and which cannot be proven by demonstration. As Karl Jaspers points out, Kierkegaard, throughout his work, wants to present how the truth apprehended through "Christian faith" stands at odds with reason, and is, indeed, "unreason"<sup>42</sup>. For Kierkegaard, "Christian faith develops outside of and in opposition to human truth".<sup>43</sup> This position is emphatically adopted by Climacus in the *Philosophical Fragments*. The truth of Christianity, a paradoxical truth, offends our reason immediately. But, it is possible to supersede this initial offense:

But one must not think ill of the paradox, for the paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without the paradox is like the lover without passion: a mediocre fellow. But the ultimate potentiation of every passion is always to will its own downfall, and so it is also the

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<sup>40</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 83.

<sup>41</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 84.

<sup>42</sup> Jaspers, Karl. "The Importance of Kierkegaard." *Modern Critical Views: Søren Kierkegaard*. New York: Chelsea House, 1989. 35-49., 37.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

ultimate passion of the understanding to will the collision, although in one way or another collision must become its downfall. This, then, is the ultimate paradox of thought: *to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.*<sup>44</sup>

What kind of paradox does Climacus suppose the truth of Christianity to be? Larsen points out that the paradox, for Climacus, constitutes a “limit for thought”.<sup>45</sup> There are many truths that are clearly paradoxical. For example, there exists the paradox that bonds “self-love with the love of another”.<sup>46</sup> This is a Christian truth based on the “presupposition of Christianity’s demand that each man must love his neighbor as himself”.<sup>47</sup> Now, what kind of structure does this paradox have, and why must the thinker have a paradox?

Climacus outlines the effects the paradox has when it is encountered by Socrates' philosophical inquiry of himself and his difficult, and futile, but fruitful, quest to understand the truth of himself.<sup>48</sup>

We know, then, what man is, and this wisdom, the worth of which I, least of all, will denigrate, can continually become richer and more meaningful, and hence the truth also. But then, the understanding stands still, as did Socrates, for now the understanding’s paradoxical passion

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<sup>44</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 37.

<sup>45</sup> Larsen, Robert E. “Climacus's Absolute Paradox.” *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Jan., 1962), pp. 34-43., 39.

<sup>46</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 39.

<sup>47</sup> Larsen, 35.

<sup>48</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 38.

that wills the collision awakens, and without really understanding, itself wills its own downfall.<sup>49</sup>

Here, we have the crux of Climacus's argument of what the paradox entails: the matter of epistemological limitations. For in inquiring about herself and reflecting upon what she believes she knows, the inquirer, like Socrates, encounters the unknown<sup>50</sup> It seems that in encountering the unknown the understanding always collides with it, and the passion to know is thrown into a disturbance Socrates seeks his truth in a manner he shall never be able to find it - through reason. This impasse is a result of the nature of the truth. One cannot understand through reason a truth that lies beyond it, and which it collides with.

In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard described the key "movement" that the eventual faithful must go through before achieving faith, and a key step that precedes complete faith is resignation, described as a "mighty trampoline leap whereby I cross over into infinity".<sup>51</sup> A paralysis is reached the very instant the paradox is encountered through thought and, this offense caused by the paradox is what "[tricks] men out of something by pretending that it is nothing".<sup>52</sup> It is the paradox that brings to the fore what philosophy *can* do, and what it may positively offer, but that does not give philosophy the authority to remove from the paradox and to make it

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Larsen, 35.

<sup>51</sup> *Fear and Trembling*, 36.

<sup>52</sup> *Fear and Trembling*, 33.

inferior when it is “the highest”.<sup>53</sup> There are truths that are not apprehensible by reason, but that are in danger of remaining unrecognized and trivialized because of their nonconformity to reason. To remain skeptical about these truths, because of this nonconformity is as much “an act of will” as believing them.<sup>54</sup>

### **Arguing for Theism, II**

How does Climacus present the futility of demonstrating the existence of God, and how does he invite one to believe in the truth which is “highest” when demonstrations are useless, meaningless, and incoherent? For Climacus, God’s works do not betray the “absolute relation”<sup>55</sup> they have to their maker. This follows from God’s status as an unknown, as a being whose existence is not factual, i.e. contingent, but rather ideal, beyond immediate comprehension. How can we demonstrate God’s existence from an “order of things”?<sup>56</sup> It was this method that was at the heart of Cleanthes’ failure. Borrowing a phrase from Climacus, I will say that his “fragment of demonstration,” is ruined by Philo’s interruptions and cavils, and is relegated to a status of being forever “in suspenso” of its own success.<sup>57</sup>

To demonstrate God’s existence ideally, from “the works regarded ideally”<sup>58</sup>, is a potential alternative. But, Climacus does not consider *any* demonstration of the existence of God to be anything but a “ridiculous

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<sup>53</sup> *Fear and Trembling*, 33.

<sup>54</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 81.

<sup>55</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 42.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

procedure".<sup>59</sup> For Philo, a natural theology hypothesis can be tested and concluded to be strong, but ultimately without basis. Climacus rules any explanation out of relevance. His conception of the paradox and how it results from an encounter with the unknown, which corresponds to God makes demonstration an incorrect avenue to knowledge of God.<sup>60</sup>

Climacus considers how the demonstrations of the existence of the unknown takes place. To demonstrate the existence of the unknown, of God, I presuppose that the conclusion will not be doubtful, but has already been decided, and will be discovered.<sup>61</sup> But, if God does not exist what can I demonstrate about *him*?<sup>62</sup> If, in demonstrating the existence or inexistence of God, "I want to demonstrate that the unknown, which exists, is the god" I am demonstrating nothing, for what can I say about the unknown? All I can do is define a concept.<sup>63</sup> When I demonstrate the existence of any "object of investigation" I merely demonstrate that "something which exists is" an *x*.<sup>64</sup> If God is definitively an unknown, it cannot be presupposed that he exists or does not exist because he is *unknown*. He is not an object of investigation like a stone or some other observable, but one that is *by definition* "a concept".<sup>65</sup> The unknown is a concept that lies outside the comprehension. God is the unknown and legitimate,

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<sup>59</sup> Thomas, J. Heywood. *Subjectivity and Paradox*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1957.49

<sup>60</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 49.

<sup>61</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 39.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 40.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 41.



descriptive demonstration of his existence or inexistence is impossible whether he exists or not.<sup>66</sup> Reason cannot comprehend God.

Whatever torment follows uncertainty about God is a reaction to the insurmountable "collision,"<sup>67</sup> concerning God. It is the torment that follows the paradoxical passion when it perceives the "frontier" of the unknown.<sup>68</sup> To try to understand rationally that which cannot be understood by the reason because it is "absolutely different" from it is to attempt to access the unknown in the wrong way.<sup>69</sup> We see this mistake also in the Socratic process of self-examination.

Christianity, for Climacus, can breach the "absolute difference between God and man".<sup>70</sup> Reason so desperately wants to know the unknown God, that it reaches its limit again and again.<sup>71</sup> God wanted to teach what could not be discovered by reason, that is, the absolute difference that resulted from sin and debarred reason from knowing the fact about God's existence.<sup>72</sup> God becomes the "absolute equality" of men to do so.<sup>73</sup> It is doubly paradoxical for the absolutely different to become absolutely equal; to believe it "the understanding does indeed will its own downfall" for it is an inconceivable matter.<sup>74</sup> But, how else to "[bring] into

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<sup>66</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 39.

<sup>67</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 44.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 48.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas, 107.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas, 109.

<sup>72</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 47.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

prominence the absolute difference of sin, and positively...annul this absolute difference in the absolute equality".<sup>75</sup> Of course, faith in the incarnation, in God having become like the sinner, is not demonstrably warranted; these claims, furthermore, offend the understanding. But, this is exactly *why* God became the equal of the believer, to breach this chasm that reason cannot.<sup>76</sup>

Climacus is dedicated to the concept of truth of Christianity being incomprehensible to reason. He maintains that the "historical event" and fact of God's presenting of the paradox to its historical contemporaries is secondary and irrelevant to the status of the follower in relation to the "object of faith".<sup>77</sup> Proximity, immediate contemporaneity with the "event" of god<sup>78</sup> is not advantageous to the person who wishes to become a follower, nor does it eliminate the paradox apparent to the understanding.<sup>79</sup> God's "making his appearance" to historical contemporaries<sup>80</sup>, did not at all provide an occasion for potential followers to "know with certainty"<sup>81</sup> the paradox the understanding cannot grasp. Historical knowledge does not provide warrant for belief, because being an eyewitness to the historical fact, does not provide the contemporary with the decisive fact, the content of which is not *immediate*.<sup>82</sup> To believe the content of the

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 58.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 59.

<sup>80</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 60.

<sup>81</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 61.

<sup>82</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 102.

fact that can only be known by faith is an act that has little to do with either immediate access to the historical moment or to the “scrupulous accuracy” present in an account of the fact given to a person who “comes later” than the immediate contemporary.<sup>83</sup> Both the contemporary, and the “follower at second hand” who does learn the historical facts immediately<sup>84</sup> encounter the paradox of “god’s planting himself in human life,”<sup>85</sup> of accepting the “absurdity”<sup>86</sup>. The two types must equally “relinquish the understanding”<sup>87</sup> in order to believe fideistically. No historical contemporaneity with a paradox that offends the understanding will provide an advantage to the believer; the “I believe it” asseveration<sup>88</sup> in question remains an “offense” to the understanding, regardless of one’s proximity to the “jolt of the fact”.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

In the *DNR*, Philo impoverishes natural theology of any rational justification for belief in God. For Climacus, the belief in God comes from paradoxical faith, and opposes full incorporation into the realm of reason. He does not try to argue for its ability to be apprehended after full disclosure to the faculty of reason. Furthermore, he criticizes the project of demonstrating the existence of God and he is skeptical about reason’s capacity to prove God’s existence because we cannot demonstrate the unknown. He

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<sup>83</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 103.

<sup>84</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 99.

<sup>85</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 107.

<sup>86</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 104.

<sup>87</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 103.

<sup>88</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 104.

<sup>89</sup> *Philosophical Fragments*, 93.

argues that the Christian believer places faith in the Christian God *because* his existence is indemonstrable.

Together, the *DNR* and Climacus reveal what reason cannot accomplish: proof of the existence of God and a coherent rational defense for theism. With arguments from design thoroughly undermined by Philo in the *DNR*, Climacus is warranted in providing an alternative avenue to belief. Hume's naturalism may suit a skeptic who proposes an elimination of religious belief, following the *Enquiry*, and Philo's own positions display a mere superficial support for fideism, but the skepticism, victorious in the *DNR* can do otherwise. Philo himself realizes fideism can emerge newly prosperous after the defeat of natural theology, and can even prove useful for his own devices in preserving theism. His rebuttals invalidate natural theology, but do not debunk every basis for belief in religion.

He proves that empirical and analogical reasoning cannot justify belief in a God. Climacus accepts this notion, and argues that any argumentation for the existence of God is wrongheaded and impossible. He is stalwartly opposed to any evidence, even historical contemporaneity to the truth of Christianity, being understandable through reason. Yet, after the dust has settled, and reason is defeated, regarded as ill-equipped to make sense of God or religion, it is still possible for a person to establish *committed* belief predicated on a paradoxical faith in a truth that lies beyond reasoning. Did not Hume, after all, make evident the possibility of holding beliefs with no rational justification?

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