

Paul Lodge and Benjamin Crowe: Leibniz, Bayle, and Locke on Faith and Reason

Abstract: This paper illuminates Leibniz's conception of faith and its relationship to reason. Given Leibniz's commitment to natural religion, we might expect his view of faith to be deflationary. We show, however, that Leibniz's conception of faith involves a significant non-rational element. We approach the issue by considering the way in which Leibniz positions himself between the views of two of his contemporaries, Bayle and Locke. Unlike Bayle, but like Locke, Leibniz argues that reason and faith are in conformity. Nevertheless, in contrast to the account that he finds in Locke's *Essay*, Leibniz does not reduce faith to a species of reasonable belief. Instead, he insists that, while faith must be grounded in reason, true or divine faith also requires a supernatural infusion of grace.

Page 575

Our aim in this paper is to illuminate Leibniz's conception of faith and its relationship to reason. Given Leibniz's obvious commitment to natural religion, we might expect his view of faith to be deflationary. This suggestion receives prima facie support from the fact that Leibniz introduces his *Theodicy* with an essay entitled: a "Preliminary Dissertation on the Conformity of Faith with Reason."¹¹ Appearances notwithstanding, however, we shall show that Leibniz's conception of faith involves a significant non-rational element. Although he claims that it is always the case that objects of faith can be supported by the reasons of argument, Leibniz allows that the faithful need have no internal access to those reasons.

Page 575

Our discussion will not provide an exhaustive account of these aspects of Leibniz's thought. Instead, we shall approach his understanding of the issue by considering the way in which Leibniz explicitly positions himself between the views of two of his illustrious contemporaries, Pierre Bayle and John Locke. Doing so will allow us to emphasize some hitherto ignored aspects of Leibniz's view.

Page Break 576

In the first section of the paper, we discuss Leibniz's response to Bayle's claim that reason and faith are in direct opposition. Unlike Bayle, but like Locke, Leibniz argues that reason and faith are in conformity. In contrast to the account that he finds in Locke's *Essay*, however, Leibniz does not reduce faith to a species of reasonable belief. Instead, he insists that, while it is necessary for faith to be grounded in reason, true or divine faith also requires a supernatural infusion of grace.

I.

We begin with a preliminary characterization of the terms "faith" and "reason" based on the distinction that Leibniz draws between the two in PD §1. Here Leibniz introduces the notion of faith as follows: "the object of faith is the truth, which God has revealed in an extraordinary way" (PD §1/GP VI 49). Although this statement does not tell us explicitly what faith is, it does tell us that, for Leibniz, faith has the truth for its object. We take this claim to be equivalent to the claim that faith is a propositional attitude, like belief or desire.¹² Thus, we might have faith that Jesus rose from the dead, or that Moses received the Ten Commandments directly from God. Moreover, in the above citation, Leibniz appears to rule out the possibility of faith that is directed toward a falsehood. Considered in this way, having faith is more like knowing than believing. Furthermore, this citation teaches us something about the way in which the one who has

faith is directed toward truth: Leibniz holds that this direction happens through the immediate and extraordinary action of God. Leibniz will often denominate the things that are revealed with the term "mysteries," since they have characteristics that place them beyond the comprehension of human beings.¹³

In addition to what he says about faith, however, we also need to examine what Leibniz has to say about reason in PD §1:

Page Break 577

Reason is the linking together of truths, but particularly (when it is compared with faith) of those to which the human mind can attain naturally without being helped by the light of faith.... It is in the same sense that one sometimes opposes reason and experience. Reason, consisting in the linking together of truths, has the right to join up those with which experience has furnished it, to draw mixed conclusions. But pure and unadorned reason, as distinct from experience, has only to do with truths that are independent of the senses (PD §1/GP VI 49).

Here Leibniz uses the term "reason" to refer to a mental process, the connecting together of truths by inference. We might prefer the term "reasoning," reserving "reason" for the capacity to engage in reasoning. Furthermore, it seems likely that reason could link falsehoods as well as truths. Nonetheless, Leibniz's intention is clear enough. He also observes that, in the present context, "when it is compared with faith," reason should not be understood as the linking together of truths that are derived from experience, including articles of faith. Indeed, Leibniz claims that "pure and unadorned" reason links together nothing but truths that are known a priori.

II.

In PD, Leibniz defends the use of reason in matters of religion against those who hold that reason and religion "appear as adversaries" (GP VI 39). It is clear that he regards Bayle among this number. From its title alone, we might expect to find Leibniz defending the rationality of religion in PD. Nevertheless, we should not expect PD to present a definitive account of Leibniz's views on the issue; to fulfill the purpose for which it was written, PD need only deflect the arguments of those (in particular Bayle) who would rule out the project of the *Theodicy* on the assumption of an irresolvable conflict between faith and reason. As we shall see later, however, there is a good deal that remains to be said about the relation between these two, even after this deflection has been accomplished.

The position Leibniz attributes to Bayle in PD has two components. On the one hand, Bayle regards reason and faith as standing in an irresolvable conflict; on the other hand, he embraces the articles of faith that have been handed down to us in Scripture.¹⁴ According to Leibniz, Bayle adopts a

Page Break 578

form of fideism by adhering to these two components. Leibniz, for his part, objects to this fideism. He believes that if, ex hypothesi, faith were indeed in conflict with reason, it is faith that should be jettisoned and not reason. Nevertheless, Leibniz thinks that Bayle is mistaken in his claim to have found a conflict between faith and reason. The aim of this section will be to illuminate Leibniz's views on the relationship between faith and reason as they emerge in his critique of Bayle. For the most part, our discussion will draw upon passages from PD, including those passages in which Leibniz quotes Bayle directly, though we shall also consider some of Bayle's other writings so as to provide further elaboration of, and support for, the views that Leibniz attributes to him. Here, as

throughout, we shall not attempt to present a definitive account of the view of Leibniz's opponent. It is an interesting question as to whether Leibniz's readings are accurate or if they are merely sketches that he uses as a foil. Unfortunately, however, we do not have the space to examine such issues here.

Leibniz objects to Bayle's position in a number of ways. Sometimes his concerns appear to be pragmatic. Observing that there are those who reject the transitivity of identity in order to uphold the doctrine of the Trinity, he notes that "one must take care never to abandon the necessary and eternal truths for the sake of upholding Mysteries, for fear that the enemies of religion seize upon such an occasion for decrying both religion and Mysteries" (PD §22/GP VI 64). Moreover, he objects to Bayle's suggestion that one may uphold faith in light of insoluble objections:

[W]hat other legitimate reason for rejecting an opinion can one find, if an invincible opposing argument is not such a one? And what means shall one have thereafter for demonstrating the falsity, and even the absurdity of any opinion? (PD §58/GP VI 83).

Elsewhere in PD, however, it becomes clear that Leibniz is unwilling to base his opposition on pragmatic considerations alone. In PD §23, for

Page Break 579

example, he insists that "once a dogma has been disputed and refuted by reason... one may say that nothing is easier to understand, nor more obvious, than its absurdity" (PD §23/GP VI 64).¹⁵ Leibniz thinks that a refutation which results in demonstrated falsehood cannot be ignored. As we saw above, in PD §1, Leibniz holds that faith takes the truth as its object. Thus, there is no room for faith in matters which have been shown to be false. For Leibniz, anything of this kind can only have been deemed an article of faith by mistake. He also claims that, in cases where a demonstration of falsehood has been discovered, we are compelled to reject the dogma in question.

Given Leibniz's commitment to the existence of inviolable truths that are accessible to the human mind, Bayle's position that faith always triumphs, even in the face of invincible reasons, cannot stand. For if in fact Bayle has discovered demonstrations that show the falsity of purported matters of faith, then, in Leibniz's view, they must be rejected. Faith simply cannot be in direct opposition to reason and its deliverances in this way.

Clearly, then, Leibniz rejects the view that faith is sustainable in the face of demonstrable objections. Faith must conform to reason in at least this minimal sense. Nevertheless, the greatest part of Leibniz's efforts in PD is directed toward showing that Bayle is mistaken in thinking that reason is opposed to faith at all. Leibniz identifies two different ways in which Bayle tries to support his claim that faith is rationally indefensible. The first of these ways is found in those passages of Bayle which argue that particular articles of faith can be refuted by rational argument; the second is presented in passages where Bayle constructs a more general argument against the conformity of faith and reason, one which is based on the claim that articles of faith are "above reason."¹⁶ We shall not concern ourselves with this latter argument here, for despite its inherent interest, it does not help us to understand Leibniz's notion of faith so much as it addresses the issue of what it means to entertain and to rationally defend propositions whose contents are mysterious or "above reason."¹⁷

Page Break 580

According to Leibniz, Bayle holds that there are articles of faith which are defeated by rational arguments.¹⁸ Unfortunately, Leibniz does not provide us with any concrete examples from Bayle's writings that would substantiate this claim. In the *Dictionary*

article, "Simonides," however, Bayle himself offers the following:

And observe that there is no hypothesis against which reason furnishes more objections than against that of the Gospel. The mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, his death for the expiation of our sins, the propagation of the sin of Adam, the eternal predestination of a small number of persons to the happiness of heaven, the eternal condemnation of almost all mankind to the endless torments of hell, the extinction of free will since the Fall of Adam, and the like, are matters that would have thrown Simonides into greater doubts than all that his imagination suggested to him (*Selections*, 280).

This passage suggests that Bayle regards reason as providing objections to all the mysteries of the Christian faith. Certainly, this is the position to which Leibniz responds.

When Leibniz observes in PD §39 that "reason is a gift of God, even as faith is," and therefore that "contention among them [sc. reason and faith] would cause God to contend against God" (GP VI 73), he offers a sweeping refutation of Bayle's claim that faith and reason are in conflict. Although the position Leibniz announces in this statement provides him with enough reasons to reject Bayle's claim, he does not rest content with this approach.¹⁹ Instead, Leibniz proceeds to respond directly to each of the considerations Bayle offers as support for his position. Here Leibniz's discussion takes direct account of two different kinds of reasons that opponents to faith may claim to provide, namely, those that are presented in the form of demonstrative arguments, and those which are merely probable.

Page 580

Leibniz takes seriously Bayle's claim that there are demonstrations that refute articles of faith. He admits that "if there is such an argument against our thesis we must say that the falsity of the thesis is demonstrated, and that it is impossible for us to have reasons sufficient to prove it; otherwise

Page Break 581

two contradictories would be true at once" (PD §25/GP VI 65).¹¹⁰ Despite this admission, however, Leibniz does not believe that the faithful are left in this position, since he is committed to the view that there are no such objections.

As one way in which to answer Bayle's claim that an article of faith admits of demonstrative refutation, Leibniz suggests that the force of the argument has been overstated; what Bayle presents as a demonstration is in fact merely probable. Leibniz takes this approach when contending with Bayle over the problem of evil. Thus when Bayle claims to possess a demonstration proving that a good God could not have produced this world, according to Leibniz he does so only because he seems "to demand that God be justified in some such manner as that commonly used for pleading the cause of a man accused before his judge" (PD §32/GP VI 68-9).¹¹¹ For Leibniz, however, a careful consideration of the issue should lead one to recognize that

when one has foreseen the evil and has not prevented it although it seems that one could have done so with ease, and one has even done things that have facilitated it, it does not follow on that account *necessarily* [emphasis in the original] that one is accessory thereto. It is only a very strong presumption, which commonly takes the place of

truth in human affairs (PD §33/GP VI 69).

Leibniz draws the term “presumption” here from jurisprudence. Something is said to be presumed “which must provisionally pass for truth in case the contrary is not proved” (ibid.), and it is clear from this definition that an argument which involves presumption cannot be demonstrative.¹¹² Thus, arguments such as Bayle’s which implicate God in the existence of evil are at best only probable.

Furthermore, even in cases where the arguments in question are not merely probable arguments in disguise, Leibniz is still confident that there should be no problem. For if an objection is demonstrative, it must follow from premises whose truth is proven in the same manner, or which are

Page Break 582

known a priori. And, although he does not provide any examples in the *Theodicy*, Leibniz insists that it should be easy to discover that these conditions will never hold in the case of any supposed demonstrative objection to an article of faith.¹¹³

As Marcelo Dascal has noted, Leibniz’s strategy in these cases is a defensive one.¹¹⁴ So too here, when addressing Bayle’s challenge, Leibniz responds by offering some general strategies for disarming the force of individual attacks. In effect, when Leibniz asserts that there are no demonstrative conclusions which contradict faith, he takes up not just the challenge of Bayle, but also a challenge of his own, one that seeks to show that the reasons which support faith are stronger than those which oppose it. For Leibniz, then, every putative demonstration will turn out either to be logically flawed and have no force at all, or to be a probable argument in disguise—and yet, one finds with him no suggestion of a general argument which shows that all putative demonstrative arguments may be ignored. Despite this fact, however, Leibniz’s posture is a confident one. Indeed, one might say, it is an overly confident one.

Although Leibniz thinks that some “demonstrative” objections can be shown to involve logical flaws, it is clear that the success of his overall strategy is predicated on success of the strategy that he invokes to deal with probable objections. Part of his response to Bayle involves showing that many arguments which are offered as demonstrations turn out to be merely probable. The question that naturally arises at this point is why these arguments pose no problem once they have been seen in their true light.

Leibniz recognizes that there are successful arguments which show that there is some probability that articles of faith are false. Given the stated view in PD §42 that “faith triumphs over false reasons by means of sound and superior reasons that have made us embrace it” (PD §42/GP VI 74), we might expect Leibniz to respond to such challenges by showing that the reasons which support articles of faith are always stronger than those which oppose them. Leibniz also recognizes, however, that “the art of judging from probable reasons is not yet well established; so that our logic is still very imperfect, and to this day we have little beyond the art of judging from demonstrations” (PD §28/GP VI 67). And it is no doubt for this reason that he does not offer a general procedure for determining which of a pair of probable arguments is stronger based on a logic of probability.

Page Break 583

For all this, Leibniz does think that “this art [of judging from probable reasons] is sufficient” to uphold faith and that therefore we should not be “disturbed by objections that obtain only probability” (ibid.). One way in which we might respond to a probable objection would be to show that the argument is flawed. Leibniz, however, has another line of defense to invoke against well-formulated objections. He observes:

[E]veryone agrees that appearances are against the Mysteries, and that they are by no means probable when regarded only from the standpoint of reason; but it suffices that they have nothing in them of absurdity. Thus, demonstrations are required if they are to be refuted (ibid.).¹¹⁵

Probable arguments do not entail their conclusions in such a way that we are obliged to accept their truth on pain of contradiction. For this reason, Leibniz thinks that one may sometimes maintain a proposition even when there exists a probable argument against it. It is in the very nature of mysterious articles of faith to be out of the ordinary, or other than one would expect. Indeed, for Leibniz, a miracle is by definition something that goes against the natural and predictable order of things.¹¹⁶ So, he insists, the faithful need not be worried by an argument which shows that what they accept is improbable. This line of response is the dominant one that Leibniz offers to Bayle. It is far from clear, however, that such a response is consistent with his suggestion that "faith... would not triumph if the contrary opinion had for it reasons as strong as, or even stronger than, those which form the foundations of our faith" (PD §42/GP VI 74). Surely, when confronted with a probable argument against an article of faith, the challenge is to show that one has better reasons to believe the truth of scripture than to believe the conclusion of the probable argument.

Leibniz does not approach this challenge directly in PD, but he does give further consideration to his grounds for accepting the authority and veracity of the Bible when he observes that

Page Break 584

it is a matter of no difficulty among theologians who are expert in their profession, that the *motives of credibility* [emphasis added] justify, once for all, the authority of Holy Scripture before the tribunal of reason, so that reason in consequence gives way before it, as before a new light, and sacrifices thereto all its probabilities (PD §29/ GP VI 67).

Leibniz does not explain why he thinks that the authority of scripture is so well grounded.¹¹⁷ Indeed, it might appear that he supports the testimony of scripture simply by appealing to the testimony of theologians. Nonetheless, it is clear that Leibniz believes the claims of scripture to possess a very high probability, and his confidence that this probability will win out in the face of probable objections is equally clear.

Although Leibniz's response to direct arguments against the articles of faith may seem quite complex, it can be reduced to the following two claims. First, Leibniz is confident that only well-formed objections are probable. Second, he is confident that none of the arguments based on such objections will be stronger than the probable arguments which support the truth of scripture. Somewhat surprisingly, however, Leibniz does not expend any energy trying to explain why it is reasonable to have this confidence. We shall return to this apparent lacuna toward the end of the paper.

Our discussion of Leibniz and Bayle has revealed that Leibniz has the following attitudes towards the relationship of faith and reason. Unlike Bayle, Leibniz does not think that it acceptable to retain as articles of faith dogmas that have been demonstrated to be false. If its conclusions are demonstrative, reason will always

triumph over apparent faith. Leibniz does not see a great threat from this kind of argument, however, since he regards true faith as incapable of being demonstrated false. Furthermore, in cases where the objections to articles of faith are merely probable, Leibniz is convinced that they will never be strong enough to overthrow the probability of the articles of faith themselves. Nevertheless, as we have noted, the way in which Leibniz characterizes the conformity of faith and reason is not entirely satisfying. For there is nothing in what Leibniz says that provides an adequate support for such a confident acceptance of articles of faith.

Page Break 585

Although Leibniz has outlined the ways in which challenges like Bayle's must be met, it is clear that, confidence notwithstanding, he has not provided any reasons for thinking that other challenges of this kind can be satisfactorily dispatched.

III.

The encounter between Leibniz and Bayle provides a good deal of information about the way in which Leibniz understands the relationship between faith and reason. Another important source for our understanding of Leibniz's view, however, is the *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*. The discussion of faith and reason in the *New Essays* is shorter than that in PD. Nonetheless, it allows us to see how Leibniz positions himself in relationship to Locke, who is portrayed as taking a view that is almost diametrically opposed to Bayle. In short, the Locke who is presented in the *New Essays* treats faith as a special case of probable belief. And, like any other belief, an instance of faith can only be legitimate if it is based on reasons that the faithful person herself possesses. Locke leaves no room for faith which is lacking reasoned support, let alone faith which conflicts with reason.

As we have already seen, Leibniz is sympathetic to the claim that faith is always reasonable. Thus, one might imagine that his view is close to that of Locke. But, despite surface similarities, it will become clear that Leibniz does not allow for such a reductive approach.¹¹⁸ Locke discusses the nature of faith toward the end of the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Of primary import are book 4, chapter 18, "Faith and Reason and their distinct Provinces" and book 4, chapter 19, "Of Enthusiasm." Other relevant remarks are scattered throughout the chapters which deal with belief and opinion. For his part, Leibniz, speaking through the character Theophilus, comments on almost all of the statements made on Locke's behalf by the character Philalethes. As with Bayle, we shall consider Locke's position as it is presented by Leibniz, rather than by his own lights.¹¹⁹ In order to remind the reader of this fact, we shall draw upon the words of Philalethes for the

Page Break 586

most part, though it will occasionally prove necessary to draw attention to the words of Locke himself.

Unlike Bayle, Philalethes provides an explicit definition of both the terms "faith" and "reason." He tells us that reason is "'the discovery of the certainty or probability of such propositions [[as are deduced from knowledge]] got by the use of [[our]] natural faculties, viz., by sensation or reflection.'" (4.18.3/NE 496).¹²⁰ Reason is the exercise of our minds in such a way that we come to possess the grounds for knowledge or opinion. In addition, Philalethes tells us that the mind must be employed with ideas that have arisen through the "use of its natural faculties" (ibid.). In other words, when we reach the point at which we recognize certain connections among ideas which have been

formed through ordinary channels, there we have an instance of "reason." My recognition that I have the basis for believing that triangles have internal angles of 180 degrees (which is certain knowledge for Locke), and for believing that the sun is hot (which is a probable opinion) are both due to reason.¹²¹

Page 586

In contrast to reason, Philalethes defines faith as "'the assent to any proposition' on the basis of revelation, that is, as having been made known to men by God in an 'extraordinary way of communication'" (4.18.3/NE 496).¹²² Faith is said to be present when we assent to a proposition which we regard as having been revealed, or communicated, to someone by God in a manner that went beyond his ordinary epistemic capacities. Further explanation of the notion of revelation is found in 4.18. But before we turn to this, it is worth considering some earlier remarks. In 4.16, Philalethes makes it clear that he regards revelation as a special kind of testimony. More precisely, it is "the testimony of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived" (4.16.14/NE 474). Revelation, like other testimony such as the writings of an historian or the nightly news, is the presentation of information by another. Unlike these other sources, however, revelation is never wrong.

Page Break 587

Furthermore, Philalethes claims that faith is special because it "'as perfectly excludes all wavering' as does the most certain knowledge" (ibid.). On this view, if we ever find ourselves in a situation where we are presented with a revelation from God, it will be something that we are unable to doubt.¹²³ This indubitability does not mean that faith is epistemically unproblematic, however, for as Philalethes puts it, "it is important to 'be sure, that it be a divine revelation, and that we understand it right'; otherwise one will be exposed to fanaticism and to the errors of a wrong interpretation" (ibid.). In many cases, this assurance is merely probable since the "existence and the sense of the revelation are only probable" and then "our assent cannot have a higher probability than that of the proofs" (ibid.).

We have seen already that faith is assent to something which is accepted as revelation. Philalethes divides revelation into two species that he calls "original" and "traditional." Original revelation occurs where there is an "'impression, which is made immediately by God, on the mind'" (4.18.3/NE 496), whereas traditional revelation "comes only by the ordinary ways of communication" (ibid.). In both cases, the proposition in question is one which is taken to be something that has been directly communicated by God, but in the latter it has been passed on to another person by some natural channel of communication, such as the written or spoken word. Thus, original revelation is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for traditional revelation.

Philalethes is also quick to point out that not every original revelation is a candidate for traditional revelation. In order that an instance of original revelation be suitable to establish a tradition, God must inspire using simple ideas that are naturally available to others. Although Philalethes allows that God may illuminate the mind with non-natural ideas that are completely novel, these will remain essentially private to the one who has the original revelation (cf. 4.18.3/NE 496). In addition to allowing that there may be essentially incommunicable original revelation, Philalethes also points out that "the truths which are discoverable by reason may also be communicated to us by a traditional revelation as would have been the case if God had willed to communicate the theorems of geometry to men" (4.18.4/NE 496). God could reveal the truth of Pythagoras's theorem if He so desired, although Philalethes seems to think that revelation of this sort

Page Break 588

never actually takes place.¹²⁴ As we learn in section 7, he holds that "the things which are 'beyond the discovery of our natural faculties [are] the proper matter of faith,' for instance, the fall of the rebellious angels and the resurrection of the dead" (4.18.7/NE 497). Such matters could not be the objects of knowledge or of natural belief.¹²⁵ Thus the kinds of proposition that he expects we shall find as objects of faith are those which are available to us only through divine revelation.

After providing an account of the nature of reason and faith, Philalethes addresses

the issue of their relationship. He begins by considering the relationship between a proposition of geometry that was known through reason and one which was assented to as a matter of faith, because God had revealed it. As we have seen, Philalethes holds that any proposition which is revealed must be true, but he denies that the necessity of its truth entails an epistemological security for the one to whom it was revealed. Indeed, Philalethes insists that revealed propositions of geometry could never have "as much certainty as if we had demonstrated them from the connections of ideas" (4.18.4/NE 496). Philalethes explains the case in question as an instance of a more general claim that faith should never be given priority over knowledge that is had by immediate intuition, or by demonstration:

[S]ince, even when the revelation is immediate and original, this requires evident knowledge 'that we deceive not our selves in ascribing it to God [[and]] that we understand it'; and the evidentness of this can never be greater than that of our intuitive knowledge (4.18.5/ NE 496).

Faith can never be used to overthrow genuine knowledge; that is, it cannot overturn a proposition which is certain. Even in the case of an original revelation, our confidence in that revelation should be no greater than our confidence that it *really was* an instance of revelation. While it is true that God cannot lie, we can certainly be mistaken about the source of those things that we ascribe to Him. Furthermore, according to Philalethes, there

Page Break 589

will never be a situation when this confidence exceeds that of our intuitive and demonstrative knowledge.

Here we see an implicit rejection of Bayle's fideism. For Philalethes, there is no situation in which we should assent to a proposition which contradicts the deliveries of reason that are certain. Faith cannot be upheld where there are objections of this kind. But what about cases in which reason provides us with nothing more than probability? Here Philalethes' view is different: "in 'probable propositions [...] an evident revelation [[will]] determine [[us]] even against probability'" (4.18.9/NE 497). In cases where reason is indecisive, revelation is to be taken more seriously provided that it is "evident." We have not yet been told anything about what is required for revelation to reach the requisite degree of evidentness. However, to the extent that there are legitimate instances of faith, it would seem that this evidentness must be achieved. The fact that Philalethes believes there are legitimate cases of revelation is borne out by his commitment to the idea that the proper objects of faith are matters which are beyond the reach of our demonstrative and intuitive knowledge.

We have seen that Philalethes appears to sanction the existence of some cases in which it is acceptable to assent to something on the grounds that it is the product of a revelation. But clearly we need to know more about the conditions under which this is permissible. These issues are discussed in greatest detail in book 4, chapter 19, "Of Enthusiasm." For Philalethes, "Enthusiasm is the name given to the defect possessed by those who take to be an immediate revelation something which is not grounded in reason" (4.19.3/NE 503).¹²⁶ Despite the confidence that enthusiasts themselves place in their beliefs, Philalethes is quick to dismiss the basis on which this confidence is founded: "'They are sure, because they are sure: and their persuasion' is right because it is strong; for this is all that their metaphorical language amounts to" (4.19.9/NE 504). The enthusiasts take the feeling of conviction to provide epistemic warrant and "liken their opinions to matters of seeing and feeling," claiming that "They see the divine light 'as we do that of the sun at noon, and need not the twilight of reason to show it' to them" (4.19.8/NE 503-4). As Philalethes points out, however, the mental state of the

enthusiast really involves *two* perceptions: one "of the proposition and [one] of the revelation." Given this duality of perception,

Page Break 590

Philaethes thinks it legitimate to ask "where the clear light is to be found" (4.19.10/NE 504).

Philaethes answers this question by posing a dilemma. On the one hand, if the truth of the proposition is that which the enthusiasts see clearly, such perception would imply that "revelation is needless." As such, this possibility is unacceptable. On the other hand, the enthusiasts may in fact be experiencing a revelation that is seen. But, Philaethes asks, "how can they see that it is God who reveals it, and that it is not 'an *ignis fatuus* that leads them continually round in this circle'?" (ibid.). The position of such an enthusiast reduces to the following: "'It is a revelation, because they firmly believe it, and they believe it, because it is a revelation'" (ibid.). Yet a strong feeling of persuasion is no sure guide to the truth; after all, "St. Paul had great zeal when he persecuted the Christians, and yet he was mistaken. The devil is known to have had his martyrs; and if all that is needed is to be strongly persuaded, it will be impossible to 'distinguish between the delusions of Satan, and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost'" (4.19.12-13/NE 504).

The foregoing discussion is advertised as a critique of enthusiasm. It is clear, however, that this critique must be answered by anyone who wishes to maintain that there are acceptable claims of revelation and genuine instances of faith. To this end, Philaethes offers "'[two] unerring rules' for judging these illuminations" so that "we at least run no risk in viewing them as inspired by God, 'though perhaps... not an immediate revelation'" (4.19.16/NE 504). In other words, there is a procedure which may be used to ensure that we do not treat a proposition as revealed when it is not. The rules in question are grounded in the conformity of a given illumination with "reason and Scripture" (4.19.16/NE 504). Reason may help us judge illumination in the same way that it did for "The holy men... who had revelations from God" (4.19.15/NE 504). Philaethes suggests that people such as Moses and Gideon "'had outward signs to convince them' of the truth of 'that internal light'" (ibid.). Their revelatory experiences were accompanied by miraculous events, such as the burning bush, whose presence could only be rationally explained as the immediate handiwork of God. The idea here seems to be that where there is a miracle and a claim to revelation, we should accept that claim.

Although the existence of a reasoned belief in the presence of a miracle would support a concurrent belief that an illumination came directly from God, Philaethes recognizes that "God 'doth sometimes enlighten men's minds in the apprehending of certain [[important]] truths, or excite them to good actions by the immediate influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit, without any extraordinary signs accompanying it'" (4.19.16/NE 504). Here we need the second rule which involves an appeal to scripture in order to

Page Break 591

judge an apparent revelation. Philaethes says no more about this rule, and the idea that Locke is trying to convey at this point in his text is masked by Leibniz's paraphrase. Further investigation of this issue would be worthwhile, but we shall not attempt this here since our immediate concern is to examine the way in which the *New Essays* react to Locke's views on faith and reason, and there is no trace of this connection in Leibniz's discussion of the second rule.

Leibniz's response to his version of Locke's position begins with a positive reception of Philaethes' account of faith. In the guise of Theophilus, he observes:

I heartily commend you, sir, for maintaining that faith is grounded in reason; otherwise why would we prefer the Bible to the Koran or to the ancient writings of the Brahmins? Our theologians and other

learned men have also thoroughly recognized this: that is why we come to have such fine works on the truth of the Christian religion (NE 494).

Here Leibniz focuses on faith that is grounded in traditional revelation by suggesting that one can adduce historical evidence for the truth claims of the Bible, as opposed to those of other books that have been regarded as sacred. Nevertheless, we are told nothing here about the contents of the "fine works" that serve to support this position. Leibniz does go a little further, however, by arguing that it is "impossible" to ignore "reasons and proofs when it is a question of belief" unless we are prepared to allow that "'believe' signifies recite, or repeat, and acquiesce in without taking any trouble over it" (NE 494). Properly speaking, belief is assent which is grounded in reasons. Thus, from what Leibniz says here, it appears that he is following Locke even further in treating faith as a species of probable belief.

Leibniz recognizes, however, that there will be limitations on the extent to which human reason can provide rational support for revealed truths:

St. Paul speaks more correctly when he says that the wisdom of God is foolishness to men. This is because men judge things only in accordance with their experience, which is extremely limited, and whatever does not conform with it appears to them absurd. But such a judgment is very rash: there is in fact an infinity of natural things which, if we were told about them, would seem just as absurd to us as the ice which was said to cover our rivers seemed to the King of Siam. But the order of nature itself, being without metaphysical necessity, is grounded solely in God's good pleasure, so that he may depart from it for higher reasons of grace. But we should not infer

Page Break 592

that he has done so except on good evidence, which can come only from the testimony of God himself, testimony to which we must utterly defer once it has been duly confirmed (NE 495).

Although he holds that faith should be supported by reason, like Locke, Leibniz does not think that revealed propositions must always be supported by our ordinary judgments. Indeed, God may choose to reveal propositions which express truths that go against all our experience, since they involve a departure from the natural order of things.¹²⁷ As Leibniz observes in chapter 18, "going by the order of nature one can be confident that the same person cannot be at once a mother and a virgin and that a human body cannot be inaccessible to the senses, though the contrary of each of them is possible for God" (NE 499). Instead, Leibniz requires, along with Locke, that we be able to confirm that God has in fact revealed those propositions which are objects of faith.

Up to this point, Leibniz and Locke appear to be in close agreement on a number of central issues. Both accept that the faith which is grounded in traditional revelation should be supported by reasons which confirm that revelation in fact took place, and both stand in opposition to the extreme views of those such as Bayle who would place faith in direct opposition to reason. Leibniz's positive assessment of Locke continues when we turn to his comments on book 4, chapter 18, "Of Faith and Reason." After providing a succinct but accurate presentation of the views that Locke expresses in this chapter, Theophilus remarks on Leibniz's behalf: "everything you say, sir, is beyond dispute" (NE 497). In this brief remark, Leibniz appears to reinforce his prior acceptance

of the dependence of faith on reason; he also seems to embrace Locke's definitions of the terms "faith" and "reason," as well as the priority of knowledge over faith that we discussed above.

Nevertheless, we should be careful not to treat this positive appraisal as a ringing endorsement of all that Locke says in 4.18, for it is qualified in an important way. In fact, when read in its fuller context, Leibniz's overall appraisal is as follows:

If you take faith to be only what rests on rational motives of credibility, and separate it from the inward grace which immediately endows the mind with faith, everything you say, sir, is beyond dispute (NE 497).

Page Break 593

Leibniz *may* be willing to use the term "faith" in the same way that Locke does, namely, to refer to the reasonable assent one gives to revealed propositions. This is not, however, the only use that he sanctions. Faith may also be produced by "inward grace."¹²⁸ Leibniz elaborates in the sequel:

For it must be acknowledged that many judgments are more evident than the ones which depend on these rational grounds. Some people have advanced further towards the latter than others have; and indeed plenty of people, far from having weighed up such reasons, have never known them and consequently do not even have what could count as grounds for probability. But the inward grace of the Holy Spirit makes up for this immediately and supernaturally, and it is this that creates what theologians strictly call "divine faith" (NE 497).

In this passage, Leibniz gives us the expression "divine faith" to refer to this new category. As we have already seen, Locke claims expressly that he is explicating the concept of "divine faith."¹²⁹ Leibniz, however, does not accept this claim. He insists that divine faith is something which is available to "plenty of people" who "do not even have what could count as grounds for probability." In other words, divine faith for Leibniz, in contrast to its Lockean counterpart (as Leibniz depicts it), need not be based on reasons available to the one who possesses it. Instead, the Holy Spirit, whose supernatural activity provides the grace for one to make true judgments about matters of revelation, supports the assent of such a person. Indeed, Leibniz suggests that these judgments may be even more evident than those of one who reaches the same conclusion through probable reasoning.¹³⁰

Leibniz's principal objection to Locke's view is that it makes the capacity for faith dependent on intellectual endowment. Locke will only allow faith to those who have epistemic access to the "motives of credibility." In contrast, Leibniz insists:

[I]t is not necessary that all who possess this divine faith should know those reasons, and still less that they should have them perpetually

Page Break 594

before their eyes. Otherwise none of the unsophisticated or of the

feeble-minded—now at least—would have the true faith, and the most enlightened people might not have it when they most needed it, since no one can always remember his reasons for believing (NE 497).

So far, our account of Leibniz's response to Locke has revealed two things. First, Leibniz agrees that there are rational grounds for faith, and he suggests that the nature of these reasons or "motives of credibility" are just as Locke describes. Second, Leibniz refuses to equate the belief state that emerges from a consideration of such reasons with genuine faith, or "divine faith" as he terms it here. Something more—indeed something supernatural—is required for this faith to be present, namely, the grace of the Holy Spirit. In fact, things are a little more complex than even this, since Leibniz allows that those who are not in possession of the relevant reasons may have divine faith.

Although the above account gives an adequate treatment of Leibniz's direct response to Locke, it does not exhaust Leibniz's discussion of faith in the *New Essays*. We shall consider the additional material that is presented in the *New Essays* in our final section, which will also draw on material from a number of other sources. Our aim in this section will be to provide a more definitive account of faith and its relation to reason as Leibniz understands it.

IV.

The texts we have focused upon thus far all date from the first decade of the eighteenth century, but the conception of faith we have partially uncovered during our examination of Leibniz's responses to Bayle and Locke dates back a good deal further. Indeed, essentially the same account can be found by around 1686, when Leibniz wrote his *Examination of the Christian Religion*, or, as it is sometimes known, the *System of Theology*.¹³¹

Leibniz begins his discussion of faith in the *Examination* with a consideration of the nature of revelation. As we saw at the beginning of our discussion, in PD §1 Leibniz explains faith as a propositional attitude whose object is revealed truth. In the *Examination*, Leibniz is concerned with the marks by which apparent and true revelation may be distinguished:

Page Break 595

[R]evelation must be invested with certain marks (commonly called motives of credibility), from which it may be established that what is contained therein and declared to us, is the will of God, not an illusion of the evil genius, or an incorrect interpretation of our own. And if any revelation be destitute of these notes, we cannot embrace it safely (A VI, 4, 2361/ST 10-11).

Although Leibniz does not use the terminology of the *New Essays* at this point, his discussion of "motives of credibility" in the *Examination* is sensitive to the need for providing rational grounds that support claims to original and traditional revelation. The first of these motives addresses the difficulty that Locke poses in 4.19 when he considers the distinction between faith and enthusiasm. In the *Examination*, Leibniz tells us that

all the marks of divine revelation except one (the excellence of the doctrine itself) may be resolved into that of confirmation by miracle, or by some wondrous and inimitable circumstance, or event, or coincidence, which it is impossible to ascribe to chance (A VI, 4, 2362-3/ST 12).¹³²

It is far from clear whether the criteria Leibniz offers here provide for a satisfactory decision procedure, but the idea is reasonably clear. Setting aside the fact that all revelations must consist of "excellent doctrine," a putative revelation will stand or fall to the extent that one can reasonably regard it as having been accompanied by a miraculous event. The paradigmatic case of such an event is a prophecy. Leibniz accepts that "the devil can counterfeit miracles,"¹³³ but foreknowledge of contingent futures is deemed more secure since it "exceeds not only all human, but even all created powers" (A VI, 4, 2363/ST 12-13).

Traditional revelation inherits the epistemic insecurities of original revelation, but it is accompanied by yet more uncertainty. For in the case of traditional revelation, there is the additional worry that the grounds for

Page Break 596

regarding the tradition as a legitimate communicator may be fallible. In the *Examination*, Leibniz writes:

Furthermore, if miracles of this sort which happened a long time ago, are supported by those arguments by which the truth of other historical facts is usually established, we should believe them now in just the same way (A VI, 4, 2363/ST 13).

The additional motives of credibility that must be supplied in such cases are historical and philological. That is, the methods for pinning down a miraculous event of the past will be the same as those which one would employ in any historical investigation. And if one can succeed by the lights of these methods, one will have sufficient grounds for believing that an original revelation took place.¹³⁴

Page 596

On the other hand, when evaluating the credibility of most of the articles of the Christian faith, it is clear that much of the historical challenge is constituted by the need to establish the authenticity of scripture. Leibniz says nothing in the *Examination* about the methods that one should employ here. As noted earlier, however, Leibniz displays an active interest in biblical scholarship and exegesis, as well as in the study of ancient history and philology, because he regards them as various methods one could employ to establish the truth of the Christian religion.¹³⁵

Thus far, we have considered the reasons that ground faith for Leibniz. But, as we have already seen, Leibniz is not out to completely "rationalize" faith in the way that he claims Locke does in the *Essay*. As he puts it in the *Examination*:

Aside from the human reasons for faith, or motives of credibility, a certain internal operation of the Holy Spirit is required which gives it the name Divine Faith and which confirms the mind in truth (A VI, 4, 2362/ST 12).

Divine faith requires more than motives of credibility that support claims to revelation.¹³⁶ This passage makes it clear that grace, or the "internal operation of the Holy Spirit," is a necessary condition for the meritorious

Page Break 597

mental state that Leibniz calls "divine faith."¹³⁷ Believing a revealed truth— even on the basis of an adequate rational ground—does not amount to the faith Christianity requires,

but what does grace bring to the one who is already prepared to assent to articles of faith on rational grounds?

As is clear from the *Examination*, Leibniz believes that grace transforms the manner in which assent takes place. He gives us the following analogy which is supposed to represent those who have beliefs based on motives of credibility, but do not have faith.

We know that there are persons who seem convinced enough by argument that they will never meet ghosts in the dark, and who, nevertheless, will not dare to walk alone by night, or, if they dare, are seized by fear with a certain panic. On the contrary, there are others who never even think of arguments against the fear of ghosts, and who, nevertheless, secured by the firm faith and conviction which they possess, fearlessly spend whole nights alone in the woods and in the dens of wild beasts (A VI, 4, 2373-4/ST 28).

According to Leibniz, this example is designed to illustrate the difference between a "theoretical opinion" and a "practical assent" (A VI, 4, 2374/ST 28). Theoretical opinion occurs when one merely recognizes that he has a belief which is rationally grounded; practical assent occurs when one assents with a "firm conviction" to the content of a rationally grounded belief. As we have seen, the motives of credibility that support the truth of revelation are not demonstrative. At best, the believer will have moral certainty regarding the conclusions he draws about such truths. Leibniz, however, recognizes a different state of mind in which a "true believer" might find herself. In the mind of the true believer, rational probability is supplanted by an unshakeable conviction. Such a person has the conviction of the enthusiast, but unlike the enthusiast, the true believer's conviction is supported by reasons and produced by God himself. In PD §29, Leibniz provides one of his more eloquent statements of this view:

Nevertheless divine faith itself, when it is kindled in the soul, is something more than an opinion, and depends not upon the occasions or motives that have given it birth; it advances beyond the intellect, and takes possession of the will and of the heart, to make us act with zeal and joyfully as the law of God commands. Then we have no further need to think of reasons or to pause over the difficulties of argument which the mind may anticipate (PD §29/GP VI 67-8).

Page Break 598

As we can see here, faith makes reason redundant when it comes to practical matters by "taking possession of the will and heart" in such a way that we follow God's lead without hesitation.¹³⁸

Two further issues are brought out by this passage. First, it becomes clear that the influence of grace divorces reason and action in such a way that the enlightened person who has received grace appears to need no supporting beliefs for the articles of faith to which she subscribes. Thus, it seems open to Leibniz to claim that one could act in just the same way without ever possessing those reasons. Of course, this is the very position that we saw Leibniz adopt in the *New Essays* when he complained that Locke's account of faith is too chauvinistic since "plenty of people, far from having weighed up such reasons, have never known them and consequently do not even have what could count as *grounds for probability*" (NE 497).

Although divine faith can be present in the absence of a conscious reliance on reason, Leibniz insists that such reasons must exist. In the *Examination*, he expresses

the point in the following way:

The very nature of true faith, however, necessarily supposes that those who, in the fear of God, attentively examine the truth, should be able, when occasion requires, to institute an analysis of its motives; if it were not so, the Christian religion would have nothing to distinguish it from a false system, speciously adorned (A VI, 4, 2362/ST 12).

Articles of faith must be backed up by a set of reasons, even though the faithful need not rely on them. Furthermore, these reasons, the so-called "motives of credibility," are *in principle* available to the faithful. If they were not, then there would be nothing to distinguish the faithful from those enthusiasts who zealously embrace false religion. As Leibniz puts it in the *New Essays*:

God, it is true, never bestows faith unless what he is making one believe is grounded in reason—otherwise he would subvert our capacity to recognize truth, and open the door to enthusiasm—but it is not necessary that all who possess this divine faith should know those reasons, and still less that they should have them perpetually before their eyes (NE 497).

Page Break 599

In contrast to Locke, Leibniz's insistence on a rational basis for divine faith is externalist in nature. Grace leads us to assent to articles of faith infallibly, but it does not provide the faithful with reasons for assent. This aspect of Leibniz's view brings with it an inevitable skeptical worry. For there is nothing in the account to guarantee that the faithful (especially the unenlightened faithful) will be able to convince themselves that they are not enthusiasts. There will be a fact of the matter, but Leibniz's account is consistent with a situation in which the evidence for this fact is actually known only by God.

The second issue that is raised by PD §29, and which again distances Leibniz from Locke, is the relationship between divine faith and the will. In this section, Leibniz suggests that divine faith "takes possession of the will and of the heart, to make us act with zeal and joyfully" (PD §29/GP VI 67). In the *Examination*, he notes, "it must be admitted, indeed, that even according to the received notions, faith, or assent, partakes in a certain sense of the will; for were it otherwise, the act could not be commanded by God, nor elicited by men in obedience to the command" (ibid.). Although Leibniz's discussion here is couched for the most part in the third person, it seems likely that he wishes to identify himself with the received position. Given this is so, we can see that he admits that there is more to faith than representation, or entertaining a proposition. And to this end, the will as well as the intellect must be involved. In this respect, however, the role of the will in granting assent is no different than its role in other situations where assent is given.¹³⁹

At this point, our account of divine faith and its relation to reason is complete; let us conclude by returning to an issue raised earlier in the paper. When considering Leibniz's response to Bayle's claim that articles of faith are refuted by argument, we were left in an uncomfortable position. Leibniz appeared overly confident that he would never encounter arguments which could overthrow those supporting scripture and the articles of faith articulated therein. We want to suggest that this confidence becomes intelligible if we allow that Leibniz's account of divine faith is one which is intended to be descriptively adequate for his own condition. If we assume that when Leibniz wrote PD, he wrote as one who numbered himself among

Page Break 600

the faithful, we should expect the conviction with which he embraces the articles of faith to go beyond the conviction that would be produced by a simple weighing of probabilities. Leibniz's belief that it is reasonable to accept the mysteries is in part grounded in his awareness of the historical and philological support for this belief, and any residual uncertainty he may feel is swept away by the conviction that he attributes to the action of the Holy Spirit. Due to the miraculous nature of divine faith, Leibniz will never be in a position to provide wholly compelling rational support for having this conviction. Yet it is also the case that the presence of the conviction is sufficient to remove any overriding need for such rational support.

Leibniz has argued that one can always adduce reasons to support the articles of faith, but we have also seen that he deems it possible for divine faith to be present in those who have no access to those reasons. Given his acceptance of the articles of faith, an acceptance Leibniz identifies as the result of his own divine faith, it follows that Leibniz will be convinced that there are indefeasible reasons to believe these articles, whether he is aware of them or not. And even though he is unable to refute every possible argument against a given mystery, Leibniz will nonetheless retain confidence that such a refutation could always be done in principle.¹⁴⁰

Page 600

Tulane University
New Orleans, Louisiana

Notes

Footnote Page 575

¹. Hereafter abbreviated in the text as PD.

Footnote Page 576

². This interpretation is supported by Leibniz's characterization as faith as a species of assent in the *New Essays* (NE 474; 496) and *Examination of the Christian Religion* (A VI, 4, 2373/ST 27). In this way, Leibniz's understanding of "faith" in contrast to "reason" appears to be non-traditional, since he does not characterize it as a virtue or character trait.

Footnote Page 576

³. This account of faith does not rule out having faith in perfectly mundane truths, as long as these have been revealed. Nevertheless, most of Leibniz's discussion assumes that the objects of faith are mysterious. We shall, on occasion, refer to the propositions toward which faith is directed as "articles of faith."

Footnote Page 577

⁴. See GP VI 34; PD §58/GP VI 82-3; PD §81/GP VI 97. Leibniz's view of Bayle has been endorsed by some scholars, including R.H. Popkin ("Pierre Bayle's Place in 17th Century Scepticism," in *Pierre Bayle: Le Philosophe de Rotterdam*, ed. P. Dibon [Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company, 1959], 1-19, at 2-3), and S. O'Cathasaigh ("Skepticism and Belief in Pierre Bayle's *Nouvelles Lettres Critiques*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 [1984]: 421-33). Other scholars, however, have regarded Bayle's fideism as a disingenuous masking of a skeptical atheism. Among these are R. Whelan ("The Wisdom of Simonides: Bayle and la Mothe de Vayer," in *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. R. H. Popkin and A. Vanderjagt [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993], 230-53), and A. McKenna ("Pierre Bayle et la superstition," in *La superstition à l'âge des Lumières*, ed. B. Dompnier [Paris: H. Champion, 1998], 49-65,

at 64-5). More recently, it has been claimed that "Bayle is strictly speaking neither a skeptic nor a 'fideist'" (J. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 338).

Footnote Page 579

⁵. See also PD §25/GP VI 65.

Footnote Page 579

⁶. In the *Dictionary* article "Paulicians," Bayle also argues that certain heretical doctrines provide us with better explanations, concerning the same phenomena, than those contained in the articles of faith. Leibniz, however, does not comment on this point. See Pierre Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary: Selections*, trans. R. H. Popkin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 169-75 (hereafter cited as *Selections*).

Footnote Page 579

⁷. See M. Dascal, "Reason and the Mysteries of Faith: Leibniz on the Meaning of Religious Discourse," in M. Dascal, *Leibniz. Language, Signs and Thought* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1987), 93-124, at 115-20 (hereafter cited as "Reason").

Footnote Page 580

⁸. See PD §24/GP VI 64.

Footnote Page 580

⁹. Over the course of his career, in fact, Leibniz will consider several approaches for rendering faith compatible with reason. Dascal notes ("Reason," 112-3), for example, that early on in his career, Leibniz attempted to prove the possibility of mysteries such as transubstantiation. Yet by the time of the *Theodicy* of 1710, he is prepared to assert: "Nor is it possible for us... to prove Mysteries by reason" (PD §5/GP VI 52).

Footnote Page 581

¹⁰. Also see PD §3/GP VI 50; PD §5/GP VI 52; PD §79/GP VI 96-7.

Footnote Page 581

¹¹. The aptness of Leibniz's example here seems problematic, however, since the article of faith in question appears to be one that he treats as demonstrably true (see PD §44/GP VI 75).

Footnote Page 581

¹². For further discussion of the relation between the notion of "presumption" and Leibniz's discussion of the mysteries in his earlier work, see R. M. Antognazza, "The Defence of the Mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation: An Example of Leibniz's 'Other' Reason," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 9 (2001): 283-309, at 289-93 (hereafter cited as "Mysteries").

Footnote Page 582

¹³. See PD §27/GP VI 66-7; PD §30-31/GP VI 68. For a discussion of Leibniz's use of this strategy in connection with the Trinity and the Incarnation in earlier writings, see Antognazza, "Mysteries," 294-303.

Footnote Page 582

¹⁴. See Dascal, "Reason," 120. Also see Antognazza, "Mysteries," 288-93.

Footnote Page 583

¹⁵. For additional evidence that Leibniz regards mysteries as improbable, see PD §3/ GP VI 50-1; PD §32/GP VI 68-9; PD §79/GP VI 96-7.

Footnote Page 583

¹⁶. For a helpful discussion of the relationship between miracles, laws of nature and our understanding, see D. Rutherford, "Natures, Laws, and Miracles: The Roots of Leibniz's Critique of Occasionalism," in *Causation in Modern Philosophy*, ed. S. Nadler (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 135-58.

Footnote Page 584

¹⁷. On the other hand, Leibniz does provide explanations for this claim in other writings; he exhibits a particular interest in the study of ancient history as a method for establishing the truth of the Christian religion (see Daniel Cook, "Leibniz: Biblical Historian and Exegete," *Studia Leibnitiana*, Supplementa 27 (1990): 267-76 (hereafter cited as "Leibniz: Biblical Historian"); idem, "Leibniz and Millenarianism," in *Leibniz und Europa*, ed. H. Breger (Hannover: G. W. Leibniz Gesellschaft, 1994): 135-42.

Footnote Page 585

¹⁸. In fact, Leibniz's response to Bayle appears to draw solely on points where his own account of faith and reason coincides with his reading of Locke.

Footnote Page 585

¹⁹. The account is clearly a simplification of Locke's discussion in the *Essay*, and, since Leibniz relies exclusively on this work, he does not include any discussion of the somewhat different, and arguably incompatible, view of faith that Locke sets forth in his debate with Stillingfleet. See P. Helm, "Locke on Faith and Knowledge," *Philosophical Quarterly* 23 (1973): 52-66.

Footnote Page 586

²⁰. In our quotations from *New Essays*, we employ the following conventions. Single quotes indicate material which is found verbatim in Locke's original; double square brackets represent material within single quotes that does not appear in Locke. Where appropriate, in addition to the page numbers of the *New Essays*, we have indicated the passages from Locke's *Essay* which Leibniz paraphrases. Such passages are cited according to book, chapter and section as found in John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

Footnote Page 586

²¹. Earlier Locke had used "reason" as the name of "the faculty which finds out the means and rightly applies them to discover certainty in [knowledge] and probability in [opinion]" (*Essay* 4.17.2).

Footnote Page 586

²². Also see 4.16.14/NE 474.

Footnote Page 587

²³. Later in the same section, Locke is prepared to speak of situations where one might "have faith and assurance in what is not divine revelation" (*Essay* 4.16.14). Given this statement's inconsistency with Locke's official characterization of faith, we assume that he is using the term "faith" in a looser sense at this point.

Footnote Page 588

²⁴. It seems likely that Locke would regard such revelation as redundant in light of our natural capacity to attain the propositions involved. As early as chapter 2 of book 1, he argues that it would be impertinent to suggest that God would implant ideas or knowledge directly that he has given us the power to acquire for ourselves (*Essay* 1.2.1).

Footnote Page 588

²⁵. In 4.18.7 of the *Essay*, Locke also observes that the distinguishing feature of

propositions such as these is that they involve “things wherein we have very imperfect notions, or none at all” or “things of whose past, present, or future existence, by the natural use of our faculties we can have no knowledge at all.”

Footnote Page 589

²⁶. Locke himself says that enthusiasm is the name for another “ground of assent” (*Essay* 4.19.3), but it is “founded neither on reason, nor divine revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed or over-weening brain... heightened into a divine authority” (*Essay* 4.19.7).

Footnote Page 592

²⁷. Similarly in book 4, chapter 18, Leibniz criticizes the Socinians on the grounds that they are “too quick to reject everything that fails to conform to the order of nature” (NE 498).



Footnote Page 593

²⁸. A similar qualification can be found at the end of PD §1/GP VI 50.

Footnote Page 593

²⁹. See *Essay* 4.18.6.

Footnote Page 593

³⁰. We must be careful not to be confused by Leibniz’s use of the term “judgment” here. Clearly, in this instance, a judgment is not something that depends upon the weighing of reasons by the one who judges. Here it must be equivalent to assent. Thus, divine faith is a species of assent to the truth that is caused by a supernatural act. The Holy Spirit bestows the grace that is sufficient for a degree of assent which could not be rationally supported by the person assenting.

Footnote Page 594

³¹. A VI, 4, 2355-2455. Given that the *Examination* appears to have been written as part of Leibniz’s project for reconciling the churches, we might be skeptical about treating the views contained in it as ones to which he actually adhered. Nevertheless, the account of divine faith and its relation to reason which appears in this earlier work does not differ from the views expressed in the *New Essays* and *Theodicy*.

Footnote Page 595

³². In the *New Essays*, Leibniz gives examples of contemporaries who were regarded as having a “divine mission” (NE 506), but he denies that there are motives of credibility which warrant the conclusion that their reports or actions are due to a revelatory experience, claiming that “they would have to work miracles before they would deserve to be accepted as inspired prophets” (NE 507).

Footnote Page 595

³³. See ST 13, n. 1. In the *New Essays*, Leibniz suggests another, slightly different condition: “[I]nspired utterances could bring their proofs with them; this would be the case if they truly enlightened the mind through the important revelation of some surprising truth which was beyond the powers of the person who had discovered it, unless he had help from outside” (NE 507).

Footnote Page 596

³⁴. See A VI, 4, 2363/ST 13.

Footnote Page 596

³⁵. See Cook, “Leibniz: Biblical Historian.”

Footnote Page 596

³⁶. Occasionally, Leibniz calls beliefs in revelation that are sufficiently grounded by motives of credibility "human faith" as opposed to "divine faith" (see A VI, 4, 2362/ST 12; A I, 6, 76; A I, 6, 115). Usually, however, Leibniz employs the term "faith" to refer to "divine faith."

Footnote Page 597

³⁷. Also see DS 410-3/L 367-9.

Footnote Page 598

³⁸. The conception of faith that Leibniz endorses here is clearly not an entirely novel one. It bears strong affinities to the views of Aquinas. See Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*, ed. B. Decker (Leiden, 1959), 3.1 ad. 4; idem, *Summatheologiae*, ed. P. Caramello (Turin, 1950), 2-2.4.1; 2-2.4.8.

Footnote Page 599

³⁹. This is not to say that there are no differences. In a normal situation assent is, or should be, proportional to the distinctness of one's perceptions: the more distinctly one perceives the truth, the more strongly one assents to it. In circumstances of divine faith, however, this principle is preempted. The strength of one's assent is (and should be) stronger than the warrant given by one's reasons for assent. Thanks to Donald Rutherford for emphasizing this point.

Footnote Page 600

⁴⁰. Many thanks to the following people for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper: Maria Rosa Antognazza, Caery Evangelist, Antonia LoLordo, Donald Rutherford, and Tad Schmaltz.