

Cross-Examination of *In Defense of Kant's Religion*

With a new Appendix (pp.16f) offering a detailed rebuttal to Firestone & Jacobs' replies

By Stephen Palmquist

1. Extending the Trial with Two Friendly Questions

I cannot hide my deep sympathy with the overall thrust of this new book by Nathan Jacobs and Chris Firestone. Its masterful effort to resolve “the most common conundrums forwarded by Kant’s critics” (234) resonates in so many ways with my own reading of Kant’s *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* that I would be digging my own grave, so to speak, if I were to attempt to minimize the significance of their contribution to our understanding of Kant’s great but hardly straightforward philosophical classic. But to spend the next few minutes singing the praises of our authors’ contribution to the recent “affirmative” trend in the interpretation of Kant’s philosophy of religion would be to waste a valuable opportunity to advance the cutting edge of scholarship still further. With the latter goal in mind, I shall appeal to my longtime friendship with one of the co-authors as a rationale for bypassing the statutory praises one ought to give at the outset of such critical reviews, and move directly to the first of two sets of questions I wish to ask our authors about the claims and arguments they have advanced.

In keeping with our authors’ division of their book into two parts – **first an overview of a selection of contrasting positions adopted by past interpreters regarding Kant’s metaphysical motives and the philosophical character of his *Religion*, then a new attempt to interpret the four parts of Kant’s *Religion* based on their three new interpretive assumptions** – I shall begin by asking questions about just how seriously they view certain claims they make about the uniqueness of their approach. I shall follow this up with a second set of questions arising out of the second part of their book, focusing on the legitimacy of one of their three key interpretive innovations. **My goal will not be to cast a shadow on the undeniable contribution Jacobs and Firestone have made in this book, but rather to offer them a chance to clarify where they stand on two sets of issues that might otherwise prevent readers from accurately appreciating the nature and extent of their accomplishment.**

2. Kant’s *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* as a Linear, Transcendental System

The first question I hope Jacobs and Firestone can answer is: *What exactly do you mean by your concluding claim (233), that yours is the first book to present “a holistic and linear interpretation” of Kant’s Religion that portrays it as containing a “transcendental analysis” of religious concepts?*¹ In Part 1 our authors show such an impressive command of the recent

¹ Our authors make similar claims throughout their main text. See e.g., 154. I fully agree with our authors’ claim to have conducted such an analysis. My question arises because I am baffled by their claim that no previous author has done so. It seems that either they are intentionally hiding what they know to be the case, or

major interpretive trends regarding Kant's *Religion* that I cannot imagine that they intend their claim to be taken at face value. Given that some of the interpreters whose works our authors summarize have written section-by-section commentaries on Kant's *Religion* and have explicitly claimed to see in *Religion* arguments of a transcendental character, the hermeneutic principle of charity constrains me to assume that they are aware of this. And if that is the case, the only options are that they are covering up evidence they know but hope their readers do not know, *or* that they mean something new and different by the terms "linear interpretation" and "transcendental analysis". I dare not presume to impute the former motive to two such fine scholars as our authors. Hence, I present this first question as a challenge for them, to explain how their meaning is different from how past interpreters would understand these terms. To highlight the urgency of this challenge, I shall review several examples that appear to conflict with their claim. In referring to the parts of Kant's *Religion*, I shall follow Werner Pluhar's recent translation, by calling each part a "Piece", this being the literal translation of Kant's term, *Stück* (referring to the fact that Kant initially wrote these four essays as "pieces" to be published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* journal).

The interpreter primarily responsible for the affirmative shift in Kant-studies, even though he did not himself traverse very far down the path he first forged, was Allen Wood, the past defender of Kant's coherence with whom our authors interact most fully in Part 2. His ground-breaking book, *Kant's Moral Religion* (1970), devotes only one chapter and parts of two others to a discussion of Kant's *Religion* text; the rest examines religious implications of Kant's theoretical and practical philosophy. When he finally turns to *Religion*, however, he presents a text-based analysis of the key arguments in the First and Second Pieces. I would call his analysis linear, though it is admittedly not holistic, in the sense that he offers only a cursory treatment of the Third and Fourth Pieces. Moreover, he focuses significant attention on the role of the disposition as Kant's key to establishing a *non-empirical* account of how conversion occurs,² highlighting in at least one place the *transcendental* character of Kant's analysis.³ Admittedly, Wood tends to portray Kant's approach in quasi-existentialist terms, rather than as a transcendental system of religion as such. And, of course, the various "conundrums" our authors attempt to solve all arose *after* Wood's book appeared. But this does not make Wood's analysis any less linear, any less transcendental, or any less focused on the centrality of the disposition.

Without going through each Kant-interpreter who looms large in the pages of *In Defense of Kant's Religion*, we can safely guess that *some* of them, at least, would regard their own books as having gone further than Wood down the path of making Kant's *Religion* coherent. **Would John Hare, for example, accept the claim that his book, *Kant's Moral Gap*, does not contain a "linear" interpretation of *Religion*? I doubt it. Even a skeptical interpreter *par***

else they have not read (or have forgotten the content of?) several works they list in their Bibliography.

² See e.g., *Kant's Moral Religion*, pp.180,230.

³ *Kant's Moral Religion*, p.203.

excellence, such as Gordon Michalson, would probably want to claim such a distinction for his own work. Our authors' only explanation of what they mean by "linear interpretation" is that it is "one where [the text's] arguments are understood to build on one another by unpacking underdeveloped concepts from [Kant's] critical philosophy in ways that are intricate and insightful" (233). In surveying the relevant literature, it seems undeniable that *some* past interpreters *have* effectively provided just such an interpretation of the text.

A good example is Sidney Axinn's 1994 book, *The Logic of Hope*; our authors list this book in their Bibliography (262) and refer to it in one footnote (257). Yet they never mention the fact that Chapter 3 is a lengthy, section-by-section analysis of Kant's *Religion* text,⁴ one that not only sets out to establish the holistic coherence of the text, but does so only after setting Kant's text into the context of his Critical philosophy and conducting a rigorous logical analysis of the arguments that appear problematic. Axinn defends a position our authors never consider, that Kant's text might be inherently ambiguous because the human individual is inherently ambiguous, so that Kant's portrayal of religion is both accurate and deep precisely *because of* the apparent conundrums that our authors seek to dispel. Axinn is not the only past interpreter of Kant to regard Kant's emphasis on *hope*⁵ as being rooted in his *unwillingness* to take refuge in the kind of metaphysical "cognitions" our authors claim Kant is defending in *Religion*. But curiously, our authors offer no example of the approach Axinn represents – a fact that seems strangely incongruous with the heavy emphasis they put on conducting a thorough review of the past literature in Part 1.

To guard against the possibility that I may have misunderstood the way other past interpreters have read Kant's text, I shall conclude this first line of questioning by referring to my own writings on *Religion* over the past twenty years. When one of our co-authors first walked into my office in Hong Kong over 14 years ago, announcing his desire to do a doctoral dissertation on Kant under my supervision, he told me he had read and was profoundly in agreement with a *Kant-Studien* article that had appeared just a few years earlier, entitled "Does Kant Reduce Religion To Morality?" Palmquist argues for a resounding "no" in answer to that question, suggesting that a more appropriate way to read Kant's text is to see it as *raising* morality to the level of religion. In the course of defending this claim, Palmquist presents a linear summary of the entirety of Kant's argument in *Religion*, portraying it as a

⁴ *The Logic of Hope*, pp.67-138.

⁵ Our authors call the question of hope "the third of his fourfold series of questions in the first *Critique*" (123). Yet in the *Critique* there are only three, not four, questions. The fourth question is only introduced in other texts, such as *Lectures on Logic* and Kant's letters. Later (173), in the course of discussing the three difficulties that arise for the objective reality of any doctrine of grace, our authors simply skip over the second difficulty, because they "have already isolated and addressed [it] in our treatment of moral faith". But moral faith and moral hope are quite distinct topics for Kant. Moral faith is the cognitive frame of mind that enables a person to take hold of the gift of the archetype (*Urbild*) and allow it to empower one's future decision-making processes; it is the key transcendental condition Kant defends in the Second Piece. Moral hope is the proper outcome of moral faith and is an epistemological issue just like the other two difficulties. By separating hope from the other two difficulties, our authors not only blur a distinction Kant makes clear (between faith and hope); they also weaken the force of Kant's attempt to buttress the objective reality of the prototype with epistemologically justifiable supports.

system of transcendental conditions for the possibility of religion. When Palmquist included a revised version of that paper as Chapter VI of *Kant's Critical Religion* (Ashgate, 2000), he did so specifically as a lead-in to Part Three of the book, where he engages in a thoroughgoing, threefold examination of the systematic structure of Kant's arguments in *Religion*.⁶ In each of the next two chapters, Palmquist traces Kant's argument through every section of Kant's *Religion*: Chapter VII of *Kant's Critical Religion* analyzes what Kant calls his first experiment (the system of rational religion as such); Chapter VIII analyzes his second experiment (the consistency of Christianity with Kant's system of rational religion). In the course of this twofold analysis, Palmquist deals with virtually every aspect of Kant's text discussed by Jacobs and Firestone, including the transcendental character of the disposition in the form of the archetype of perfect humanity. Yet our authors completely ignore both chapters.⁷ Their only hint that these 106 pages even exist comes in one sentence, where, in the course of summarizing Palmquist's position, they excuse themselves from including these crucial chapters by claiming (24): "To unpack all the idiosyncrasies of Palmquist's approach to *Religion* would take us well beyond the confines of the required testimony." Their reasoning appears to be that their summary of Palmquist's position serves only to highlight his claims about the metaphysical grounding of certain aspects of Kant's Critical philosophy in the mystical writings of Swedenborg, and that to make this point it is not necessary to summarize Palmquist's holistic and linear account of the coherence of Kant's defense of a transcendental system of religion. In the context of the courtroom metaphor they use in Part 1, this dismissal of the heart of Palmquist's interpretation may be legitimate. But is it legitimate to go on in Part 2 to defend an interpretation that resembles Palmquist's in many key respects without ever acknowledging the similarity – unless (as I am assuming here) our authors meant something new and unusual by the phrases "holistic and linear" and "transcendental analysis"?

The foregoing is but one of several worrying indications that the charitable assumption implied by this first line of questions may be unwarranted, at least in the case of our authors' knowledge of Palmquist's work. For in Part 1 they present Palmquist's Kant as an out-and-out-mystic, missing the whole point of the crucial qualifier "Critical" in Palmquist's label "Critical mysticism". Palmquist does not, as our authors claim, see Kant's *Religion* as a defense of any kind of mysticism (not even "Critical"). Quite to the contrary, "Critical" mysticism means (in part) that the *Critical System* – the three *Critiques* themselves – can be

⁶ Every second page of Chapter VII has at the top the abbreviation "System_r", as a reminder to the reader that this chapter examines "Kant's System of Religious Perspectives" (*KCR* 140). Nevertheless, our authors show no awareness that Palmquist is one of several apparent exceptions to their generalizations – e.g., concerning the way "interpreters typically approach Book Three" (181).

⁷ In presenting the Palmquist-Wood contrast (103-104), our authors never acknowledge that in his lengthy discussion of the role of *Religion* in Kant's System Palmquist portrays it as a way of bridging the theoretical and practical systems. Palmquist coined the term "judicial standpoint" to describe the proper role *Religion* plays in the System, but any reader of *IDKR* who is not familiar with Palmquist's writing will come away thinking that for Palmquist *Religion* does little more than bask in the mystery of mystical irrationality! Interestingly, our authors adopt the same, non-standard usage of "judicial", but without citing the source of this neologism.

read as providing the philosophical foundation for a *properly* mystical way of life, in contrast to the fanatical mysticism typified by the likes of Swedenborg. When Kant comes to write *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* he has completed his defense of Critical metaphysics, as well as his (analogous, though only implied) defense of Critical mysticism.⁸ Kant's *Religion* is therefore no more a defense of mysticism than it is a defense of metaphysics as such. Moreover, in Part 2 the situation regarding our authors' portrayal of Palmquist fares even worse. Almost without exception, their references to Palmquist's publications are either confusing⁹ or commit outright exegetical errors.¹⁰ And when they categorize Palmquist, for the sake of dismissing the relevance of his approach to their (allegedly unique) "transcendental" approach, they inappropriately identify him as a defender of the "Religion-as-symbol thesis".¹¹

⁸ On page 103, our authors focus on Palmquist's claims about the amenability of Kantian philosophy to a Critical form of mysticism, even though this has nothing to do with the aims of their book. Their section on Palmquist in Part 1 had claimed to be a defense of Kant's *metaphysical* motives, not a defense of his *mystical* motives, so this way of summarizing Palmquist's approach is oddly out of place at the beginning of Part 2. The summary reveals our authors' lack of understanding of Palmquist's claim that *the three Critiques* have strongly mystical roots, *not* (in itself) *Religion*. In light of these points, what do our authors mean by saying that, for Palmquist, the "critical roots" and "mystic roots" of *Religion* "drink from different (and even opposing) streams"? I know of no sense in which Palmquist would regard those two "roots" as drinking from "opposing" streams. Their metaphor appears to be based on a wholesale misunderstanding of Palmquist's project.

⁹ At one point (210 and 257, note 1) our authors refer to *KCR* but give no page number. It is entirely unclear what they are citing *KCR* as an example of. If the author of the book they here refer to is mystified by this reference, how can our authors expect their readers to understand what they are intending?

¹⁰ Our authors quote several passages from Part Three of *KCR* that are perfectly in accord with their own reading of Kant's text, but misrepresent them by portraying them in a context Palmquist never intended. For example, their quote on page 154, from *KCR* 211, is taken completely out of context. Palmquist is referring to Section Two of the Second Piece, yet our authors present this statement as if it refers to Kant's theory of the archetype of humanity as presented in *Section One*. Palmquist's point is that the narrative sketched in Section Two can serve as an historical illustration for the rational arguments presented in Section One; but our authors present Palmquist as saying that the arguments in *Section One* are themselves symbolic. This is a gross mistake! It is a convenient one, however, insofar as it enables our authors to conclude (154) that their approach and *only* their approach highlights the "transcendental character" of Kant's argument.

Again, on page 167, our authors quote *KCR* 282 badly out of context. They introduce it as if in this passage Palmquist were arguing that grace is God's "overriding of human choice" through a "mystical stirring of the will to do good." But the quoted passage is drawn *not* from one of the two chapters of *KCR* that contain Palmquist's exegesis of the transcendental conditions of religion presented in *Religion*, but in his follow-up chapter wherein Palmquist explicitly adopts the (non-Kantian) Perspective of the biblical theologian; as such, the quoted sentence is *not an interpretation of Kant as such*, but a post-Kantian statement of how a Christian theologian can reconcile apparent paradoxes in the doctrine of grace by upholding a Kantian philosophical Perspective. In other words, the passage has nothing to do with God overriding human choice (indeed, the quoted passage explicitly states that this is *not* implied by the "confession" being made!) and makes no reference *at all* to any "mystical stirring of the will to do good". The passage is about Christian doctrine, but our authors have taken it to be part of an alleged mystical reading of *Religion* that does not, in fact, exist in *KCR*. The greatest irony, perhaps, is that Palmquist's position is entirely consonant with that of our authors; it appears that they disagree with it not because it is wrong, but because agreeing with Palmquist would require them to acknowledge that someone else had already advanced a position very much like their own on the issue of how Kant thinks divine grace operates. That "Kantian grace speaks principally of the *availability* of the prototypical disposition" is almost identical to the position Palmquist defends in *KCR* 7.2.B, where such availability is portrayed as a necessary condition for the possibility of religion (i.e., moral renewal). Unfortunately, our authors never detail any *argument* of Kant's in defense of his positing of the archetype; they present it merely as a *fiat* (a "willful descent"). Our authors would have done well at this point to strengthen their argument with references to Palmquist's account of the actual *argument* that Kant presents in the Second Piece, Section One.

¹¹ Our authors are mistaken to portray Palmquist (209 and elsewhere) as a defender of the "Religion-as-Symbol thesis". *One aspect* of Palmquist's interpretation of *Religion* could be called a "Faith-as-Symbol" thesis; but this

Our authors admit (24) that they have passed over Palmquist's lengthy exegesis of the text of Kant's book; if they actually have not read those chapters, then this could explain why they failed to recognize that *Kant's Critical Religion* contains a linear, holistic, text-based interpretation of the transcendental features of Kant's argument. That they also give the misleading impression that Palmquist sees *Religion* as a mystical text, containing nothing but "symbols of faith", and that in Part 2 they go to great lengths to distance their approach in other ways from that of Palmquist¹² – such questionable tactics might make an uncharitable reader ask quite different questions regarding the nature of their claim to be unique in presenting a "linear", "transcendental" analysis of Kant's *Religion*.¹³ But again, I prefer to

is very different. Religion itself, on Palmquist's reading of Kant, puts the believer in touch with an inner, transcendental reality that the symbols of faith must point to in order to maintain their meaning; but religion cannot be *reduced* to these symbols! Our authors are therefore completely correct in their claims toward the bottom of page 209—except insofar as they believe (quite wrongly) that Palmquist (and probably some of the other interpreters from whom they, apparently unwisely, attempt to distance themselves) disagrees with them. Quite to the contrary, *KCR* (especially Chapter VII) advances the same type of theory they claim here to be advancing. This tendency of our authors to shy away from admitting that past interpreters might have got Kant right at certain points is again evidenced on p.229, when they reveal that Kant "admits" the important role symbols may have in religion, but portray this as being "**akin to the Religion-as-Symbol motif of Ward and Palmquist**". A *charitable* interpretation would have said that this motif "is right insofar as ..." and then sought to explain some other perspective from which, perhaps, defenders of that motif go astray. Had they done this (and especially had they checked their sources more carefully), they would have discovered that Palmquist does *not* defend a generalized "*Religion-as-Symbol motif*", except where *Kant himself* (as our authors themselves admit [229]) defends it. For Palmquist, just as much as for our authors, *Religion* is first and foremost a system of the transcendental conditions that make empirical religion theoretically possible and morally necessary for humankind.

¹² See above, notes 9-11. Furthermore, on pages 177-178 our authors again misinterpret a quote from Palmquist, taken from *KCR* 460-461, where Palmquist is presenting a detailed interpretation of Kant's theory of atonement. Unfortunately, our authors say nothing about Palmquist's interpretation, which largely agrees with their own and which, where points of disagreement arise, could have been used to clarify their own position. Instead of entering into dialogue with Palmquist on the issues of their mutual concern, they latch onto one word, "symbolically", and use that as an excuse for rejecting the whole interpretation (which readers of *IDKR* could not possibly have understood, given that no attempt was made to present it fairly). They claim that Palmquist sees atonement "poetically" (*IDKR* 177), whereby scriptural "imagery of atonement" is "a symbol" meant to encourage the convert to believe that God will reward his or her good efforts. Our authors rightly reject this position as contrary to Kant's earlier insistence that there cannot be a "surplus" of righteousness. Yet it is an utter caricature of Palmquist's position. First, our authors appear to be completely unaware of what *Kant* says a "symbol" is and of how *Kant* argues that symbols are an absolutely essential feature of pure cognition in the religious sphere. Thus they refer (178) to "a mere symbol", where Kant would never denigrate symbols in this way. Symbols in religion function in the same way schema function in the first *Critique*: there can be no (legitimate) cognition without them. Moreover, what Palmquist actually says in the quoted text is that the believer's imaginative *experience* of "go[ing] to the cross" is the symbol, not that the biblical imagery of atonement is merely symbolic. Palmquist says this in the course of explaining how, for Kant, it is essential for anyone who believes he/she has been converted to demonstrate this in his/her life-conduct; in the passage quoted he explains that for Kant the true Christian must enter, with Christ, into the experience of the cross. This is *not* salvific, and Palmquist never says it is; rather, the "punishment" Palmquist sees Kant as referring to amounts to the commonplace idea that *repentance* is necessary. Palmquist is simply describing what happens, according to Kant's own analysis, when a convert experiences the archetype as "a cognized object of rational faith". In order for that cognition to be *pure*, a *symbol* must be present in the believer's mind and in this case that symbol is Jesus on the cross. Do our authors really deny that this is Kant's point? If not, then they should have resisted the temptation to set up straw men merely so they could tear them down in order to present themselves as the first scholars ever to have proposed such theories! This would have enabled them to focus on *real* disputes between them and past interpreters, disagreements that could give rise to fruitful dialogue.

¹³ Our authors' claim near the top of page 232 is not only uncharitable but imprecise and possibly internally self-contradictory. They have just stated that part 1 of *IDKR* established *Religion's* "metaphysical motivations and philosophical character" by means of a review of existing literature, and yet now, a few lines later, they tell

overlook the misrepresentations as careless errors, prompted not by malice or an unscrupulous attempt to discredit one's competitors, but by an assumption that our authors' use of these phrases must mean something quite different from anything they clearly state in the book itself. Our authors boldly contrast their approach to that of past interpreters with words like these (234): "Gone was the temptation to truncate the text in order for it to make sense."¹⁴ As the above examples demonstrate, some past interpreters *have* conducted just the kind of "linear interpretation" that Jacobs and Firestone perform, and not all of them "truncate the text" in the way our authors allege. As I turn now to my second set of questions, we shall see that their own self-assessment, that *they* did not truncate Kant's text in order to defend *their* reading, is not as straightforward as it may seem.

3. The Nature and Function of Kant's Two "Experiments"

Of the three novel assumptions our authors put forward in hopes of establishing a new and more coherent approach to interpreting Kant's *Religion*, my second set of questions focuses on the one that wreaks the most havoc on the *accuracy* of our authors' reading of the text. The other two assumptions – that Kant advances various "cognitions" regarding the

us that none of the literature on which they have established that foundation for their own approach is "capable of answering" the various objections that others have put forward. A charitable (and very possibly accurate) claim would have been: *nobody has yet written a work whose main purpose was to respond to the specific objections of these three recent scholars*. Wood, Axinn, Hare, Palmquist, and the various others our authors claim to use as part of their "defense" of Kant in Part 1, would surely agree with *this* modest claim, as the purposes of their works on Kant have been different. But our authors have not made this modest claim. They have rather brashly claimed that no other approach is even *capable* of responding to such objections, though they give no justification for this claim (here or elsewhere). Thankfully they at least refrained from naming Palmquist explicitly as one of the scholars whose approach they claim leaves the text "guilty of incoherence". One wonders, when reading the end of this paragraph from page 232: *has any other past scholar followed this "road less travelled"?* *Is it a road LESS travelled, or a road NEVER travelled?* Our authors give the latter impression. I hope anyone who has read and understood Part Three of *KCR* would draw the former conclusion. (The same problem arises two pages later, when our authors claim (234) that their "way into the text" is "until this volume, untried". Now, if they mean by this that their specific way of responding to the "debilitating conundrums" of Quinn, Wolterstorff and Michalson has never yet been put forward, then they are of course correct. But that does not appear to be what they are claiming in their Closing Statement; rather, they imply that nobody has ever interpreted *Religion* transcendently – an implication that is plainly false, and rather shocking in a book that claims to be grounded in a thoroughgoing review of the literature! Admittedly, the three specific novelties our authors mention immediately after their claim that their approach is "untried" all represent positions adopted *in direct opposition to KCR and, for at least one of the co-authors, in full knowledge that opposite viewpoints existed in the literature, and yet the fact that an opposing position on all three points has been published eight years earlier is completely hidden from their readers' view; the only explanation for this hiding is that, if the reader had been allowed to see how others have already staked claims on all three of these key points, then our authors could no longer have claimed that they were the first to try this approach but could only say that they were the first to apply this approach in the way they do*. A more accurate statement appears toward the bottom of page 234, that their approach is novel because it "addresses successfully the plethora of objections to the text from Kant's critics." *IDKR* does do this and is successful, and this is its claim to greatness; but the claim would have been even stronger, had our authors more fully revealed the relation of their approach to the work of past scholars who have also adopted it. Given that our authors do claim to be "informed by the various ways *Religion* has been interpreted" (234), my first set of questions can be regarded as a challenge, to demonstrate how they are *not* being duplicitous.

¹⁴ I am not sure which would be a worse problem: claiming not to truncate a text when one knows full well that one has done so, or truncating a text but claiming one has not done so because one does not realize what one has done. For this reason (and because I wish to be as charitable as possible in these comments), I do not hazard a guess in these comments as to which of these may be the case for our authors (see below).

human experience of being religious that enable Kant to transcend the first *Critique's* strictures on “God-talk” (110-112) and that Kant’s theory of the “disposition” refers to “the enduring moral ontology of the human being” (122) – give rise to various questions that could just as easily be raised at this point. But in view of the limitations on time, I shall leave those topics to others and focus here on the novel assumption that I believe is most clearly and evidently mistaken, and with the worst result. My second question is: *How do you reconcile your claims about the location of Kant’s two experiments with the massive amount of contrary evidence in Kant’s text?* According to the only way I can see of identifying the two experiments, our authors’ “novel” assumption about their position in Kant’s text is indeed novel, but only because it is so obviously mistaken; yet they make little, if any, effort to rebut the substantial evidence that contradicts their position. They assume that when Kant distinguishes between the two experiments he conducts in *Religion*, he intends to develop the first experiment entirely in the first three Pieces and the second experiment only in the Fourth Piece.¹⁵ Rather than assuming that they have simply made a silly error in making this claim, I prefer to assume they have an insight into the deep meaning of these two experiments that did not come across in my reading of their book.

Our authors distinguish between the two experiments as follows (114): “The first experiment considers only what reason tells us about the ‘pure religion of reason’ (6:12)—that is, it considers only natural religion. The second experiment looks at a specific ‘alleged revelation’ and compares its doctrines (*in abstracto*) to the doctrines of natural religion in order to ‘see whether it does not lead back to the same pure *rational system* of religion’ (6:12).” This way of characterizing Kant’s distinction, however, stacks the deck in favor of their interpretation in a way that is not supported by Kant’s text. They import the term “natural religion” into Kant’s distinction, even though *Kant never uses this term in Religion until he distinguishes between natural religion and revealed religion the Fourth Piece*.¹⁶ That is, our authors merely assume that the first experiment can be identified with what Kant later calls “natural religion”; Kant himself never makes such an identification. This could, of course, be merely a verbal quibble, so for now, let’s overlook this little hiccup in our authors’ exegesis, and examine the actual implications of their claim regarding the location of the two experiments.

¹⁵ On page 203 our authors not only wrongly identify the Second Preface as the location of Kant’s account of the first experiment (when in fact the first experiment is explained in the First Preface, and only implicitly and indirectly alluded to in the Second Preface), but in addition they falsely state that “Kant’s explication of rational religion in the first experiment refers specifically to Books One, Two, and Three”. The latter claim is false because Kant *never* “explic[itly]...refers specifically” to those three Books in this regard. *They* (our authors) have made this explicit connection in previous sections; but that isn’t what the quoted sentence claims! Without a reference to a *text* where Kant really states what they claim, this statement is merely wishful thinking.

¹⁶ On page 225 our authors reveal an unfortunate misunderstanding of the first experiment. They identify it as “a thoroughgoing attempt to explicate the doctrines of natural religion on practical grounds”. But this would amount to a reduction (and or *translation!*) of religion to practical reason! Passages like this lead me to worry that our authors have, inadvertently, walked down the path of those who see *Religion* as an appendix to Kant’s ethics, rather than as a *bridge between the theoretical and practical standpoints* (as Palmquist claims in *KCR* and various other publications).

The problem with our authors' claim is two-sided and can be stated quite simply. First, they do not and (so far as I can tell) *cannot* explain why the concluding portions of the First Piece, the Second Piece, and the Third Piece *all* look at specific claims to revelation from the Christian tradition and compare these traditional Christian doctrines to the doctrines Kant has established in the earlier sections of each Piece, discussing in each case whether those doctrines do not lead back to the same pure *rational system* of religion he has just introduced. Limitations of time forbid me from going into detail. But the broad outline of Kant's plan is clear enough. Section 4 of the First Piece explicitly examines the Christian doctrine of original sin, *naming it* and stating its origin in "Scripture" (*Religion* 41). Our authors conveniently downplay this section of Kant's text. Similarly, Section Two of the Second Piece begins with these words: "Holy Scripture . . . sets forth this intelligible moral relation in the form of a story" (78) and the remainder of the section compares the scriptural account of salvation with the rational account Kant himself has defended in Section One of the Second Piece; yet Jacobs and Firestone mention this second section of Kant's text only once, incorrectly identifying it as part of the General Comment to the Second Piece!¹⁷ The Third Piece, likewise, has two major "Divisions": Division One explicitly carries out the first experiment, calling it the "Philosophical Presentation" (95), while Division Two carries out the second experiment, calling it the "Historical Presentation" (124).¹⁸ These *obviously* refer to the two experiments; yet when Jacobs and Firestone devote a short section to the

¹⁷ See *IDKR* 166. *Religion* 82-83 belongs to Section Two of the Second Piece, not to the General Comment; as such it is part of the *main task* of what Kant is trying to accomplish – namely, part of the second experiment (on the reading given in *KCR*, Part Three – a text our authors inexplicably choose to ignore). Moreover, a second irony is that our authors call Kant's appeal to Satan and Christ in this passage "an illustration" of the rational theory developed in Section One, yet this is precisely the interpretation Palmquist gives of this section in the passage from *KCR* 211, which they quote *out of context* on page 154 (see note 10, above). What they are affirming here is *exactly* the point Palmquist was making in the passage they claimed to disagree with previously! That they hold exactly the position Palmquist defends on this point (i.e., that the narrative is, for Kant, symbolic) is explicitly stated on page 168—though of course without acknowledging that they are here adopting one of the methods of interpretation they claim to be supplanting!

That Section One of the Second Piece is part of Kant's first experiment is not a matter of dispute. However, our authors simply never comment on the status of *Section Two* of the Second Piece, so their claim on page 155 that "Book Two" is "part of the first experiment" is begging the question. What is arguably even worse is that our authors' interpretation of the rational system Kant defends in Section One of the Second Piece is skewed to make it *appear* to have little or no relation to the second experiment, whereas in Kant's text it serves to lead directly to the presentation in Section Two (117): The "distinction between faith in the prototype and faith in a purported appearance of the prototype" is very important, yet our authors ignore Kant's discussion of the latter, in Section Two of the Second Piece. By saying nothing about that part of Kant's argument, they give the (misleading) impression that in the Second Piece Kant is *only* concerned about the former—a truncation of the text that (conveniently) supports their assumption that the second experiment appears only in the Fourth Piece.

¹⁸ Kant presents his list of essential characteristics in *Religion* 101-102 as characteristics of the *church*, not as characteristics of the "ethical commonwealth", as our authors claim (185). Why so many interpreters of Kant, and even (if not especially) Christian interpreters, have shied away from using *Kant's* term ("church") is a mystery. Perhaps in this case our authors shied away from Kant's term because it might make his argument here look like part of the second experiment. But this would not be justified, for the Kantian church (in Division One of the Third Piece) is a *rational/transcendental structure*, not an account of the Christian church as such. Unfortunately, when our authors finally get around to mentioning the church (193), they refer to it quite inappropriately as part of Kant's attempt to deal with "the religious landscape". But this reference to Subsection IV (of Division One of the Third Piece) is misleading, because the principles Kant introduces in that section are transcendental, not primarily historical.

discussion of Division Two, they have to go to great lengths to explain away the embarrassing fact that Kant is doing something that they do not think he should be doing until the Fourth Piece.¹⁹ What is most shocking about this evidence is not that our authors have a new and different view of the location of the two experiments; it is that in spite of their masterful overview of the literature in Part 1 of their book, they overlook a golden opportunity to *improve* their defense of their own novel position by arguing against the most plausible existing alternative; instead of taking up that challenge in their text, they simply remain silent about whether or not any such alternative reading even exists.²⁰

The second, and arguably more serious side of the problem our authors face, if they wish to defend their understanding of the location of the two experiments, is that their account implies that the arguments of the Fourth Piece *play no role whatsoever in the rational system of religion*.²¹ If the Fourth Piece consists entirely and *only* of Kant's second experiment, as our authors claim, then his whole distinction between true and false service of God²² in a

¹⁹ On page 185 our authors acknowledge that in the Third Piece Kant says quite a lot about Christianity. Unfortunately, here (and later in the Chapter [see e.g., 192]) they do not sufficiently explain how that can be, if (as they have argued) the second experiment is *only* conducted in the Fourth Piece.

²⁰ This account of the nature and location of the two experiments is the foundation of the entire discussion of *Religion* presented in Chapters VII and VIII of *Kant's Critical Religion*. Moreover, I have personally discussed this alternative with one of the co-authors. Why they chose to ignore it in their book is a mystery I hope they will solve at today's session. The answer cannot be that they were not aware of this alternative! Since in our past discussions no clear rebuttal was ever given for this alternative, I looked forward with great anticipation to the publication of their book, so I could finally learn more about why they reject the position defended in *KCR*; previously, their response was simply "let's agree to disagree"; but hopefully they will go deeper than this when faced with an audience of our peers! Our authors do compare their thesis with an alternative, attributed to Hare and Reardon; but that alternative is a weak and obviously inadequate one, associating the first experiment with Kant's moral philosophy and the second experiment with the *entirety* of the *Religion* book (see 115ff).

²¹ On page 228, Jacobs and Firestone give a good summary of the purpose of the Fourth Piece, but their own summary implies that the *whole* of the Fourth Piece cannot refer only to Christianity. Because in the Third Piece Kant has argued that the weakness of human nature *requires* empirical manifestations of the invisible church (and because we humans are and must be in charge of organizing those structures), Kant emphasizes in the Fourth Piece the importance of keeping those empirical structures well "pruned"—a nice metaphor, especially for those with experience caring for fruit trees! The unfortunate implication of our authors' assumption about the location of the second experiment is that if they are correct, then Kant's pruning applies *only* to the Christian church, not to the practice of rational religion as such or to the manifestation of any other empirical religion. Ironically, further down on the same page (228), our authors imply that Kant is here also thinking of the first experiment, for they now refer to "the dual perspective of the two experiments". Are they not acknowledging at this point that, even while discussing Christianity in the Fourth Piece, Kant is also saying something important about the first experiment?

²² On page 222 our authors misrepresent Kant's position when they contrast "acts of divine service" with "true moral conversion". Kant's emphasis for *both* true and false service is on the *deeds*. While our authors are correct to say that the problem with false service is that the "acts" are non-moral, aimed at appeasing God, they are wrong to identify the "true" act as that of moral conversion. Those on *both* sides of this distinction will claim to be converted, and Kant thinks nobody can be objectively certain of who is and who is not "saved". This is why, in the very passage our authors go on to quote, Kant says that such a disposition must "be demonstrated in *deeds*." The issue here (and throughout the Fourth Piece) is on what constitutes *correct* service of God, not on decrying "service of God" as wrong and "moral conversion" as right, as our authors would have us believe. While this is, admittedly, a highly nuanced point, it is important to get it straight if the full extent of Kant's aim of *reforming* Christianity is to be appreciated. Later, our authors do admit in conclusion that "Kant does not, of course, oppose service to the deity" (p.230), but they do not clearly explain what such service can entail, other than being morally good. If this is *all* it means, then Kant is a moral reductionist. Palmquist has explained in great detail why this cannot be all it means for Kant; yet our authors do not develop this crucial issue.

The question that arises from all of this is: Is this "much-debated distinction" (211) between true and false

church would have to apply *only* to Christians.²³ But this is ridiculous!²⁴ As our authors themselves point out, the Fourth Piece is divided into two major sections, considering natural religion and revealed religion. Because Kant associates *both* sections with Christianity, our authors assume both must refer to the second experiment. But the first section deals explicitly with *natural* religion, and Jacobs and Firestone themselves admit that this is the topic of the *first* experiment, not the second!

This second line of questioning can now be summed up in a twofold form: *How can our authors reconcile their interpretation of the two experiments with (a) the fact that Kant establishes a crucial aspect of his system of rational religion in the Fourth Piece and (b) the fact that Kant weighs the extent to which Christianity fits the mold of rational religion in each of the four Pieces, always in the final major division of each Piece?* This question is further intensified when we note that our authors say almost nothing about the General Comments Kant adds to each Piece.²⁵ Without a really persuasive answer, it seems we are left with no

service really part of his *second* experiment? Our authors identify the second experiment over and over with the entire Fourth Piece; yet they say Kant introduces the second experiment only *after* he makes this distinction in the introductory section. Indeed, their own discussion of the second experiment does not begin until the *second section* of their Chapter 8! So, what is the status of this preliminary distinction and of the section of *Religion* that puts it forward? Is it, or is it not, part of his defense of the first experiment's transcendental system of religion?

²³ If our authors' claim on page 210 is correct, concerning the purpose of the Fourth Piece, then why does Kant give this part of his book a title that clearly indicates he will be advancing arguments that will play an indispensable (though admittedly regulative, hypothetical) role in completing his *rational system of religion* (i.e., the first experiment)? If our authors' thesis were correct, then surely Kant would have given the Fourth Piece a *title* that clearly indicated his intent to modulate to a consideration of Christianity. Our authors never address the issue of why Kant strangely avoids mentioning Christianity in the title, if in fact this is the *whole* purpose of the Fourth Piece.

²⁴ Our authors' statement on page 211 is technically correct, but misleading, because it does not describe *all* that Kant does "In the opening of Book Four". Any reader unfamiliar with the text of *Religion* would not know, merely from their statement (or anything else in *IDKR*) that this opening section of the Fourth Piece concludes (following the summary of the first-experiment argument *up to this point*) by explaining the key distinction between true and false service of God, which is the contribution of the Fourth Piece to the *first* experiment. Our authors want to persuade their readers that the Fourth Piece makes no contribution to the first experiment, so they *must* downplay Kant's references to true and false service of God in a church, since this must be part of the transcendental system of religion, not part of the second experiment. Even though Kant emphasizes this focus both in the title of the Fourth Piece and in its opening section, our authors do not discuss Kant's crucial distinction between true and false service until page 227—19 pages into Chapter 8, and only five pages before the end!

Likewise, our authors' statement on pages 219-220 is accurate as far as it goes, but does not merit the conclusion drawn from it. The distinction between natural and learned religion would be more naturally related to the distinction between the first and second experiment (as our authors themselves acknowledge, later on page 220). Our authors never explain how or why Kant deals with *natural religion* (which they themselves associate with the first experiment) in a section of the book that they claim is focusing on the *second* experiment. But there is an even greater problem with concluding this section of their text in this way: they never indicate what *Kant* regards as the main purpose of this "turn" to the distinction between natural and revealed religion in the Fourth Piece. His purpose is not (as our authors claim) to begin carrying out his second experiment, at long last, having completed the first. Rather, his purpose in these two sections is to answer the question: *how does God want to be served in a church?* Answering this question, clearly, is as crucial to the first experiment as it is to the second. Is that why our authors *must* ignore it? Perhaps acknowledging Kant's focus would require them to revise their claim regarding the location of the second experiment, abandoning one of their three novel assumptions.

²⁵ For example, when our authors claim (163) that Kant does not develop his theory of the archetype "into a Trinitarian metaphysic"; they ignore the fact that Kant has a lengthy discussion of Trinitarian theology in one of his General Comments. One explanation for their systematic neglect of the General Comments is that

other alternative than to conclude that Jacobs and Firestone inadvertently commit the very error they accuse all past interpreters of committing; they make their idea more persuasive than it actually is by truncating Kant's text wherever evidence conflicts with their approach.

4. Concluding Remarks on the Problem-Driven Hermeneutic²⁶

The dangers of interpreting Kant's two experiments in the way Jacobs and Firestone recommend cannot be more profound, at least for the Christian, for their portrayal of Kant's second experiment requires them systematically to overlook Kant's many attempts to *reform* the traditional understandings of Christian doctrine. In the First Piece, there is no longer a *moral gap* to be filled by the Christian tradition, if (as they argue) evil is a fully cognized reality whose depths are laid bare by Kant's transcendental reflections.²⁷ Their attempt to dissociate the Second Piece from Kant's second experiment likewise leads them to write as if

acknowledging their existence would significantly weaken their claim that the second experiment occurs only in the Fourth Piece. Likewise, the page references they give for "Kant's case for Christianity" (185) indicate that our authors are turning a blind eye to the General Comments. (I found only two references to the "parerga" in the entire book [pp.213, 258], and they come in a quotation from Despland, which our authors quote for a different reason, and in a passing reference added in a footnote.) It would have been good if at least some brief explanation of this interpretive decision had been presented. The General Comments are pretty clearly dealing with aspects of the *second* experiment, yet they occur in *each* of the four Pieces; as such, it seems our authors needed to ignore this issue in order to make their claim about the location of the second experiment appear to be a viable option. On page 231 our authors once again ignore the General Comment, claiming that the Fourth Piece "closes" at *Religion* 190, as if the General Comment is not part of the Fourth Piece! If they really think it is not, they should have presented an argument defending their position.

²⁶ See e.g., 210. Throughout their book (especially Part 2) they let their exegesis of Kant's *Religion* be driven by the problems they have found in the writings of other scholars. This is not necessarily, in itself, a bad way to write a book; but it is a strategy that can produce only very limited results: namely, demonstrating that the conundrums can be solved. As pointed out in my forthcoming review of *IDKR* in *The Journal of Religion*, I think Jacobs and Firestone succeed in this limited goal; but not in the broader task they claim for themselves, of establishing an entirely new approach to interpreting *Religion*.

A good example of the impact of our authors' problem-driven strategy comes on page 228, where they discuss the General Comment to the Fourth Piece. They here mention this highly interesting part of Kant's text only in passing, saying they need not discuss the issues because it "is not considered a source of conundrums". In fact, Palmquist has argued that the point they mention *is* a source of some important misunderstandings of Kant. Those who claim Kant is seeking to destroy empirical religion frequently refer to these closing sections of *Religion* as evidence. Any serious affirmative interpreter must therefore stake a claim on these points of dispute: is Kant affirming the value of prayer, or denying it? Is he encouraging us to attend church, or giving us a good excuse to stay away? Is he showing us the reason baptism and communion should be preserved, or is he mocking those who still believe in such silliness? Our authors give no hint regarding their position on these important points. If anything, they imply that they would read Kant as *rejecting* these elements of indirect service, since they refer to them as "excesses". Again, this suggests that our authors have inadvertently portrayed *Religion* as Kant's attempt to reduce religion to nothing but morality in disguise.

²⁷ Our authors' eisegesis on pages 147-151, applying Aristotle's theory of primary and secondary substance to Kant's argument, is a highly innovative, intriguing idea, but filled with hermeneutic presumptions that would be virtually impossible to justify. The biggest problem with their whole line of argument at this point is that, if it succeeds, it will rob Kant of one of his primary concerns in the First Piece, which is to reveal a *moral gap* that *cannot* be filled by pure cognition alone. If this Aristotelian argument succeeds in fully explaining the nature of human evil, then there will be nothing left for Kant's second experiment to accomplish – no explanatory gap left in the first experiment, to be filled by revelation. The fact that Kant ends the First Piece with a direct appeal to the inscrutability of evil is clear evidence that Kant would regard our authors' Aristotelian argument as a long-shot effort to accomplish something that need not (and cannot) be done. Moreover, our authors come perilously close to affirming (149) the very interpretation of evil that Kant explicitly regards as "inept"—that evil becomes an inevitable "characteristic of the species" as a result of the first human being's sinful choice.

Kant's language there is Platonic *rather than* Christian, even though Kant is quoting directly from the Bible!²⁸ And in discussing the Third Piece they are forced to assume that Kant accidentally wrote "*Anlage*" instead of "*Gessinnung*" when he argued that *converted* persons (our authors think Kant must have meant *unconverted* persons) can still corrupt the disposition of good-hearted persons;²⁹ quite implausibly, they are led by their "novel"

²⁸ Claiming that Kant's language in Subsection A is Platonic "as opposed to...Christian" (158) is surely going too far. While the arguments about Kant's possible Platonism are rather far-fetched, they are *not* intrinsically implausible. That is, their proposal does make sense as one way of reading the text. However, it does *not* make sense to argue that this Platonic reading, for Kant, was somehow *opposed to* Christianity, because Kant puts many of the key phrases in quotation marks! When he says things like the archetype is "God's only begotten son", when he calls "him" the "Word", etc., he is *obviously* using Christian terminology. To argue that this portrayal is *also* Platonic (perhaps that it amounts to a Christian Platonism) is plausible. But our authors claim more than that. They clearly state in this passage that it is *not Christian*, that Kant is being Platonic *rather than* Christian, and this turns a far-fetched but possibly true argument into one that is plainly mistaken. Kant is quoting from the Bible, not from Plato, whether or not our authors wish to acknowledge this fact.

²⁹ On page 183 (and then repeatedly, throughout the rest of their book) our authors assume that in the introductory section to the Third Piece (*Religion* 93-94) Kant is referring to *unconverted* persons having a bad influence on converted persons. But nothing in the text justifies this assumption. This is why, as they explain in a footnote (255)—a footnote that fails to specify a page reference for the quote!—our authors are forced to change Kant's reference to "moral disposition" so that the passage reads "moral *predisposition*"; they admit that without this change their interpretation would not even be *possible*. (If the two terms here were cognates in German, as they are in English, this change would seem plausible; but given that they are completely different words in German, the proposed amendment to Kant's text is far-fetched, especially when an alternative interpretation is available that does not require the assumption that Kant accidentally wrote the wrong word.) What Kant has in mind here, as explained in *KCR* 7.3.A, is that *converted persons* will corrupt each other, as soon as they come into each other's presence, and thus "make one another evil." This, and *only* this, is what makes a church necessary; if we converted persons did *not* have the tendency to corrupt each other, then we would not need to band together; all we would need is to be sure we stay clear of all non-believers! But the purpose of the church is not to help its members escape from or fight against the "baddies" who are not yet converted (as our authors' position could be taken to imply): it is to give those who are converted (or who believe they are) a way of combating the natural tendency *believers themselves* have of corrupting each other, leading each other astray, misunderstanding each others' words, accusing each other of insults where no insult was intended, feeling jealous of each others' achievements, not wanting to promote the valid achievements of others, etc. Kant wrote "disposition" and that is what he meant, as argued in *KCR* 7.3.B; in the Second Piece, he has shown how conversion is possible, so he is now dealing with the converted; the unconverted are no longer a matter of Kant's concern for the remainder of the book. Incredibly, our authors show no awareness that this alternative reading of the text even exists. Moreover, our authors' reading is internally inconsistent. For on their reading, the believers and the non-believers "will mutually corrupt each other's moral predisposition and make one another evil". But how is the convert going to corrupt the moral predisposition of the non-believer? And if the non-believer is already evil, then how will this "mutual" corruption "make" the non-believer evil (since the non-believer is presumably already mired in radical evil)? To be consistent, our authors would have to say that Kant did not intend to write the words "mutually" and "one another" either; these words should also be stricken from the (amended) text and eisegetically-inclined interpreters should replace these words with words that better suit their own fancy!

Our authors go on to make a helpful qualification of their point (see "Unless" on page 183). However, it still does not accurately reflect what Kant is arguing here. He is *not* arguing that if moral communities are built by the unconverted, then the members will corrupt each other. He is arguing that if *no* moral community is built, then *even believers* (as he is assuming readers will take themselves to be, in the wake of the Second Piece) will corrupt each other's dispositions. While our authors are correct that Kant assumes a "logical priority" (conversion must precede the building of an ethical community), he *never argues for this*; what he does argue for is that belief in God is necessary. Kant's "unless" argument refers to the need for such persons to believe in God: unless those in the ethical commonwealth believe in God, their efforts will be fruitless because there is no way for them to conceive how the task of building the community could even get off the ground. Our authors unfortunately do not sufficiently highlight that argument. Likewise, when they summarize their view of the ethical commonwealth (189-190) they only briefly mention the "people of God" aspect, almost as an afterthought. That the latter is the core of Kant's argument for both the nature and the necessity of the ethical commonwealth is demonstrated in "Kant's Religious Argument for the Existence of God—The Ultimate

assumption about the two experiments to present passages even where Kant explicitly refers to Christianity as an example as if Kant were referring only to “non-Christian faiths”.

In the same way that our authors’ assumption about the location of the two experiments adversely influences their understanding of how the first three Pieces of Kant’s *Religion* relate to historical faiths such as Christianity,³⁰ it also blinds them to various key factors relating to the role played by the Fourth Piece in a rational system of religion³¹ and leads them, quite inappropriately, to express concerns over Kant’s alleged “elitist tendency” in religion.³² Moreover, our authors admit in their Closing Statement that they have not attempted to apply their reading of *Religion* to a new interpretation of the three *Critiques*; that is a telling confession, for the order of interpretation and “application” should be the

Dependence of Human Destiny on Divine Assistance”, *Faith and Philosophy* 26 (January, 2009), pp.3-22.

Later (188), our authors repeat their claims about *Religion* 93-94, but add one new point. They claim Kant is saying the threat of a return to evil “arises not from the subdued evil within”; but Kant never says this. In the text they have just quoted, Kant says “malignant inclinations... assail [the convert’s] nature”; surely these are the convert’s *own* (inner) inclinations. For how can someone else’s inclinations assail *my* (inner) nature? Again, our authors here blatantly ignore the fact that Kant’s use of “mutually corrupt” and “one another” makes their interpretation internally self-contradictory.

Incidentally, in the Third Piece, Kant makes no reference to the archetype until Subsection IV of Division One and does not refer to the “Son of God” until Subsection VII. Nevertheless, our authors write (184) as if “practical faith in the Son of God” were the core of Kant’s early arguments in defense of the ethical commonwealth and church. If they mean to be looking forward to later sections, they should state this more clearly. Later (229), our authors similarly interpose “Son of God” language where Kant refers only to “good life conduct”—for in the Fourth Piece, Kant *never* uses the expression “Son of God”, yet our authors give the novice reader the clear impression that he does.

³⁰ Unfortunately, our authors do not (neither on page 201 nor elsewhere) consider any alternative views regarding the issue of where in the text of *Religion* Kant “engage[s] with Christianity”. Their claim that this never happens until the Fourth Piece requires them to defend some very strange and strained claims, especially when considering the Second Division of the Third Piece. In passages where Kant is clearly and explicitly discussing Christianity, our authors must portray him as actually doing something else.

³¹ An example of a typical confusion that arises in our authors’ discussion of the Fourth Piece comes on page 197: their use of “meet with” is at the very least awkward and most likely incorrect. While Cambridge does translate Kant’s term (*anzutreffen*) as “met with”, the (implied) subject of the sentence is “we” (i.e., Kant and the reader; or possibly, members of the true church). A better translation would be “found” (as in both Greene and Pluhar). That is, Kant is saying *we* meet with (i.e., “find”) true religion in the various revealed faiths. Our authors claim that the “various faiths can meet with” true religion sounds very odd, and does not reflect what Kant actually says. Our authors then claim that “confusion can—and often does—ensue over what exactly he means.” Well, our authors have admittedly *made* this passage sound confusing, but I do not recall ever reading any other commentator who thought it was confusing, so it would have been nice if they had cited one or two examples of this allegedly “often” occurrence. This is a good example of a place where our authors, finding themselves confused, should have consulted the German, realizing that such confusions may arise from poor translations. (Incidentally, the way our authors go on to interpret this passage seems correct to me—but obviously so. Their citation of Ronald Green as allegedly in disagreement is poor exegesis: they give no evidence that Green ever claims that *this passage* means what he [Green] aims to accomplish in his book; they merely argue that the project *Green* sets for himself is contrary to this passage. But this is not evidence that *this passage* has itself aroused confusion from different interpreters.)

³² This allegation, raised on page 202, is an important one, though they seem to be only half-hearted in their attempt to rescue Kant from the charge of having “an elitist tendency”. In fact, a proper understanding of the Third and Fourth Piece (especially of Kant’s rejection of clericalism) shows that Kant is positively *anti*-elitist, in the extreme. Our authors appear to be (implicitly) forgetting that Kant’s arguments in *Religion* (unlike those in his later *Conflict of the Faculties*, where Kant admittedly does seem somewhat elitist on behalf of philosophy scholars) are *not* about the conflict between religious and philosophical *scholars in a university* but rather they are about how to please God *in a church*. By lacking a clear focus on this point, our authors end up making more of this potential problem than the text itself merits.

reverse.³³

The upshot of all these observations is that, unless Jacobs and Firestone can enlighten us on the advantages of seeing the two experiments in the way they do and can effectively rebut the weight of evidence that militates against it, their book leaves us with the ironic picture of two “defenders” of Kant who, in their effort to render Kant’s claims “coherent”, have portrayed him in a manner that makes his position hardly worthy of assent. Were Kant himself here to tell us what he thinks of this book, I suspect he might refuse to weigh in on *any* of these issues, but would simply remind us of the old rabbinic prayer: “Lord, save me from my friends; my enemies I can take care of by myself!”

³³ See *IDKR* 109 for one of several examples that can be cited of our authors’ tendency to disconnect their interpretation of *Religion* from the principles of the three *Critiques*. I know of no passages in *CPR* where the process of obtaining knowledge is presented in the way they describe it in this passage.

The use of “cognize” and “cognition” (e.g., 155) typifies the problem that pervades this and the previous chapter (but which, fortunately, is absent from most of the rest of the book). For Kant, the human disposition is necessarily unknowable. It is beyond the boundary of human cognition. Any talk of “cognizing” the disposition is simply unKantian, *unless* the word is being used in an explicitly unKantian way, as a synonym of “thought”. Kant *does* allow us to *think* the disposition, and this appears to be what our authors mean by “cognition”. Given Kant’s careful definition of *Erkenntnis*, however, such usage (as attributed to Kant) is misleading and illegitimate. Kant himself explicitly forbids it at numerous places in *Religion*, as when he says (77) a person “can acquire no secure and determinate concept whatever of his actual attitude through direct¹⁹² consciousness.” For another typical example of our authors’ usage, see page 164; Kant does not say that we “should *cognize* the prototype”; he just presents his account of it as if it were a statement of fact. If our authors wish to present Kant’s text here as an example of pure cognition, and if they want this claim to be genuinely Kantian, then they need to show more than just that Kant “thinks” of the archetype in this way. They need to show that he presents it as a transcendental component of his religion system, and for that to be the case, they need to show what pure intuition the idea (pure concept) of the archetype attaches itself to in our understanding of universal human (religious) nature. I think our authors have correctly understood the “top-down” function of the archetype in Kant’s system of religion; that this “descent of the divine Son of God is thus a provision of divine grace” (164) is consistent with the position I defend in *KCR* 7.2.B. But what is added to that previously defended position by describing it in terms of “cognition”? Unfortunately, our authors pass over in silence the relevant secondary literature that deals with this issue.

Similarly, our authors state that “Kant sees a natural link between happiness and moral uprightness – happiness is proportionate to virtue” (136-137); yet this is not Kant’s view. His view is that in the ideal/hypothetical realm of what pure reason cognizes about our moral nature, the “highest good” (something that is *not* now part of the natural order but towards which all moral beings should strive) has this characteristic. Our authors’ attribution of this view to Kant’s theory of nature suggests a weak grasp of the intricacies of Kant’s moral philosophy.

Another example of our authors’ inadequate grounding in the Critical philosophy comes with their use of the phrase “the highest good” (192, and throughout this chapter), which does not correspond to Kant’s usage in the text. Kant uses this term only three times in the Third Piece, and *never* explicitly in the technical sense of the Critical philosophy (which, as he implies in the second edition Preface, is not necessary for understanding *Religion*); his three uses of the term are very general, and seem to be synonymous with a goal that is “good for everyone”. I would not deny that the position our authors defend here *was* Kant’s position; my point here is only that they are reading it into *Religion* at this point, not reading it from the text itself. Once again, our authors later refer to “highest good” (223) as if Kant uses this term in the text, even though he does not. He uses “*höchste Gut*” only once in the Fourth Piece (and only in passing); the Cambridge edition uses the term to translate one other passage, at *Religion* 173, but here Kant uses “*Weltbesten*”. Kant *does* say, and *Religion* does argue, that religion is bound up in *human destiny* (as our authors also, rightly, state). But Kant’s system of religion does not stand and fall with his theory of the highest good. This may seem like nit-picking, but it is crucial when arguing against conundrums put forward by interpreters such as Byrne (who is virtually, though inexplicably, ignored in *IDKR*), for whom the failure of Kant’s argument for the highest good in the second *Critique* is virtually co-extensive with the failure of his arguments in *Religion*. That is, by assuming a false connection here, one that is nowhere required by Kant’s actual arguments in *Religion*, our authors lay themselves open to a potential attack from Byrne (or Byrneans).

Appendix: Detailed Response to the “Replies” of Firestone and Jacobs

The essay shown above was sent to Chris L. Firestone (hereafter CLF) and Nathan Jacobs (hereafter NJ) prior to the November 2009 AAR meeting where it was presented as part of a symposium on their book, *In Defense of Kant’s Religion* (hereafter *IDKR*). A significantly shortened version (containing only about one-third of the material shown above, due to length limits) was published in *Faith and Philosophy* 29.2 (April 2012):170-180—hereafter *FP29.2*—along with revised versions of the other papers presented at the symposium. CLF and NJ did not share their replies with the critics prior to the AAR symposium, nor did they share their (thoroughly revised) essays prior to their publication in *FP29.2*. Unfortunately, this significantly eclipsed the possibility of meaningful dialogue that might have avoided some rather serious misunderstandings. The editor of *Faith and Philosophy* kindly invited me to write a follow-up response, which appears in *Faith and Philosophy* 29.3 (July 2012):340-346—hereafter *FP29.3*. However, that reply focuses mainly on broad background issues, and includes a promise (p.342n) that a lengthier response to the detailed points raised CLF and NJ in their replies will be posted on my Academia.edu site. This Appendix fulfills that promise. As in my *FP29.3* reply, my use of the authors’ initials will refer to them as persons, while their initials will be put in italics when I am referring to their written replies as published in *FP29.2*.

CLF appears first and contains fewer comments on *SRP* (i.e., on my *FP29.2* article, as shown above in its original, longer version), so I will begin with responses to the points raised therein. My hope, in making the effort to write out my rebuttals in such detail, merely to be posted on what amounts to a blog in this context, is to encourage a continuation of the healthy aspects of the dialogue initiated in *FP29.2*, while discouraging a continuation of aspects that are clearly dead ends. A casual reading of my *FP29.3* response might give the impression that I not interested in further dialogue on such issues. Nothing could be further from the truth, as I hope this Appendix will make clear. For ease of reading, I begin each paragraph with a short heading that indicates the topic to be covered.

Further Responses to *CLF*

Clarification of *IDKR*’s claim to be unique. In the Conclusion of *IDKR*, the authors summarize their accomplishment in terms of three “unique” contributions they claim to have made to the literature on Kant’s *Religion*. They explain one of those unique contributions in terms of having proposed a “holistic” and “linear” interpretation. When writing *SRP*, I believed that any reader of *IDKR*’s Conclusion would think, as I did, that the quoted words are an essential part of their claim to uniqueness. So, one of the two central questions addressed in *SRP* was what they meant by these two words. *CLF* (and later, *NJ*—so I will deal here with both of their replies on this point) claims to be dumbfounded that anyone

would think they meant these (quoted) words to be part of their claim to uniqueness. Both authors explain that the words merely refer to their attempt to provide an interpretation of *Religion* that covers (more or less) the whole text, and they freely admit that they are not the only scholars to have done so. Was *SRP* based on a misreading of their use of these terms, or are they now backtracking on the boldness of their original claim to uniqueness, having been shown clear evidence to the contrary? Answering that question is not important. I asked for clarification and they gave it, so we now all appear to be in agreement that *IDKR* is not the only “holistic” and “linear” interpretation of Kant’s *Religion*. Sadly, *CLF* refuses to comment on whether Chapters VII and VIII of my *Kant’s Critical Religion* (hereafter *KCR*) also contain such a reading, even though *KCR* is one of the previous interpretations that *IDKR*’s literature review claims to cover. This, and other comments made in *CLF* (see below) could lead one to wonder whether he has actually read *KCR*.

The (alleged) reasons that *IDKR* ignored *KCR*’s interpretation of *Religion*. *CLF* claims at *FP29.2*, 207, that *IDKR* ignored *KCR*’s interpretation of *Religion* because (a) *KCR* adopts a perspectival framework that is foreign to Kant, and in any case (b) *KCR* “does not handle the conundrums in Kant’s *Religion*, which is the sole purpose of *IDKR*.” He later adds (208): “One could read virtually all of Palmquist’s work prior to *IDKR* and be totally unaware that any of the litany of problems noted in chapter 3 of *IDKR* exists in the secondary literature! This is a significant lacuna in Palmquist’s work on Kant.” I give a general response to both of these claims in my *FP29.3* rebuttal; what follows here summarizes that response and elaborates on some of the details. First, the purpose of *KCR* is not to prove the applicability of the perspectival framework developed in *Kant’s System of Perspectives* (hereafter *KSP*), but to provide (in Part Three) an exegetically-responsible, coherent interpretation of Kant’s *Religion*. The fact that I utilized a self-chosen interpretive framework (one that *KSP* had previously demonstrated to be deeply rooted in Kant’s texts!) for doing this does not make my interpretation irrelevant to those who disagree with my framework, any more than *IDKR*’s use of a courtroom metaphor thereby makes their interpretation irrelevant to readers who do not like that metaphor. Second, *KCR* does, in fact, address many of the same conundrums that *IDKR* responds to (see the next paragraph for details.) Of course, there are *some* conundrums that *KCR* does not address, because they were published (by Michalson and others) only after *KCR* was written, and *KCR* certainly did not address them (in 2000) in exactly the way *IDKR* did (in 2008), for the obvious reason of temporal order. Moreover, *KCR* does not adopt a conundrum-driven approach, as *IDKR* does; indeed, the word “conundrum” probably never appears in *KCR*’s main text. But this is also true of many other previous interpreters, as both the Conclusion of *IDKR* and *CLF* clearly imply, by claiming that *IDKR* is unique in this respect! So this is clearly not a good excuse for ignoring the *relevant* chapters of a work whose *other* chapters *IDKR* openly regards as relevant. The fact that *CLF* had been exposed to many of the ideas defended in Part Three of *KCR*, when he studied in Hong Kong for a year under my guidance, during the very time when those

chapters were being finalized, and that *IDKR* actually (perhaps inadvertently?) supports many positions that are very similar to those of *KCR*, could be unspoken reasons for the authors' decision to ignore the portion of *KCR* that might have forced them to acknowledge it as a relevant precedent for some of the positions they defend. Nobody who has not read both *IDKR* and Part Three of *KCR* would be in a position to assess the correspondence between various arguments presented in both, and the possibility that the latter influenced the former.

Does *KCR* ever address Michalson's conundrums? The CLF response to point (b) in the previous paragraph goes to a rather surprising extreme. CLF claims not only that *KCR* does not *focus* on the conundrums, but that it "does not address a single one of them" (*FP29.2*, 208). But this is plainly false, and provides still further evidence that CLF, having been personally introduced to *KCR*'s main arguments in 1995-96 by its author, may not have actually read *KCR*'s Part Three, once it was actually published several years later. (It is crucial to note in this regard that the positive use made of *KCR* in Part One of *IDKR* relates only to what *KCR* calls "Critical mysticism", which appears in Chapter II and in Part IV. *It is quite true that KCR does not address the conundrums in those chapters—the chapters that the authors found useful for their rhetorical "courtroom" purposes!*) The authors explicitly identify their conundrum-driven approach as arising mainly from the criticisms of *Religion* put forward by Michalson (see *IDKR*, chapter 3). A glance at the listing for Michalson in *KCR*'s Author Index (*KCR* 555) shows that he is one of the contemporary Kant interpreters whose views I addressed most frequently in that book, and nearly all of those references involve an explicit *defense* of Kant against the conundrums that Michalson thinks *Religion* raises. *These defenses of Kant against Michalson's conundrums occur on at least 21 different pages.* Just to cite two obvious examples from Chapter VII (one of the highly relevant *KCR* chapters that CLF and NJ appear not to have read, but wish to portray as, in any case, irrelevant to their concerns): two lengthy footnotes (*KCR*, 159n and 169n) explicitly respond to mistakes in Michalson's position, quoting his references to various "philosophical puzzles and obscurities"—including several that *IDKR* also addresses. It seems, therefore, that CLF either did not bother even to check *KCR*'s index or else he thinks the word "conundrums" has some special meaning that is not included by "philosophical puzzles and obscurities".

Detailed evidence that CLF's claim (that *KCR* does not address the conundrums of *IDKR*) is false. Perhaps CLF would reply to the above by saying the two lengthy footnotes in *KCR* VII.2-3 (along with the 20 or so other explicit references to Michalson) somehow do not "count" as addressing the many conundrums that *IDKR* mines from Michalson's works. To preempt such a response, I shall now demonstrate that *KCR*'s main text (especially in Chapter VII) presents a positive reading of Kant's *Religion* that addresses *each* of the "conundrums" that *IDKR* chapter 3 highlights; the fact that in most cases I do not single out Michalson for special treatment (since, as *IDKR* explicitly confirms, he is not the only critic who highlights such perplexities) does not mean that the problems he raises are not discussed in a very explicit manner. For the sake of clarity, I shall number the seven conundrums *IDKR* identifies,

giving at least one example in each case of an explicit reference *KCR* makes to it:

- (1) “the predisposition-propensity conflict” (*IDKR* 85-88): *KCR* 155 argues that “the coexistence of the good predisposition and the evil propensity” is no accident or inadvertent failure to decide on Kant’s part, but is rather “the tension out of which religion arises”, and the entirety of *KCR*’s §VII.2.A deals with this conflict;
- (2) “the innate-but-freely-chosen predicament” (*IDKR* 88-90): *KCR* 150 argues that “Kant’s full solution to the problem of mankind’s innate moral character” rests on “his subtle distinction between a ‘disposition’ (the timeless ground of a person’s maxims at any given point of time) and a ‘predisposition’ (the timeless ground of a person’s maxims at the very *outset* of life, before any moral actions have been performed)”, and this predicament is also at the forefront of the discussion throughout *KCR* §VII.2.A;
- (3) “the universal-contingent puzzle” (*IDKR* 90-93): *KCR* 155 specifically states that this puzzle can be solved only if we recognize the *reason* why “the act that produces the evil propensity must be, paradoxically, both ‘contingent’ ...and yet ‘universal’”, and that this paradox becomes palatable “only if we regard [this] act...as ‘radical’”—another main theme of *KCR* §VII.2.A;
- (4) “the stoic-saint dilemma” (*IDKR* 94-95): *KCR* 169 argues that the main point of Kant’s doctrine of the church is to resolve “the paradox between human responsibility and divine assistance”, which I take to be the main dilemma being highlighted by *IDKR* at this point, and the bulk of *KCR* §VII.3.A is devoted to explicating the nuances of Kant’s resolution;
- (5) “the before-and-after problem” (*IDKR* 95-97): *KCR* 164 shows how Kant’s soteriology, which Michalson thinks plagues Kant’s approach to religious conversion, actually makes good sense if understood as a perspectival distinction between what humans can know (actions in the phenomenal world) and what only God can know (the human disposition), and *KCR* explores the depths of Kant’s solution in even more detail in §VIII.2.B and Appendix VI.2-3, in discussing Kant’s “three difficulties”;
- (6) “the hermeneutic circularity crisis” (*IDKR* 97-99): *KCR* protects Kant in advance from this crises (which essentially amounts to the claim that Kant begs the question by reading morality into religion from the very start) by founding the entirety of Part Three (where the details of Kant’s *Religion* are treated) on an earlier argument that Kant’s position is not reductionist, but rather *raises* morality to the status of religion (*KCR* Ch.VI), and this anti-reductionism therefore colors every aspect of Chapter VII (see e.g., *KCR* 180-181, where the significance of the non-reductionist position is explicitly mentioned as a way of demonstrating that Kant does not beg the question);
- (7) “the unnecessary necessity paradox” (*IDKR* 99-100): *KCR*’s Chapters VIII and IX are so thoroughly devoted to the task of showing in precise detail how Kant resolves this paradox, which is essentially the paradox of how the two experiments (focusing on pure religious faith and historical faith, respectively) can ever fit together, that specific quotes of specific arguments defending such consistency are simply unnecessary—for anyone

who has actually *read* the relevant chapters!

CLF's first way of diverting attention from SRP's question about the two experiments: misquoting. The second of the two main questions in *SRP* (i.e., in my criticism of *IDKR*, as published in *FP29.2*) asks why *IDKR* ignores what is arguably the most comprehensive account of Kant's two experiments published to date, namely the thoroughgoing treatment of their relationship presented in Chapters VII and VIII of *KCR*. (Instead, the authors select as the only alternative to their view a "translation thesis" that is only mentioned in passing by a few previous interpreters, and never developed into a systematic account of the distribution of the two experiments throughout the text of *Religion*.) Leaving *SRP*'s explicit question conspicuously unanswered, *CLF* diverts attention from it in three ways. First, he employs a strategy that readers of *IDKR* will find familiar: he quotes a statement out of context, then presents it as if it were saying something that it is not. Immediately after (falsely) claiming that *KCR* says nothing about any of *IDKR*'s seven key conundrums, he writes (*CLF* 208): "Palmquist's claim that we 'make little effort to rebut previously published evidence contradicting their position' (175) sounds truly remarkable, given what we find or, more exactly, what we do not find in his own published writings." By "what we do not find", *CLF* clearly implies that readers of *KCR* will find nothing relevant to the *seven conundrums* laid out in *IDKR*, chapter 3; yet the words quoted from *SRP* 175 were not about the conundrums, but about *KCR*'s treatment of the two experiments, which the authors *admit* they did not address! In any case, as I demonstrated in the previous paragraph, *CLF*'s claim here is quite false. What truly *is* remarkable, though, is that *IDKR*'s own approach to identifying the location of the two experiments makes no obvious contribution to the authors'—admittedly valiant—attempt to resolve the seven conundrums! Quite to the contrary, as I argue in *SRP*, their way of locating Kant's experiments creates a whole new set of problems with *Religion*, problems that (not surprisingly) lie at the very heart of *CLF*'s and *NJ*'s reasons for claiming that Kant's view of religion ultimately does more harm than good to Christianity. By contrast, anyone who has read Chapters VII and VIII of *KCR* (especially the 111 textual footnotes, most of which explicitly interact with the relevant secondary literature) cannot help but recognize that my reading of the location of the two experiments forms the very backbone of my account of how Michalson-type perplexities in *Religion* are to be resolved. Indeed, it leads naturally to Chapter IX, where I present an account of a possible biblical theology that would be quite compatible with Kant's position in *Religion* and is fully consistent with the view of Christianity that the authors themselves claim to hold.

CLF's second way of diverting attention from SRP's question about the two experiments: ridiculing KCR. Continuing to conflate the issue of Michalson-type conundrums with the issue of why *IDKR* remains silent about *KCR*'s view of the two experiments, *CLF* 208 continues: "Whenever we considered one of the very difficult conundrums forwarded by Kant's critics and consulted Palmquist's writings with a view to resolving it, we were left either in silence or with a quotation of Kant—which only begs the

question of what the text actually means.” *KCR* does, indeed, contain numerous quotes from Kant’s writings, but only to confirm arguments made independently of such quotations—as the examples quoted above (in connection with the list of *IDKR*’s seven conundrums) clearly illustrate. (Note that those quotations from *KCR* do not contain a single quote from Kant!) But the issue *CLF* is allegedly discussing on these pages is *SRP*’s question about the placement of the two experiments (his excursus on the conundrums being merely a diversion from that question); *CLF* cannot possibly maintain that *KCR* contains no relevant theory on *that* issue, because *SRP* (and even more so, the original longer version, provided above) offers plenty of clear examples of just such a theory and why it is relevant.

***CLF*’s third way of diverting attention from *SRP*’s question about the two experiments: denying what he knew to be true about *KCR*.** After offering further reflections on my use of a perspectival hermeneutic (observations I have adequately responded to in my *FP29.3* rebuttal), and poking more fun at its irrelevance to *IDKR*’s “more overtly exegetical” (*CLF* 209) concerns, *CLF* offers a third and final rationale for not saying anything in response to *SRP*’s question about how the authors would respond to *KCR*’s thoroughgoing treatment of the two experiments. He claims that “we cannot be held responsible for interacting with material that did not at the time exist” (209). A similar comment, made by *CLF* in the response he presented at the initial AAR symposium, shocked me so much that, when I was informed that the authors were hoping to publish the responses in a special issue of a journal, I refused to allow my piece to be included in the collection. When *CLF* asked why I had refused, I explained that his response had denied knowledge of what he *knew* to exist: namely, the fact that *KCR*’s view of the location of the two experiments is an important competitor to *IDKR*’s view of that issue. I reminded him that several years earlier, during a week we spent together while working on the essays that were later included in our co-edited book, *Kant and the New Philosophy of Religion* (2006), he had told me his theory of the location of the two experiments and we had discussed the matter in some detail. He recalled the discussion but stated that the position I had defended that day was not present in *KCR*. I assured him that it *was* present in *KCR* and challenged him to go through the text with me, page by page, to see who was right. We had a phone conversation lasting about two hours, during which we looked at most of the 46 uses of the word “experiment(s)” in Chapters VII and VIII of *KCR* (see *SRP* 176, note 13, for an explicit reference to these occurrences). At the end of that conversation, he openly admitted that I was right: he affirmed that *KCR* does present a detailed account of the location of the two experiments, an account that is not dependent on *KSP*’s theory of Kant’s “system of perspectives”, and that the text does interact with numerous alternative positions along the way. He promised that if I would allow a shortened version of my critical remarks to appear in the published collection, then he would revise his reply so that it contained an actual *response* to the alternative position on the two experiments, defended in *KCR*. Apparently, he subsequently forgot about that promise, because *CLF* contains no such reply.

CLF's broken promise. My reason for initially withholding *SRP* from the published collection was that I did not wish to be part of an outright deception. Sadly, the last paragraph of *CLF* reaffirms all of the points that he had conceded to be *incorrect* (during our phone conversation): he claims (209) that in *KCR* “Palmquist unpacks Kant’s two experiments as they emerge out of his wider interpretation of Kant’s philosophy. He is not arguing on the backdrop of alternative understandings of the text, but merely presenting a view of the experiments as examples of his perspectival interpretation applied to Religion. In this light, there really cannot be any competitors to his view. None of them can ever get off the ground on his reading because they must first pass muster by being run through the sieve of Palmquist’s perspectival interpretation.” In fact, *KCR* does not interpret the *location* of the two experiments as exemplifying *KSP*’s perspectival framework for interpreting Kant; rather, I frequently admit that the location of second-experiment material does *not* strictly follow a systematic rule, but is found in *various* locations throughout each of *Religion*’s four Pieces. Why CLF thinks my position bars any competitors is a mystery: *KCR* interacts with a wider range of secondary literature than *IDKR* does (though admittedly, not in the depth that Part One of *IDKR* so admirably displays for the interpreters who are addressed), and nothing in my account of the two experiments would automatically exclude *textual evidence* to the contrary. Again, CLF fully conceded these points in our personal conversation. Sadly, in the published version, *CLF* allows the deception to stand.

Further Responses to NJ

NJ reduces his response to *SRP* to “four particularly significant [types of] fallacious maneuvers” (*NJ* 217), supplemented by a footnote that lists “five less vital instances” of “errors of fact” (217n) and then (after claiming to pass over numerous other fallacies) mentions two others that allegedly involve “Begging the Question” and “Internal Contradiction” (218n). The list in that initial footnote offers a good introduction to *NJ*’s overall argumentative strategy, so I shall deal with those points first. (My *FP29.3* rebuttal already indicates my profound disapproval of such a strategy as a means of conducting a philosophical debate; my only reason for gracing *NJ*’s lack of charity with the following responses is to show that I am not merely shrinking back in the face of a superior intellect.) I shall then respond, in turn, to each of the alleged fallacies *NJ* addresses under the four subheadings: “Errors of Fact” (218-219), “Direct Attacks” (219-220), “Arguments by Half Truth” (220-221), and “Poisoning the Well” (221-222). By my count, *NJ* claims to have identified a total of at least 19 (7+12) examples of *SRP*’s illogical reasoning; with one exception (where *NJ* combines three fallacies in one), I shall devote one paragraph to respond to each of these. The bold headings at the beginning of each of the following paragraphs are direct quotes from *NJ*’s text; for the first seven paragraphs—i.e., for each complaint listed in the initial footnote (217-218n)—the bold heading is followed by a direct quote providing

NJ's entire response to *SRP*'s alleged error. *NJ*'s responses to the 12 alleged fallacies he discusses in the main text are more lengthy, so I summarize them instead of quoting them in full.

(i) The authors [CLF and NJ] consider no “Axinn-type” affirmative approaches.

NJ's response: “we address the reading of Adina Davidovich, which fits the affirmative genre of an Axinn-type approach (*IDKR*, 62–69).” My rebuttal: The approach adopted in Davidovich's book bears little (if any) resemblance to that of Axinn's. One is overtly “contemplative”, the other is explicitly oriented toward logical analysis. *SRP*'s point in mentioning Axinn was not that Axinn fits into any so-called “affirmative genre” (see my *FP29.3* rebuttal for a brief history of the “affirmative” myth!), but that Axinn thinks the tensions in Kant's *Religion* might be the best evidence that it *accurately* fits the human situation. *The main purpose of IDKR is to ease the tensions, solve the puzzles, resolve the paradoxes (etc.); so no approaches that regard these problems as the source of deep insights* (to quote *CLF* 209, used as a critique of *KCR*) “*can ever get off the ground on [IDKR's] reading because they must first pass muster by being run through the sieve of [CLF's and NJ's conundrum-driven] interpretation*”! In any case (i.e., even if *NJ* had been right about Davidovich and Axinn adopting the same genre), differing positions on such an issue obviously do not arise from any “error of fact”; they reflect merely *differences of interpretation*—something Scholastic-style debaters like *NJ*, sadly, are reluctant to admit.

(ii) The authors claim that all other interpreters truncate the Religion text. *NJ*'s

response: “we do not claim that all other interpreters truncate the Religion text, only that we do not do so when defending its coherence (*IDKR*, 234).” Rebuttal: the exact words used in *IDKR* 234, the very page that *NJ* cites, are: “When moving into the text from this vantage point [i.e., from the vantage point of the three “novel” interpretive devices they claim to have been the first to employ], we saw that the alleged philosophical failings began to quickly disappear. Gone was the temptation to truncate the text in order for it to make sense...”. This is rhetoric at its best (or, for Kant—who despised rhetoric of this sort—at its worst): *NJ* is of course correct to say *IDKR* never *explicitly* claims that *all* interpreters truncate the text; but what reader will go away from *IDKR*'s Conclusion without assuming that the passage I quote here was intended to give the *impression* that this is precisely what *CLF* and *NJ* believe? They explicitly state that their three “novel” methods succeed in doing what *none* of the other interpreters they have examined could do: namely, avoid truncating the text to make their interpretation appear to be correct. Once again, the issue of whether or not the statement in *SRP* is mistaken is clearly a matter of *interpretation*, not a black-and-white “error of fact”. If *NJ* did not want readers of *IDKR* to think that the authors were claiming to be the only interpreters who do not truncate the text, then he should have been more careful in proofreading his book's Conclusion. If he now admits that his book should not have made such a claim, then (whether or not it did make that claim) we at least agree on the main point.

(iii) The authors accuse others of making the text appear more persuasive than it actually is. *NJ*'s response: "I know of no place in *IDKR* in which we claim that other Kant interpreters are guilty of making the text appear more persuasive than it actually is." Rebuttal: *NJ* seems here to be using a rhetorical device that *CLF* also made use of, ridiculing the opponent. But he is able to do so only by removing a phrase from a sentence where the context gives that phrase an entirely different meaning. *SRP* 178 actually states is: "Without a really persuasive answer [to the specific interpretive questions raised by *KCR*'s competing interpretation of the location of the two experiments], we are left with no other alternative than to conclude that our authors inadvertently commit the very error they accuse all past interpreters of committing: making their idea more persuasive than it actually is by truncating Kant's text wherever evidence conflicts with their approach." In the passage from *IDKR* 234, quoted in the previous paragraph, *CLF* and *NJ* do exactly what I state here: they accuse other interpreters (those whose works *IDKR* has considered) of being unable to make Kant's arguments look persuasive *without truncating Kant's text*. Ironically, by truncating *my* text, *NJ* here deceives the reader in three ways about what *SRP* actually says. First, *NJ* makes it look as if I have accused *IDKR* of claiming that other interpreters make *Kant's text* look persuasive when it really is not very persuasive. It would have made no sense for me to make such a claim, because it would imply that I do not think Kant's arguments are persuasive; yet (as any reader of *KCR* would know) I *do* think Kant's arguments are persuasive. Second, *NJ* replaces my words "their idea" with "the text", thus preventing readers of *NJ* from realizing that I was referring to *IDKR's interpretation* of Kant's text, not the text of Kant's *Religion* itself. Third, by omitting my explicit reference to *IDKR's* use of the metaphor of truncation, *NJ* makes *SRP's* simple statement of fact appear to be a quite ridiculous error (one that would be worthy of their ridicule). In the end, this misrepresentation can be regarded as fortuitous (for me), since it so obviously illustrates how far *NJ* is willing to go to portray his opponent as having made an error (*any error!*), *instead of* doing the hard work of trying to understand an opposing point of view; it shows how such a strategy requires an appeal to the worst kind of pseudo-philosophical rhetoric in order to be sustained.

(iv) The authors take Kant's "metaphorical pruning" to apply only to Christianity, not to any other historical faith. *NJ's* response: "we make quite clear that Kant's "metaphorical pruning" could be applied to any historical faith, even though Kant chooses to make focus [*sic*] on NT Christianity in *Religion* (*IDKR*, 197–201)." Rebuttal: *NJ* again misunderstands the point being made by *SRP* 176: "If the authors' assumption were correct, then this metaphorical pruning would apply *only* to Christian churches, not to the practice of rational religion as such or to manifestations of other historical faiths." My point was not that the authors never *say* that Kant's claims about Christianity cannot be applied to other faiths; it was that *if we accept IDKR's account of the location of the two experiments*, then Kant would have no *first experiment basis* for applying the principles introduced in his discussion of Christianity in the Fourth Piece to any other religious tradition. It is only because the

Fourth Piece *also* contains arguments that are crucial elements of Kant's (first experiment) theory of pure rational religion that his critique of Christianity *must* also apply to other faiths. I challenged the authors to explain *how* such an application could be rationally justified, on their account of the location of the two experiments; instead of taking up this challenge (by resolving the conundrum that they manufacture, one that is nowhere to be found in Kant's text), *NJ* merely restates what Kant also clearly says. This misses the whole point of my claim that their position on the two experiments is *internally* incoherent—at least for anyone who wishes to portray Kant's critique of Christianity as worthy of assent for religious believers belonging to any and every historical faith.

(v) **We portray Palmquist as advocating mystical irrationality.** *NJ*'s response: "we distinguish the Critical Mysticism discussed by Palmquist from the uncritical mysticism of Swedenborg (*IDKR*, 21–24)." Rebuttal: referring here to *SRP* 173 (note 8), *NJ* again changes the meaning by truncating what I actually wrote. Here is *SRP*'s claim in its actual context: "In presenting the Palmquist-Wood contrast (103–104), *IDKR* never acknowledges *KCR*'s basic claim, that *Religion* bridges Kant's theoretical and practical systems. *IDKR* adopts the term coined in *KSP*, 'judicial standpoint' (see e.g., *KSP*, 62, 355–356), to describe the synthetic role *Religion* plays in Kant's architectonic; yet *IDKR*, not acknowledging this as *KCR*'s position, falsely portrays *KCR*'s interpretation of *Religion* as appealing to the symbolic mystery of mystical irrationality!" My statement in *SRP* 173n has *nothing to do* with their summary of my position in Part One of *IDKR*; the entire focus is on their claim in *IDKR*'s *Part Two*, that *KCR* adopts a "Religion as Symbol motif"; it is *this inaccurate eisegesis* (which I further clarify in the main text of *SRP*) that *IDKR* twists to fit the authors' image of *KCR* as a work that is easily dismissed, since in their opinion its only noteworthy contribution to the literature (an opinion *CLF* reiterates!) is its attempt to defend a Kantian brand of mysticism. The point of *SRP*'s footnote 8 was not that *IDKR*'s Part One misrepresents my take on mysticism and Swedenborg—*IDKR* got that part more or less right! Rather, my point was that *IDKR* misrepresents the extent to which *KCR* is *a significant precursor of their own position*, by not admitting any of the numerous respects in which the two works defend similar positions (more on this, below), and that they could accomplish this not-so-subtle sleight-of-hand trick only by falsely claiming that *KCR* reads mysticism into the text of Kant's *Religion*—a claim I never make.

(vi) **Begging the Question.** *NJ* cites this example: "Palmquist presents our conclusion that Kant's prototype is Platonic rather than Christian as a strike against us ([*SRP*] 179), which begs the question of whether we are correct." *NJ* is able to give the impression that *SRP* begs the question only because he follows his all-too-common practice of truncating the relevant text. That my reference to *IDKR*'s "Platonic" argument does not beg the question is easily seen, once one reads the last (unquoted) part of the sentence (*SRP* 179): "even though Kant there quotes frequently from the Bible." Had *IDKR* argued that Kant's argument has a Platonic flavor *in addition* to being an obvious allusion to biblical symbolism, the authors'

argument would have been far stronger. But this is not the position they defend; rather, they defend the much stronger claim that Kant's theory of the *Urbild* (best translated as "archetype", not "prototype", since the latter should be reserved for Kant's *Vorbild*) is *not in any sense* grounded in the Bible. My statement does not beg the question, therefore, but contains a challenge worthy of response: how can the authors maintain such a strong stance in the face of Kant's repeated *quotations* from the Bible, throughout his discussion of the archetype? *NJ*'s strategy of hiding behind alleged logical fallacies instead of tackling the obvious (and real) objections of his opponents is unfortunately, but telling. My criticism, properly understood, does *not* assume that *IDKR* is necessarily wrong in its claims about the Platonic nature of the archetype, so it could not possibly beg any question. It merely makes a challenge, which *NJ* avoids answering by pretending that *SRP* merely begged the question.

(vii) Internal Contradiction. *NJ* cites this example: "Palmquist at one moment attacks *IDKR*'s reading of the two experiments because the relationship between rational religion and historical faith, addressed in Book 3, belongs to the second experiment (contra *IDKR*) (176); and later Palmquist argues that the relationship between rational religion and historical faith, addressed in Book 4, belongs to the first experiment (contra *IDKR*) (177)." As the attentive reader may have come to expect by now, the alleged self-contradiction is manufactured by *NJ*. Any careful reader of Kant knows that Kant frequently uses the same terms or distinctions in conflicting ways; *KSP* explains this tendency as a result of the fact that he links every argument and every theory to a specific perspective. (When the perspective changes, so does the meaning of certain key terms.) As such, even if *SRP* had made exactly the two claims *NJ* imputes to my text, this would not necessarily amount to an internal contradiction. But this is beside the point, because *SRP* never makes such claims. My criticism of *IDKR*'s treatment of the Third Piece (which *NJ* took as an "attack", I am sorry to see) *never mentions* "the relationship between rational religion and historical faith"; rather, I merely point out how unfortunate it is that the authors rationalize away the fact that Kant discusses Christianity at great length in Division Two of the Third Piece, regarding this discussion as something that "Kant should have put in the Fourth Piece", when they could have simply taken it at face value, as evidence that this major section of the Third Piece actually "focuses on the second experiment" (*SRP* 176). Of course, taking it at face value would have required *CLF* and *NJ* to admit that their theory of the location of the two experiments has a *major* flaw. Nor does my criticism of *IDKR*'s treatment of the Fourth Piece focus on the distinction between rational religion and historical faith (a distinction I claim that *IDKR* gets more or less *right!*); rather my worry with their analysis is that, if the authors are correct about the location of the two experiments, then "the distinction between true and false service of God, made in [the Fourth Piece's] title, *would apply only to Christians*. This distinction plays an indispensable (though regulative, hypothetical) role in completing Kant's system of rational religion" (*SRP* 177). All that is accomplished by *NJ*'s appeal to an alleged internal contradiction in *SRP* is to cover up *NJ*'s unwillingness to read a criticism with the charitable eye that grants the possibility

that it might contain some insight into the truth.

Following the initial footnote, the main text of *NJ* discusses “four particularly significant fallacious maneuvers”: the four subsections then examine (I) four alleged “Errors of Fact”, (II) five alleged “Direct Attacks”, (III) two alleged “Arguments by Half Truth”, and (IV) numerous (but one main) instance(s) of alleged “Poisoning the Well”. I shall respond to each of these 12 supposed fallacious claims in a separate paragraph, with the bold heading (as above) consisting in each case of a direct quote from *NJ*’s description.

(I.A) First “Error of Fact”: the authors of *IDKR* claim that their reading of *Religion* is unique because it is holistic and linear. I have already responded to this point in my comments on *CLF*, above. Here I add only two additional comments. First, *NJ* claims that Part One of *IDKR* “presents alternative readings in as linear a manner as possible” (*NJ* 218), yet this is not only a surprisingly inaccurate assessment of Part One’s approach, but irrelevant even if it were accurate. For example, *IDKR*’s Part One discusses the arguments in *only one* of *KCR*’s 21 chapters/appendices, and makes no attempt to discuss the arguments in the order that *KCR* presents them (this being, I assume, the core feature of a “linear” exegesis). The same is true of their treatment of most, if not *all*, other interpreters: only by being highly selective *instead of* presenting linear accounts of each scholars’ positions can the authors defend the series of questionable “motifs” that form the backbone of their approach. Yet this is all irrelevant, because my question about their use of the word “linear” was about other scholars’ portrayals of *Kant*’s arguments, not *IDKR*’s portrayal of other scholars’ arguments! Second, even if *NJ* (and *CLF*) were correct about my reading of their use of the word “linear”, *SRP*’s error would not be one of “fact” but one of *interpretation*. To conflate these two is a telltale sign of an uncharitable critic, someone who employs what I have called (in Chapter IV of *The Tree of Philosophy*) “the fallacy fallacy” (the fallacy whereby one believes an opponent has been proved wrong, or one feels justified in ignoring an opposing viewpoint, merely because the opponent can be accused of having committed a fallacy). In short, *NJ*’s response to my question about what they mean by “linear” is both uninformative and evasive.

(I.B) Second “Error of Fact”: the authors do not consider alternatives to their reading of the two experiments. *NJ*’s response: “we do consider the reading of Hare and Reardon, which presumes that the first experiment consists of *Groundwork* and the second *Critique* (*IDKR*, 69–82, 114–119). This read has a commonsense appeal to it, since these works present *Kant*’s moral philosophy, and as we show in *IDKR*, this reading is able to handle a number of conundrums (*IDKR*, 73–82).” This is the most surprising of all *NJ*’s allegations, given the history of the evolution of *SRP*. For in the first version of *SRP* (see above)—and also in the shortened draft that I submitted when the collection of papers was originally submitted to *The Journal of Religion* (eventually rejected)—I explicitly referred to the fact that *IDKR* addresses an alternative view of the two experiments, even naming Hare and Reardon. The statement in question comes at the end of footnote 20 in the long version of

SRP, shown above. That footnote became footnote 13 in the version of *SRP* that I submitted to CLF and NJ for their symposium publication. During the process of re-editing the collection for *Faith and Philosophy*, I was asked to shorten my paper further. When I submitted my shortened essay, in addition to deleting some text, I put some other text in green type, stating that *I regard the green passages as essential*, but that if *even more* deletions were deemed absolutely required, then these green texts would be the least harmful to delete. Someone, at some stage (I assume either CLF or NJ), deleted those passages in green, *which included my statement about Hare and Reardon!* Clearly, the authors *knew* that this footnote did exist in all previous drafts, yet Jacobs cites my lack of reference to Hare and Reardon as an allegedly crucial “Errors of Fact”! During the proof stage for *FP29.2*, I explained this situation to the editor and, recognizing that adding back the *entire* portion of my deleted text would make Jacobs’ reply on this point look ridiculous, I asked permission to add back in a *general summary* of what I had previously written, but without explicitly mentioning Hare and Reardon. The text I hoped wanted to add to my note 13 (in *FP29.2*) was this: “Our authors do compare their thesis with a weak and obviously inadequate alternative, whereby the first experiment is identified with Kant’s moral philosophy and the second experiment with the *entirety* of *Religion* (see 115f).” I hoped in this way to “save face” for all concerned, so that I could reply by merely dismissing NJ’s allegation as an innocent oversight. However, the editor rejected this change on the grounds that it related too closely to one of *NJ*’s objections. This leaves me with no choice other than to assume that *NJ* has here knowingly fabricated a false allegation. That is, knowing that I had acknowledged *IDKR*’s reference to Hare and Reardon, because he and/or CLF decided to delete it (and presumably read it before deciding!), *NJ* then turned around and pretended that I had never acknowledged it. It is a sad day, indeed, when scholarly “debate” reduces itself to such ploys.

(I.C) Third “Error of Fact”: the authors provide no rationale for their reading of the two experiments. Once again, *SRP* never makes this claim. Quite to the contrary, *SRP* refers explicitly to several of the very points *NJ* cites in defending *IDKR* against this alleged (but bogus) criticism. What *SRP* actually claims is that the authors do not defend their reading of the two experiments *against the strongest available counter-evidence*, as presented in Part Three of *KCR*. *SRP* details some of that counter-evidence quite explicitly, in the hope that CLF and/or *NJ* might use their replies as a golden opportunity to fill the lacuna left by their book (*as CLF promised to do, in our phone conversation prior to my agreement that my essay be published*). For example, *SRP* 175 writes: “The section-by-section exegesis in *KCR*’s Chapter VIII carefully analyses how the whole *Religion* text weaves the two experiments together like two sides of a tapestry, so that characteristics of both experiments are visible in each Piece. The details presented in *KCR* demonstrate what I can only summarize here: the second experiment comes into focus toward the end of each Piece.” Instead of using his *FP29.2* essay to *strengthen* the position advanced in *IDKR*, by responding to a major alternative that *IDKR* itself never even mentions under any guise, *NJ*

(echoing *CLF*) merely pretends that the criticism was something that it obviously was not, and that the *KCR* alternative simply doesn't exist. Once again, anyone who has read the relevant material would have to draw the conclusion that NJ is setting up straw men because he is unable to respond adequately to the actual challenge being presented.

(I.D) Fourth “Error of Fact”: the authors do not address Kant’s use of scripture as potential counter-evidence to their reading of the two experiments. *NJ*’s strategy here is the same as in the two previous falsified “facts”: he puts into my mouth words and sentiments that cannot be found anywhere in *SRP*. *IDKR* obviously *does* “address Kant’s use of scripture”; by pretending that I claimed otherwise, *NJ* gives himself an excuse for merely repeating a few of *IDKR*’s claims. (His entire response is merely a long quote from *IDKR* 117-118.) Again, the point of *SRP*’s comments on *IDKR*’s take on Kant’s use of Scripture was that the authors do not address *the chief alternative explanation* of Kant’s usage—namely, the one defended in *KCR*. *NJ* actually concedes that *this fact* is true: “we do not consider Palmquist’s reading of the two experiments” (*NJ* 219). *NJ* then repeats *CLF*’s rationale for ignoring *KCR*’s position, which I have already responded to, above.

(II.A) First three “Direct Attacks”: Book 4 adds something crucial to the first experiment. *NJ*’s only explanation of what he means by a “Direct Attack” is that it entails “making an unsupported assertion” (*NJ* 219). Thus, his claim here is that *SRP* “does not tell us what this something [essential to Book 4] is” (*NJ* 220). Ironically, in the next sentence, *NJ* admits that I *do* tell the reader what this “essential” element is: “he asserts that the distinction between true and false service to God is a ‘crucial component of Kant’s system of rational religion’” (*NJ* 220)! The problem, *NJ* asserts (without supporting it with evidence!), is that this is just another example of a “direct attack” (which, apparently, is not an attack at all, but an assertion as to how to interpret Kant’s text). *NJ* disagrees with my claim (without supporting his disagreement with any evidence), but merely stating: “Palmquist does not defend the claim, and I do not know any reason to accept it.” But I *do* defend the claim at great length, in Part Three of *KCR*, and if *NJ* (or *CLF*) had read that text, they would have known this. It is *not* inappropriate in academic discourse to refer to previously published works, even if that work is one’s own; it *is* inappropriate to pretend that no such work exists, merely because one has chosen not to read it, when in fact it does exist. I will not repeat all the arguments given in *KCR* (and elsewhere, and not only by me) in favor of viewing the distinction between true and false service as being a distinction that applies to *all* religions (and therefore, to rational religion as such), and not only to Christianity. If *NJ* and *CLF* are willing to consider evidence counter to their position, they should know by now where to find it. The real meaning of *NJ*’s response at this point appears to be this: *I don’t want to read KCR, because it might present me with weaknesses in the position IDKR defends, and you can’t make me read it just by pointing out where its arguments might be superior!*

(II.B) Fourth “Direct Attack”: Kant’s word “test” (*prüfen*) carries a distinctive meaning that is irrelevant to the two experiments. This is, indeed, a claim *SRP* makes.

And it is true that *SRP* 175n offers no defense of the claim; after all, the word limit was very strict, and this point was raised only in a footnote! However, it is not true that the claim was made without a sufficient basis. I have conducted a thorough word study of Kant's use of *prüfen* and how it differs from his use of *Versuch* in his *Religion* text. The results of this study will become apparent in my (forthcoming) *Commentary* on Kant's text. By contrast, *NJ*'s response amounts to a mere counter-assertion (*NJ* 220): "It is not clear to me that the meaning of these terms are unrelated, or that either is so technical that Kant is bound to invoke the given word and only that word when discussing the particular aspect of his project to which it refers." But this response places the responsibility for proof on the wrong party. It is *IDKR* that has asserted that Kant's use of "test" is a (indeed *the*) crucial signal for his modulation from the first experiment to the second, so the onus of proof is on the authors, once it is pointed out (yes, even if it is merely *asserted*), that *Kant never refers to the concept of an "experiment" (Versuch) in this passage, and that the word "test" carries a distinctive meaning that is never associated with the two experiments anywhere else in Kant's text.* This is a very serious *potential* problem with *IDKR*'s rationale for their interpretation of the location of the second experiment. There is no fallacy involved in pointing out such a problem without providing detailed evidence to support the (obvious, grammatical) facts. It is a fallacy to refuse to address the issue merely because one is "not clear" about whether or not the two terms are really "unrelated". *Show us the relation*, if you want your position to stand! That is the challenge *SRP* gave to the authors of *IDKR*; and as usual, they pretended like the challenge was illegitimate, instead of meeting it head on with a concrete response.

(II.C) Fifth "Direct Attack": Contra *IDKR*, Palmquist claims that converted individuals corrupt one another. This issue has to do with *IDKR*'s claim that Kant, near the beginning of the Third Piece, argues that converted people will be corrupted if they remain in the company of *unconverted* people and that this is Kant's rationale for requiring the formation of a church. *NJ* offers no response other than this (*NJ* 220): "once again, Palmquist provides no evidence for this counter reading." But this allegation is blatantly false: *SRP* attaches a footnote to the very sentence *NJ* refers to here, and the footnote (in addition to citing the relevant pages of *IDKR*) directs the reader to two separate published writings, where *detailed arguments are presented to defend the view that Kant is explaining why converted persons will corrupt each other, if they do not bind together.* What I claim in *SRP* 179 is that Kant's argument "makes sense only if" interpreted in this way. That is a *reason* for rejecting *IDKR*'s position; it is not a bare assertion. Had *NJ* wanted to *defend* his position, he would have needed to show how Kant's argument as he reads it could also "make sense". If *only* unconverted persons corrupt converted persons, then converted persons would be safe, provided they associate only with other converted persons; there would be no requirement whatsoever for them to form an *organization* consisting of all converted persons; their loose association could remain entirely informal, since *there would be no naturally corrupting tendency in their casual association.* By contrast, the requirement to build a church arises

only out of Kant's claim that, while it is obvious that associating with evil-hearted persons might corrupt a good person's disposition, *even the converted persons* will corrupt each other's dispositions, if they do not construct a church. Again, Kant's argument would *make no sense* if the position *IDKR* presents (as an undefended assertion!) were correct: saying "converted persons need to form a society of converted persons because *unconverted* persons will corrupt them" merely begs the question of whether or not converted persons will also corrupt each other's dispositions—a point *IDKR* does not address, but Kant does.

(III.A) First "Argument by Half Truth": [The authors of *IDKR*] say that the entire Book 4 is the second experiment. *SRP* does, indeed, make this claim, in an effort to point out the apparent inconsistency of the fact that "'*IDKR*...admits the turn to the second experiment actually occurs only *after*...the introductory section" (*SRP* 178). In response, *NJ* 220 admits that *IDKR* sees the opening pages of the Fourth Piece as being highly relevant to the first experiment, but claims that the authors never meant to imply that the second experiment consists of the *whole* of the Fourth Piece. He excuses this admitted exception by saying that the first few pages of the Fourth Piece are but "a preliminary word", relating to "a dispute in his day concerning the precise relationship between reason and revelation" (*NJ* 221). My rebuttal here is twofold, and quite different from most of my other comments here. First, *thank you*, *NJ*, for actually responding to the issue that I raised in *SRP*! With this kind of response, a scholarly discussion might stand some chance of making progress, instead of just spinning wheels with false and unkind accusations! But your admission that these opening pages are not yet part of Kant's defense of the second experiment makes it at least *possible* that the opening distinction, between true and false service of God, might be part of the first experiment, so I wonder why you (previously) rejected that possibility without so much as offering a counter-argument? What would be wrong with seeing that distinction as an essential feature of rational religion? Well, let me answer the question for you: if it is an essential feature, then *other* (subsequent) portions of the Fourth Piece (e.g., those that deal more with the "reason" than with the "revelation" side of that distinction) might also end up looking very much like first-experiment elements, and that is a possibility that is ruled out in advance by the presupposition you bring to the text. In other words, you can't countenance what the text actually shows us, because this would destroy one of your cherished "novel" interpretive assumptions. Second, in what sense does my challenge here constitute a "half truth"? This is just an unkind, rhetorical trick to try to make readers look down on one's interlocutor. What statement did I make that *leaves out* a crucial truth that *IDKR* clearly presented, or that *puts forward as the whole story* something that *IDKR* clearly presented as only part of the story? As I see it, our discussion on this point has made some helpful progress, which could continue, but not if the discussants are going to be calling each other names, as you have done throughout your reply to *SRP*.

(III.B) Second "Argument by Half Truth": [The authors of *IDKR*] understand "natural religion" and the "pure religion of reason" (identified in the Second Preface) to

refer to the same thing. *SRP* does attribute to *IDKR* the claim that these two terms are synonymous, and does regard it as an error that the authors “cleverly” pass off as if it were “self-evident” (*SRP* 175), and *NJ* admits that *IDKR* does take this position. So, as with the previous point in this subsection of *NJ*, progress seems possible, since we are at least talking about the same thing! *NJ*’s sole response is that other interpreters make the same assumption, so the assumption that they are synonyms is not clever, but “common” (*NJ* 221). *NJ*’s one and only citation is Allen Wood’s essay, “Kant’s Deism” (p.5). However, this citation is erroneous. Nowhere in that essay (not on p.5, where these terms do not even appear, or anywhere else in that essay) does Wood ever identify natural religion with pure rational religion; and he would not do so, for in the opening section of the Fourth Piece, Kant clearly *distinguishes* between these two terms. So, the ball is now back in *NJ*’s court, if he wishes to continue taking this challenge seriously: you have accused me of publishing a “half truth”, yet the evidence you cited is itself false; so can you cite a reputable Kant scholar who *really does* treat these terms as synonymous? Incidentally, the parenthetical words quoted (from *NJ*) in the above heading could be taken, quite misleadingly, to mean that *Kant himself* identifies “natural religion” and “pure religion of reason” in the *Second Preface*. He does nothing of the kind. As a charitable reader, I assume that *NJ*’s meaning is that Kant *mentions* “pure religion of reason” (but *not* “natural religion”) in the second Preface. If that is his claim, then *NJ* is correct (but is merely repeating what I already wrote). My caution here is simply that his phrasing is ambiguous, so the reader who has not checked the text could easily misread *NJ* to be claiming that Kant himself has *identified* (i.e., stated the synonymy of) these two terms in the *Second Preface*. Kant does not do so there, nor anywhere, because the two terms are quite different! So my challenge here remains in force: if the terms “natural religion” and “pure rational religion” are *not* synonymous for Kant, then *IDKR* badly misreads the implications of the opening page of the Second Preface, and since this is one of the primary basis for one of their main arguments for their view of the position of the second experiment, their view now looks considerably weaker.

(IV.A) General examples of “Poisoning the Well”: numerous instances of this throughout [*SRP*], particularly in his portrayal of what the authors of *IDKR* are doing at various stages. It is worth noting at the outset that “Poisoning the well” (according to *Wikipedia*) “is a rhetorical device where adverse information about a target is pre-emptively presented to an audience, with the intention of discrediting or ridiculing everything that the target person is about to say.” Now, to support the claim that *SRP* has “numerous instances of” well-poisoning “tactics”, *NJ* lists three examples. I fail to see how any of these can poison any well that was previously clean: *SRP* does indeed use the expressions “rationalize” (176), “downplay” (177), and “systematically...overlook” (179), as *NJ* 221 claims, but don’t scholars use evocative words like this all the time, without causing *offense* to their interlocutor—i.e., without having the opponent impute the motive that such words were meant as a form of *ridicule* that would give them an unfair advantage in the argument? (Note,

for example, that *CLF* uses both “downplaying” [207] and “overlooked” [197] in a very similar way. Was *CLF* *ridiculing* Michalson and others when he used those words in his critical reply? Not in my estimation.) *We are not junior high students, fighting on the playground, after all!* Now, *that* comment might be accused of well-poisoning—especially if I had portrayed the authors of *IDKR* as if they were school-children bickering over (let’s say) whose shoes are fancier. But I never adopted such a demeaning attitude. I *argued* that (for example) *IDKR* 185 *must* “rationalize why Division Two [of the Second Piece] says so much about Christianity”, because according to the authors’ presupposition about the location of the experiments, *no such discussion should occur there*. The word “rationalize” is not in any sense a ridicule of their argument, but merely an objective description of what scholars tend to do when faced with clear and substantive evidence that contradicts their position: they tend to explain away (or rationalize the presence of) the contrary evidence—precisely what the reader of *IDKR* 185 will find in the text at that point. If *NJ* thinks rationalizing is well-poisoning, then he should have thought of a better theory of how to explain the location of the second experiment, so that he wouldn’t have had to allow rationalized excuses to take the place of argument in places where Kant’s text clearly contradicts his presuppositions.

(IV.B) Main example of “Poisoning the Well”: *IDKR* advances a reading of *Religion* very similar to [*KCR*’s], but does not acknowledge it. *NJ* 221-222 briefly (and correctly) summarizes the nature of *SRP*’s claim on this point, that (a) *IDKR* sometimes takes *KCR* out of context and thereby misinterprets its position, but then defends the very position that *KCR* actually defends, and that (b) *KCR* “directly influenced *IDKR*’s understanding of the first experiment” but without acknowledging it. But surprisingly, instead of giving even a single example of how *SRP* substantiated these claims, *NJ* devotes the remainder of his response entirely to the task of summarizing “some of the most central insights that set *IDKR* apart as unique” (*NJ* 222). With the possible exception of *IDKR*’s interpretation of the role of the archetype in conversion, I would not want to dispute *NJ*’s claim that *KCR* had no influence whatsoever on any of the unique features he lists, because I think *IDKR* is either wrong or inconclusive on each and every point *NJ* lists! If *NJ* wants to be fair, then he should take this news as an indication that he has misunderstood the criticism that he claims to be responding to. If he has taken offense at (i.e., if he feels that the “well” of constructive debate has been “poisoned” by) a position that *he does not understand*, then perhaps the poisoning lies more in *NJ*’s imputation of a meaning that is not there, rather than in my actual meaning. The long version of *SRP* (see above, for the whole text) gives numerous examples of specific places where *IDKR* quotes *KCR* out of context, criticizes the position that is falsely imputed to *KCR* on the basis of the misquote, then affirms the position that *KCR* actually defends. Since this is the only version that *NJ* had access to, prior to writing the first version of *NJ* (the version he read at the AAR conference), it seems reasonable to assume that he read it. So, if he has once read the evidence but remains unwilling to acknowledge it, then it would be foolish for me to assume that he will pay attention to it any more seriously, if I were to repeat

it here. As Confucius is reputed to have said, “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.” I refuse to be fooled into thinking that a debate with NJ is a debate over “clean water”, when the mean-spirited nature of *NJ* has made it all too clear that NJ is not interested in conducting a friendly, constructive debate over the issues. (When I first received the proofs for *FJ29.2*, which was the first time I ever saw the final version of *CLF* and *NJ*, I almost immediately wrote to NJ asking if we could conduct a friendly exchange on the issues he had misunderstood, and whether or not we could agree on some changes to the proofs that would prevent unnecessary offense. His *entire* response to my email was “quod scripsi, scripsi”). In spite of the all-too-obvious fact that NJ is not interested in conducting a rational, fair-minded debate over the theories he has defended in print, I will risk being called a fool by ending this essay with an outline of a few examples of points where *KCR* and *IDKR* agree, thus demonstrating the accuracy of my original claim. (Note this point of logic: if P asserts that “some of J’s claims agree with P’s claims”, and if J then responds by asserting “none of J’s six most important claims agree with claims P has ever made”, J has not proved that P’s initial assertion is false. Perhaps what P had in mind was not related to J’s six most important claims.) The following is just a sampling of the evidence I had in mind, when I claimed that *IDKR* and *KCR* share many overlapping claims that the authors did not acknowledge, and which *CLF*, at least, knew about before he ever starting working with NJ on *IDKR*.

(A) Examples of *IDKR* misconstruing *KCR*. Without merely repeating what I have already argued in this Appendix and in the long version of *SRP* (above), I present here and in the next paragraph a few additional examples illustrating the foregoing point, as raised in the shorter (*FP29.2*) version, which *NJ* noted but responded to by citing irrelevant facts. A good example of *IDKR*’s tendency to misconstrue *KCR* comes when *CLF* 207 writes: “the prototype is Jesus in moral terms for Palmquist”. This wholly misrepresents my position, because *KCR* portrays the archetype (what *IDKR* misleadingly calls a “prototype”—though this is not the point of my present comment) as a component of the *first* experiment; *Jesus* relates only to Kant’s *second* experiment, insofar as it raises the question of the degree to which Jesus matches that archetypal ideal. Despite his promise on our long phone call (see above), *CLF* appears not to have taken the time to read *KCR*’s Part Three. Had he done so, he would have seen clear resonances between the understanding of the archetype that he learned from me, while he was in Hong Kong (i.e., the understanding portrayed in *KCR*) and many of the claims made about it in *IDKR*. See point (4), below, for details.

(B) Significant points of agreement/overlap between *KCR* and *IDKR*. These include: (1) *CLF* 203 uses the term “bare reason”, suggesting (at least implicitly) some agreement with *KCR*’s argument regarding the proper translation of *bloßen* in the title of *Religion*; (2) *IDKR*’s use of “judicial standpoint” (noted above) to refer to the basic perspective adopted by the third *Critique*, a technical term I introduced in various early publications and assume throughout *KCR*; (3) I profoundly agree with all that is said in the central paragraph of *CLF*

201, because these points constitute a central thrust of the main argument in *KCR*; (4) *IDKR*'s portrayal of the prototype as a metaphysically substantive affirmation closely resembles the position defended in *KCR* 161-163, 207-216—though the authors' eventual conclusion, that the prototype is essentially a Platonic Idea, does differ markedly from *KCR*'s view of the Second Piece as immensely significant for a Christian doctrine of incarnation. For a more thoroughgoing defense of *KCR*'s position on this issue, see my essay, "Could Kant's Jesus Be God?", *International Philosophical Quarterly* 52.4 (forthcoming, December 2012).