I like to point out that positivism fails in its attempt to refute metaphysics as well as religion. Firstly, Positivists themselves have expressed metaphysical convictions like the doctrine of physicalism. When we speak of rivers and mountains, flowers and fruits, birds and animals, when we classify the objects of the world, we are on the metaphysical tract leaning to empirical realism. When science speaks of the world as having a continuous structure and uses the concept of nature, cause, law, it is making a metaphysical assumptions about the structure and continuity of nature. What gives value to scientific discoveries is derived from the source other than science itself. Logical positivism which rejects the validity of metaphysics on the ground that metaphysical statements are incapable of empirical verification is itself a metaphysical view that sense-experience is all and any statement that cannot be tested by it is unintelligible, meaningless. In short, the verificational principle advanced by the logical positivists themselves is a priori and metaphysical in nature. In this connection, John Wisdom clearly says:

Well shall we accept the verification principle? What is it to accept it? When people bring about with a dashing air the words, ‘The meaning of a statement is the method of its verification’ like one who says, ‘The value of a thing is really simply its power of exchange’, in what sort of way
are they using words? What is the general nature of their theory? The answer is 'It is a metaphysical theory'.

He is of the opinion that verifiability may be a sufficient condition for the meaningfulness of a statement, but it cannot be a necessary condition for meaning is not verifiability.

Secondly, positivists when they talk about verification they refer mainly to sense experience. The question for them therefore would be 'why limit the world experience' only to sense experience when people have other kinds of experiences like aesthetic experience, experience of choice, experience of truth etc., though they may not be capable of scientific measurement? Van Der Steen argues:

We should grant, then that science lacks a comprehensive world view and that religion has a right to occupy open spaces not chartered by science.²

He refers to a 'near-death experiences' as experiences which are not detected by science but only by the testimony of the person who have it. Radhakrishnan, in Religion and Culture says:

Again we have experience of values, of the world of spirit. We speak of darsana, seeing, vision when the soul is penetrated by a Being that is, immensely more powerful than itself. The soul turns inward and concentrates in the

central part of its being when withdrawn from body and space, beyond relation and time it enters into the presence of Divine Creativity. This is not rare or privileged event. No one is so poor as not to have felt its light and liberation whether we speak of union or communion with God or commitment to God. We have and experience which is spiritual, not perpetual or conceptual. It is true that we have no source of knowledge than experience but this experience is of different kinds, of scientific laws, of moral obligation, or spiritual reality.³

Since there can be different kinds of experiences, there can be also different kinds of statements, which could be meaningful, 'A Word', says Waisemann:

Which is used in a quite definite way and in quite definite context may be used in a new sort of context with this change of use often goes a change of meaning.⁴

And again:

Statements may be true in different senses, verifiable in different senses meaningful in different senses. Therefore an attempt at defining 'truth' or at drawing a sharp line between the meaningful and the meaningless, etc., are doomed to fail.⁵

He, therefore, concluded that to consider metaphysics as nonsense is nonsense. Ayer himself has to admit that:

5. Ibid.
In putting forward the principle of verification as the criterion of meaning, I do not overlook the fact that the word 'Meaning' is commonly used in a variety of senses, and I do not wish to deny that in some of these senses, a statement may properly be said to be meaningful even though it is neither analytic nor empirically verifiable.

My criticism of Positivism leads me in this chapter to attempt a justification of the sacred. Of course, metaphysical or theodological statements are not ordinary factual or scientific statements. Religious statements, for example, are not factual in the scientific way because they do not assert facts of sense-experience. If positivism is to survive in some form even now, it is perhaps sufficient that they can claim only to draw a demarcation line between scientific and non-scientific statements, but not to reject metaphysical or religious statements as meaningless. Therefore, any attempt to see that everything is taken as secular or have no religious significant, is to my mind false. Those who subscribe to the view that everything should be considered as secular, to my opinion, fails or at least 'refused' to understand the true nature of religion, or almost invariably due to an inadequate as well as a distorted understanding of religious concepts.

The concept of religion as we know brings together a bewildering variety of phenomena under it. Whenever we talk of religion, many things come into our mind – rituals, beliefs, prayers, worship, and many more. These will constitute what is generally known as religious language. Whether religious language or say, religious belief is

meaningful or not is a matter of controversy. For the positivists as we have seen, it will be meaningless for it cannot be verified empirically. This view has been replaced by another version of the theory of meaning propounded by Wittgenstein. In *Philosophical Investigations*, he says, "the meaning of a word is its 'use' or role in 'language'" (better language games) in which it figures. He abandons his idea in *Tractatus* as having 'grave mistake' in as much as it preaches the picture theory of meaning and the atomist view of language. Later on, he realizes that language has got more than one function, rather than picturing reality. He takes, on the other hand, the common or ordinary language itself as used by the common or ordinary language itself as used by the common man in its varieties as the ideal language and instead of viewing all language with one single eye, he now advises us to see language in its varieties with reference to a variety of uses to which it is put. There are several highly interrelated aspects of this theory, but the following are relevant for my thesis: (i) Philosophical problems arise due to a misuse of language ("when language goes on holiday"). (ii) It is a mistake to ask for the meaning of a word or sentence, it can have a variety of meanings depending on the context of its application (use). (iii) The meaning of a word is determined more than by anything else, by the use that is made of it, and its use embodies a (more or less specific) rule or criterion of correctness (a word has meaning in so far as there is a criterion of its correct use). (iv) Significant use of any bit of language is necessarily a part of a larger human activity (language a 'form of life') and it is against the background of human activity that language acquires any life at all.
Wittgenstein wants the meaning of a word to be known by putting it into the context of the ordinary language in which it is used and not by having a description of empirical data so which it refers. For Wittgenstein, speaking a language – i.e., speaking and understanding it – is engaging in certain modes of behaviour that exhibit a variety of abilities or skills.

It is primarily because he deems modes of behaviour to be so vitally important in the use of words – and behaviour, moreover, which exhibits certain skills – that Wittgenstein compares the using of words to the playing of games.\(^7\)

Using language for him, is playing language-games.

We do not merely engage in activities like games when we use language – we actually play kinds of games.\(^8\)

As we know every game exhibits its own rules which is characteristic of a particular game and not to others. Interestingly, anybody who plays ‘a’ game of football has to follow the rules of football and not that of cricket and vice versa. So the meaning of a word is its role in the various language games in which it figures, the kind of behaviour that surrounds its use the kind of behaviour in which its use is embedded.

As Wittgenstein himself once puts it: “An expression has meaning only in the stream of life”.\(^9\) Language, as we know, is an important tool for

\(8.\) *Ibid*.
communication, religious language no doubt can act as an instrument for communication in every religion. Words in religious language may have rules of use which are internal to the language itself (just like in a game) and their criteria of correctness are therefore to be found within it, and the complex activities of having life in it. This means that one cannot understand a religious claim unless one understands the concepts involved in such a claim. But the concepts are embodied in the use of words or complex of words corresponding to them, and this use is to be determined by reference to the system of human activities we call religious activities or religious ‘forms of life’. If I put it simply, one cannot claim to have an adequate knowledge of the game unless one is involved in that game. One cannot simply say that religious language or say religious belief is meaningless when one does not involve in that language game. Suppose someone stretching his hands with his eyes closed and says “Father forgive”. This statement may have varieties of meanings depending on the context it is used and the nature of the one who uses it. If we take it literally the term Father implies an earthly father or paternal father. If we take it from the point of view of believer, Father implies God in which the positivist would reject as nonsense, it applies to a reality which is not seem or heard, but if Wittgenstein’s theory of meaning is correct, the reply to the positivist would be that by assimilating the notion of addressing in worship to the ordinary notion of addressing, the positivist misses the whole point. Addressing in the religious context is crucially different from say, addressing a friend in the ordinary course of life. The concept of an addressee in the religious context is to be understood not by assimilating it to our ordinary notion
of addresses – although there, undoubtedly, are connections between
the two – but by exploring its use, by discovering the criteria of its
correct and incorrect applications in, or “language game” itself. In
Lectures on Religious Belief, Wittgenstein gives the following example:

Suppose someone were a believer and said, ‘I believe in a
Last Judgement,’ and I said, ‘well, I’m not so sure.
Possibly’. You would say that there is an enormous gulf
between us. If he said, ‘There is a German aeroplane over
head’ and I said ‘Possibly I’m not so sure’, You’d say we
were fairly near.¹⁰

Here Wittgenstein raises the question whether the non-believer
contradicts the believer when he says that he does not believe in the last
judgement.

It is not a question of my being anywhere near him, but on
an entirely different plane, when you could express by
saying: ‘you mean something altogether different
Wittgenstein’.¹¹

One can contradict the other only if both of them share a common
frame of reference. This disagreement between the believer and a non-
believer is a peculiar type of disagreement because this is not a
disagreement whether the same reference – system as in the case of two
people disagreeing whether something is a German aeroplane or not.
This disagreement between the believer and the non-believer cannot be

¹⁰. Wittgenstein, ‘Lectures on Religious Belief’ from Lectures and
Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology of Religious Belief,
¹¹. Ibid.
settled, for they lack a common reference system. Viewed within the reference system of the non-believer, the truth claims of the believer are nonsensical or meaningless. Although they are completely meaningless for the non-believer when viewed from within his reference-system, they are, however, meaningless only in a relative sense, for what is meaningless to the non-believer is in fact true within the believer's reference system.

In the context of religion, therefore, I want to examine the role of Revelation, Faith and Knowledge. The role of revelation and faith in some religions like Judaism, Christianity, Khasi religion (tribal religion) are considered as a landmark in the formation of religion. Judaism, for instance, believes that God revealed himself to man, and thereby Judaism as a religion is considered to be revealed by God. God revealed himself in many occasions as found in the Bible. God has revealed himself to Noah, to Abraham to Moses and many other prophets. Christianity which took its root from within the framework of Judaism absorbed and adopted a large number of elements and practices from Judaism, which thereby bring about lots of similarities between them. Any knowledge about God, if possible, would be through revelation and faith. Therefore, any command or any principle which comes from God has to be observed unquestionably. With the embodiment of Christianity in the form of the church or Ecclesiastical it is believed that God reveals himself in the church as his Body (St. Paul, 1 Cor. 12:12). Catholics, for example, believes that revelation is:
A communication of some truths, by God to a rational creature through means which are beyond ordinary course of nature.\textsuperscript{12}

This view holds that the divine revelation is contained in language, statements or propositions of a text, such as the Bible, it involves a certain conception of the way in which God has revealed himself (God spoke to men who in turn wrote down what he said). In this way, the church which is considered as the Body of God, is also considered as the Supreme Authority to carry on the work of God on earth and no one will ever question the authority of the church.

The Christian religion as Russell observed consisted of three elements: firstly, certain philosophical beliefs, derived mainly from Plato and the Neo-Platonists, secondly, a concept of morals and history derived from the Jews; and thirdly, a conception about salvation.

A little bit of knowledge of history will tell us that with the conversion of Constantine into Christianity the church rose to a very commanding position, and a total freedom. From that period onwards the role of the church is all and all.

The church brought philosophic beliefs into a closer relation to social and political circumstances, then they have had before or since the medieval period .... The church is a social institution built upon a creed, partly

philosophic partly concerned with sacred history. It achieved power and wealth by means of its creed.\textsuperscript{13}

What is more important as far as philosophy is concerned is that, until the fourteenth century, ecclesiastics have a virtual monopoly of philosophy, and philosophy accordingly is written from the standpoint of the church. For this reason medieval thought cannot be made intelligible without a fairly extensive account of the growth of ecclesiastical institutions, and especially of the papacy:

Catholic philosophy is divided into two periods by the dark ages, during which, in western Europe, intellectual activity was almost non-existent. During this period the church dominates the whole aspects of life, be it intellectual or spiritual or social and political, they have to be determined by the church. It is in this period that inquisition, excommunication etc., took place. Many scientists, intellectuals were deprived of their intellectual activities. No one was allowed to speak against the church or no theory was accepted which was against the doctrine or teaching of the church. Philosophy was concerned to define faith and invoke reason to enable it to argue with those who like, the Mahamedans did not accept the validity of the Christian revelation.\textsuperscript{14}

But this tradition did not continue for a long time. The thirteenth century synthesis, which had an air of completeness and due to the growth of a rich commercial class first in Italy and elsewhere who were 'as intelligent as the clergy'. Another cause was the rise of strong

\begin{itemize}
\item[13.] Bertrand Russell, \textit{A History of Western Philosophy}, George Allen and Unwin, 1946, p. 303.
\item[14.] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 304.
\end{itemize}
monarchies in France, England and Spain. In the process, the papacy meanwhile had lost the moral prestige which it had enjoys.

The Enlightenment gave birth to many ideologies like individualism, liberty, development of a new logic and methodology in which reason is considered to be the sole authority for knowledge. This is witnessed with the growth of science and scientific thinking. The growth in individual liberty and individual rights is also witnessed with the growth of various religious denominations within Christianity itself, which led to the growth of many protestant denominations besides the Catholic. Martin Luther and many others introduced new teachings in Christianity which put more stress on the individual's faith and conviction which is known as 'Justification by faith alone'.\textsuperscript{15} With the rise of humanism as a result of Enlightenment, the central question forced upon the church is mainly concerned with:

What I, as an individual, do to be saved? ... could not be answered with any degree of confidence.\textsuperscript{16}

For one of the central theme in Christian thought is that all men are sinners, and it is only through the mercy and grace of God that we are all saved and reconciled with Him. At the heart of the Christian faith lies the idea that human beings are finite and frail though they can enter into a relationship with the living God. Therefore:


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 69.
The term 'Justification' and the verb 'to justify' came to signify entering into a right relationship with God, or perhaps, being made righteous in the sight of God. \(^{17}\)

Therefore, the doctrine of justification came to be seen as dealing with the question of 'what an individual had to do in order to be saved'.

Luther, for instance, failed to understand the idea of the 'righteousness of God'. His position is what happens if sinners are so crippled and trapped by sin that they cannot fulfill the demand which is made of them. He relates to himself that he had tried with all his might to do what was necessary to achieve salvation, but found himself more and more convinced that he could not be saved. Therefore, the idea of righteousness of God thus became a threat to him. The promise of justification was real enough - but the precondition attached to the promise made its fulfillment impossible, and he failed to find any answer to this problem. At last, Luther came with a solution that the righteous person shall live by faith, which God himself gives to man.

In this context, religion becomes only a matter of faith which represents a new understanding – the righteousness principle become the foundation stone of the reformers and protestants which the Catholic church opposed. The reformers attributed man's reconciliation with God solely to the divine offer of forgiveness which was to be appropriated by man through faith. Man, the sinner is freely accepted by God. Religion thereby with the coming of the Reformation becomes

a matter of faith and therefore subjective. The idea of justification by faith refers to the restoration or establishment of a relationship between a sinner and God. The doctrine of justification by faith alone is an affirmation that God does everything necessary for salvation. Even faith itself is a gift of God, rather than a human action. This implies that good works are not the cause of justification, but are its result.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews describes faith as:

The assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen .... By faith we understand that worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seemed was not made of things which are visible.18

Here faith implies a belief on those things which do not have adequate evidence for proof.

The act of faith often occurs where there is a little evidence or none to support.19

In religious discourse, faith has two meanings:

As a trusting and confident attitude towards God, Faith (fiducia) may be compared with trust in one’s fellow human beings. As a cognitive act or state whereby men are said to know God or to have knowledge about him, faith (fides) may be compared with our perceptual awareness of


our material environment of our knowledge of the existence of other persons.\textsuperscript{20}

From the epistemological point of views faith (fides) is taken in a cognitive sense that there is God and that such and such propositions about him are true. Here, ‘faith’ is used in a cognitive sense to refer to a state, act or procedure when conviction which may be compared with standard instances of knowing and believing. The non-epistemological use of the term ‘faith’ (fiducia) as a trust, maintains that the divine purpose towards us is good and loving. This implies a religious trust.

The man who has faith claims to know God. The question one can ask in this context is whether the man who has faith or believes in God really knows or merely believes that he knows. The reason why I use faith and belief as synonymous because:

According to the most widespread view of the matter of today, faith is unevidenced or inadequately evidenced belief.\textsuperscript{21}

Therefore, Hick in expositing The Thomist-Catholic View of Faith, observes that:

Faith thus, consists in believing strongly various propositions, of a theological nature, which the believer does not and cannot know to be true.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 11.
He argues that to know one means either to observe directly or to be able to prove or verify by strict demonstration.

In *Theology and Verification*, Hick argues that the central core of the concept of verification is the removal of ignorance or uncertainty concerning the truth of some propositions. He argues that ‘p’ is verified (whether ‘p’ embodies a theory, hypothesis, prediction or straightforward assertion) means that something happens which makes it clear that ‘p’ is true. This characterization of verification raises the question whether the notion of verification is purely logical or is both logical and psychological. According to Hick, theological proposition involves human participation. Therefore, verification is treated as a logico-psychological rather than merely logical concepts. He uses ‘verify’ as a verb which has its primary uses in the active voice like ‘I verify’, ‘you verify’, ‘we verify’, ‘they verify’ or ‘have verified’. To say that ‘p’ is verified is to say that (at least) some one has verified it. He, therefore, concluded that ‘verification’ is primarily the name for an event which takes place in human consciousness. It refers to an experience, the experience of ascertaining that a given proposition or set of propositions is true. Verification, thus, is a psychological notion as well as logical notion. Both psychological and logical conditions must be fulfilled in order for verification to have taken place. In this respect, ‘verify’ is like ‘know’. Knowing is an experience which someone has or undergoes, or perhaps dispositional state in which someone is, and it

cannot take place without someone having or undergoing it or being in it. In this manner, a believer ‘experiences’ god in, at least, some particular ways, and thereby his belief is justified (verified).

Religious people or people who have faith in God claim to apprehend God by faith as something loving, infinite, omniscient, omnipresent etc. But some, if not all, may ask themselves whether having faith in God or in some supernatural beings consists in having knowledge at all. If it is knowledge then what kind of knowledge is it?

It is only when the religious believer comes to reflect upon his religion in the capacity of a philosopher or theologian, that he is obliged to concern himself with the neotic status of faith. When he does so concern himself, it emerges that faith as trust (fiducia) presupposes faith (fides) as cognition of the object of that trust.24

The question, therefore, arises - does faith consists in having knowledge? Or is faith a kind of knowledge? To answer to these philosophical problems, we have to examine in brief what meaning people attached to the term ‘know’ or ‘to know’.

Keith Lehrer, in *Knowledge*,25 gives three senses upon which the term ‘know’ is understood. (i) To know means to have special form of competence. For instance, to know the language of Khasi means to be able to speak Khasi. (ii) To know means to be acquainted with. To say that someone knows Shillong means to be acquainted with Shillong.

(iii) Another sense of know is related to an important ways to other fundamental and difficult ideas. It is, for example, closely associated with notions of understanding and controlling nature so as to sustain and enhance civil life. But in the case of a believer knowing God, these three senses of know may not exhaust the whole connotation of knowing God. Lehren also argues that the conditions of knowledge are truth, belief and justification. Therefore, if someone says that he knows that 'P', it could mean any of the following: (i) 'S' knows that 'P', then it is true that P. (ii) If 'S' knows that the sentence 'Q' is true, then 'Q' is true. (iii) If 'S' knows that 'P' then 'S' believes that 'P'. (iv) If 'S' knows that 'P' then 'S' is completely justified in believing that P.

In the case of man who has faith he is completely justified in believing that 'P' because, it implies, if it applies to some theistic statements, that it is revealed by God himself. But this brings us back to the same problem. How does 'S' know that 'P' in order to believe that 'P' or 'S' knows, say God, in order to believe in God. A man of faith may say through faith. But how far can we say that faith itself is cognitive in nature.

Medieval philosophers like Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine try to synthesize faith with the natural reason. In this tradition, God is conceived to reveal himself to man directly, and reveals the truth in the form of a proposition. Revelation is God's communicating of such truths to man, and faith is man's obedient believing of them. Therefore, the Thomist-Catholic notion of faith is accompanied by a view of revelation as the divine communication to man of the truths belief in
which comprises faith. God has communicated the knowledge that is necessary to man's salvation, firstly, through the prophets and ultimately through Jesus Christ. According to this account, there are two sets of theological truths. Those that are accessible to human reason and that can be established by philosophical demonstration (such as God exists) and those exceeding the scope of reason (Trinity). This leads to the evolution of revealed theology and natural theology. The former is grasped by faith and the later by reason. The truth of natural theology, however, as well as being rationally available, are also presented for acceptance by faith.

What, perhaps, is the aim of this tradition, is to try to understand or know God through faith as well as reason. In this manner proofs for the existence of God are formulated as a defence against the attack on religion as being irrational or false belief. Though God can be known by faith we can still infer (by means of reason) his existence from certain facts of the world. But this line of argument will fail in many ways. David Hume reacting to this view says that those who try to defend religion by the principle of human reason are like 'dangerous friends' or 'disguised enemies' of religion. But one thing we should keep in mind that Hume is a sceptic and arrives at a disastrous conclusion that from experience and observation nothing is to be learnt. There is no such thing as rational belief. Hume says that, if we believe that fire warms, or water refreshes, it will only costs us too much pain to think otherwise. We cannot help believing, but no belief can be grounded on reason. To support Hume's position Taylor argued that Christians embrace certain beliefs because they cannot help it.
Luther, as we have seen, stresses upon the primacy of an individual faith in religion. Religion, therefore, becomes only an act of faith, which is again the gift of God to sinners in order to attain salvation. John Calvin argues that faith is belief in God, and maintains that God is not determined by logical laws, for He transcends all logical determinations.

Many philosophers like Hume, Kant, Kierkegaard etc., are of the opinion that religion is a matter of faith and reason has no role to play in it. By his examination of miracles and of the various proofs for the existence of God, Hume came to the conclusion that no adequate rational foundation for religion can be found. It, therefore, involves a belief of some sort which he calls natural belief, and unavoidable. Kant also considers religion as faith. In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant holds that certain concepts like ‘Grace’, ‘Miracle’, ‘Mysteries’, ‘Means of Grace’, were:

‘Parerga’ to religion within the limits of pure reason, they do not belong within it but border upon it .... Reason does not dispute the possibility or the reality of the objects of these ideas, she simply cannot adopt them into her maxims of thought and actions.... Reason believes it with a faith. ....

For Kierkegaard, faith is man’s highest position. Faith is not assent to objective propositions, rather, it is a subjective submission to a

person, to God. It is a solitary act of an individual confronted with God. By faith man's spirit is actualized. Faith is promoted by paradox and is directed towards a person. It is an act of the will exercised without the aid of reason or objective guides. Faith is essentially a private relation to God. Faith, not reason is the door to religious truth.

As I have tried to show, the concept of faith forms the core of Christianity. But faith, as we take it, is ambiguous and connotes many other things. It does not merely imply a sort of psychological process or conviction of, say, feeling. Faith involves trust, belief in the unverifiable etc. Rather faith manifests itself through action. Faith acts as a postulate of religion because through faith one conceives of the existence of God and knowledge about God and other related things or religious phenomena. A man of faith claims to acquire knowledge about God through faith. But 'sceptics' or 'agnostics' deny this claim as impossible.

David Hume (Sceptic), for instance, argues that any knowledge about God is impossible. His argument is that any statement that is neither purely a relation of ideas, on the one hand, or a matter of fact, on the other hand, is meaningless. Of course, all statements about God fall outside these categories, and hence, impossible. In *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume says:

If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the
flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.  

Hume further argues that it is not possible to have any impression of God. Therefore, it is not possible to have any idea of God. The idea of God, therefore, will become a fictitious idea. In same way, the idea of God is not given to the senses, therefore, no knowledge of God would be possible.

Kant, on the other hand, maintained that no knowledge about God would be possible. For Kant, sensibility (intuition) and understanding (categories) are the faculties of knowledge. All thinking must be thinking through concepts. By means of experiences we form concepts and concepts are synthesized into the categories of understanding the 'stuff' of knowledge is provided by the senses but the structure of knowledge is attained eventually in the mind. This creative synthesis solved the problem of rationalism and empiricism. However, according to Norman L. Geister (Christian Apologetics), the result leads to agnosticism, for if one cannot know anything until after it is structured by the a priori forms of sensation (time and space) and the categories of the understanding (unity, causality etc.), then there is no way to get outside one's own being and know what it really was before he so formed it. That is, one can know what something is to him but never what is in itself. Only appearance can be known and not reality. We know the phenomena but not the neumena. The neumena can never

be known for we have no intuition of them. This neumenal reality includes God, soul which are the postulates of reason. Therefore, no knowledge about God is possible.

I want to argue that both scepticism and agnosticism are impractical and self-defeating. First of all, Hume's sceptical attempt to suspend all judgements about reality is self-defeating, since it implies a judgement about reality. How can one knows that suspending all judgement about reality unless one knew indeed that reality was unknowable. In this way, scepticism implies agnosticism. Agnosticism is self-defeating, it reduces to the self-destructing assertion that one knows enough about reality in order to affirm that nothing can be known about reality. This statement provides within itself all that it is necessary to falsify itself. For, if one knows something about reality, then he surely cannot affirm in the same breath that all of reality is unknowable. And, of course, if one knows nothing whatsoever about reality, then he has no basis whatsoever for making statements about reality. It follows that total agnosticism is self-defeating because it assumes some knowledge about reality in order to deny any knowledge of reality. If knowledge in its totality is limited to the phenomenal as Kant holds, how can we postulate that something exists beyond it. He know that the noumena is there but not what it is. Is it possible to know that something is without knowing something about what it is? This implies that God or soul though cannot be understood in the ordinary ways of understanding. we can still know or understand them in some extraordinary or extra-sensory method, and probably through faith. In Of Miracles, Hume concluded that our most holy religion is founded on
faith, not on reason. But he did not then conclude that it ought to be rejected by reasonable men.

Gordon Clark propounded another kind of rationalism. His thesis is based on the following points:

The various systems all fail on the two points at which failure is fatal. First, they do not furnish a systematic, consistent set of universal principles. Second, they give no guidance in making concrete decisions of everyday living .... Failing thus both theoretically and practically, the failure is complete.28

From this, Clark draws two conclusions, viz.:

The first is that no construction in philosophy is possible without some sort of presupposition or a priori equipment. The second is, that the secular philosophers who use presuppositions have not selected those can solve their problem.

To these, Clark adds:

A third conclusion, or at least an hypothesis for a consideration. It is that revelation should be accepted as our axioms, seeing that other presuppositions have failed.29

Axioms, because they are axioms, cannot be deduced from or proved by previous theories. Clark argues that – what we must ask with respect to

the axioms of the propositional revelation of Scriptures is: Does revelation make knowledge possible? Does revelation give a theory of politics? In short, he argues that, we can judge the acceptability of an axiom by its success in producing a system. Logical consistency is the essence of truth, and logical contradiction is the core of falsity. Clark concluded that since secular philosophy had failed to solve its problems the alternative hypothesis of revelation, verbal communication, the scripture was proposed. In this way, faith is considered as an important source of knowledge.

But there are always differences of opinions regarding as to whether having faith consists in having knowledge or not. A man of faith claims to know God and other theistic statements in which the sceptic considers him to commit a mistake in saying that he knows. Therefore, for the believer faith is a kind of knowledge but different from the knowledge we acquire about the phenomenal world. Men of faith have claimed and do claim to know, for instance, that God is real. They claim this and their claims are, of course, based upon certain adequate grounds. These grounds consists primarily in their religious experience. This experiencing of life as a ‘dialogue with God’ is the believers primary reason for being sure that God is real.

Even if sciences have weakened the validity of faith and its positive value becomes almost negligible, Paul Roubiczek, maintains

that there is still a mysterious and inexplicable region behind all physical phenomena, apparently making room for quite a different approach and even for freedom. He further observes that the scientists (physicists) themselves cannot extricate from that region — even though some of them call it “absolute reality” which may have no relevance to them. Therefore, it would be a disappointment if we expect physicists to provide the foundations for our religious faith, for the investigation of external reality can neither add to nor detract from, the knowledge which belongs to the sphere of faith. Even science needs two kinds of beliefs. Fundamentally, a scientist has to believe on certain presuppositions which make science possible. Secondly, he has to believe other scientists or other derived theories without needing himself to prove it. But neither of these is essential in case of faith, for if we concentrate on the structure of external knowledge alone, we can dismiss the need for belief and rely exclusively on knowledge. Faith, essentially is based on believing, it refers to facts and events of which I can only have knowledge because they are revealed to me in one way or another. The test applicable to external knowledge are not possible nor is complete proof ever available. I have to respond with an act of faith, of acceptance, with a constantly renewed willingness to believe. Knowledge can be stated once for all and it is not lost as long as we possess all its documents and know what he ought to believe.

When we have faith, we also expect it to be confirmed by experience such as the experience of God, as we have seen, to acquire a deeper and larger meaning as life in faith grows. These experiences do not force faith upon us; nor can we be forced or persuaded into faith in
any other way. Faith is not a conscience which is simply alive within us, it has to be acquired through an act of faith and cannot be understood before hand. Unless our active acceptance is constantly at work or renewed, anything we can say about the facts of faith remain meaningless, the revealed facts are not even facts without faith. We can always appeal, to conscience, but none of the proofs of the existence of God, developed throughout the ages, have ever been convincing for anybody who did not already believe.

We can say, therefore, that there are still rooms for faith, for there are in fact vast regions of reality where the possibility of knowledge is excluded. Faith, therefore, refers to something outside knowledge, cannot merely be its substitute, but must be fundamentally different from it. But external and internal reality are only aspects of one reality, aspects under which it appears to us. But because we cannot see it as one, we are unable to acquire, by our own exertions, a knowledge which is comprehensive as well as absolute; if there is to be such a knowledge at all, it has to be revealed to us and we have to accept what we are told. The object of faith does not compell assent. For since the propositions that are believed by faith are mysteries, we cannot directly see or prove their truth. It is only that which lies beyond the scope of human knowledge that must be taken, if at all, on faith and trust. When in such a case we do adopt some beliefs, the lack of rational compulsion to assent is compensated by an act of will, a voluntary leap of trust, so that the man of faith comes to believe something which he cannot prove or see. Knowledge is an intellectual vision, whilst faith is
firm and undoubting belief concerning that which is not directly knowable.

One should also be aware that we are not inquiring whether there is anything such as knowledge of God, rather we are focussing our attention upon the question whether it is proper for the man who reports a compelling awareness of God to claim to know that God exists. We are concerned with the circumstances in which it is reasonable for a man to claim to have a rational certainty that there is a God, not with the question whether there is God. The concern of the philosopher is with knowledge, faith, therefore, if it does not consists in having knowledge will be beyond the scope of philosophy. He will also try to deal with phenomenon of faith and see whether or not it has a justifiable place in thinking. To discuss faith therefore is to approach only from outside the realm of knowledge. For example, Richard Swinburne, after noting that science cannot explain consciousness by laws of nature, concludes that we must resort to the alternative of personal explanation.

If there exists such a mysterious and inexplicable region or reality beyond all physical phenomena, and apparently making room for quite a different approach and even freedom, it is therefore, to be assessed through some other methods. The only way, therefore, we can claim to know that God exists is through religious experience, which a believer may have. Indeed if his sense of the divine presence is sufficiently powerful he can hardly fail to make his claim.

We can therefore see that knowledge points towards faith, because “the absolute” is implied in knowledge, in spite of
the fact that it transcends and has to be brought to life by faith. The philosopher cannot, within philosophy, legitimately claim that there is God (even though he may have done so) but he can show some of the right approach to faith.31

Henceforth, St. Augustine’s claims, ‘believe in order to understand’ serves as a model. Augustine holds that reason left to itself is not enough. He, therefore, insists on faith. His contention is that once we have accepted the truth of faith, reason intervenes to help understanding better what we believe. If faith is identical with knowledge, then there will be only science and no religion. Therefore, the difference between knowledge and the knowledge claim by faith differ both in kind and degree.

If we consider this position as true as far as religious discourse or religious activities or beliefs is concerned, critics like positivists would say that religion as it is, it is irrational. The charge of irrationality can be seen against what may be called ‘religious discourse’ and ‘religious activities’. Any discussion whether in ordinary life or in sciences, makes certain assumption so takes certain things as given or what Swinburne calls “basic propositions” or “evidence”. A man’s basic propositions are those which seem to him to be true and which he is inclined to believe, but not solely on the ground that they are made probable by other propositions which he believes Man’s basic proposition cover a vast range, but these two are, perhaps important. To start with, there are those which the subject believes because he thinks

that they report his experiences or things experienced by him, for example, 'it looks to me as if there is a table in front of me'. There is another kind of basic propositions which men are inclined to believe not on the basis of experience but because reason seem to show them as true. Swinburne calls it "a prior propositions", for example, $2+2 = 4$, it is not based on experience but reason. However, basic propositions are not to be taken as infallible or incorrigible.

Now, one way of showing that a belief or discussion will fail to be rational is:

If it is based on evidence in the wrong way or if it is based on the wrong sort of evidence.\textsuperscript{32}

Ellis argues that irrational beliefs:

Cannot be supported by any empirical evidence and is inappropriate to the reality that is occurring.\textsuperscript{33}

Taking these views into account, it implies that religious belief or faith is only irrational because it is based on a wrong sort of evidence or inadequate evidence, or no evidence at all. To say that ‘God is good’ for the positivist would make no sense for there is no ground to support or evidence to show that there is God. Religious statements are, for the

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positivists, meaningless for they are not verifiable. But we have seen that positivists position fails in its attempt.

However, there is a limit in our questioning of assumptions. There are certain assumptions or 'basic propositions' — if we can call them that — which, as it were, set the limits of not just a particular discussion, but an entire universe of discourse about the external world and belief as such. It is against the background of these that the question of rationality/irrationality operate. It follows that one must make a distinction between a particular discussion and the universe of discourse within which it takes place. A discussion can be shown to be irrational by showing that the assumptions on which it is based are mistaken. But the criterion of these assumptions or evidence must take place within the structure of the universe of discourse to which the discussion belongs and the beliefs that constitute the structure cannot be questioned in the same way.

Religious language, it can be argued, embodies a universe of discourse of its own which is, in many ways, radically different from that of science. Its structure allows and provides for the possibility of criticism and assumptions of discussions within it on the basis of which they can be judged to be rational or irrational. Religious discourse forms its own universe of discourse which may be different from other universe of discourse. Therefore, to think that religious discourse as such can be irrational, is to think of it as part of some other universe of discourse, which is a mistake. To put it simply to judge religious faith as irrational from the point of view of some other universe of discourse
say, science, I think is a mistake. Religions, faith cannot be understood in terms of a scientific explanation (empirical evidence) rather the evidence for religious faith or knowledge acquired by the man of faith is the inner experience one has with God himself. Experience cannot always be sense experience, there is also an act of will to accept what is revealed to us.

With regard to religious belief, some may argue that it contains self-contradictory statements which would thereby make it irrational. It may be a prior proposition. It is also my view that such attempt at showing that religious beliefs are self contradictory arises invariably from an inadequate as well as distorted understanding of religious concepts. Moreover this kind of accusation arises especially when we judge religion from outside the universe of discourse. The belief may tend to be irrational only if (a) it involves in a failure of internal coherence in a subject’s system of belief, the failure in which the subject is unaware, (b) if it is not based on evidence which he is justified in holding or if that are not inferred by correct principles, i.e., satisfies the correct standard. This claim cannot be true when one looks, at religion from outside. The believer knows that what he believes is based on a very strong evidence.

The problem arises that if we consider religion merely as a matter of faith, it may not be adequate to explain the real meaning of religion. But faith in the religious context is not just a matter of having faith. In fact, it may include many things and has got wider connotation. Faith includes trust, belief in the unverifiable, faith includes will, and many
other things. These things again manifest themselves in the form of action. For instance, since I trust someone, I will do what he asks me. If I experience God as loving, I also should love Him and so on. Faith manifests itself into action or religious activities. For it is said in the Bible that, Faith without works is dead.\(^{34}\) We read in the Bible that By faith Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared and ark for the salvation.

Through faith we 'know' that God will reward us when we die and the immortal soul will go to Him in the form of salvation. As a result, faith makes us, or advises us to do something right. What is more important, perhaps true, that every religion has its own moral code of conduct which the adherents have to observe. In Judea-Christian religion, there is what is known as Ten Commandments, or Dharma in Hinduism. Khasis believe that as long as we live in this world we will preserve righteousness (Kamai ia ka Hok) for one day we will go to God. The teaching of almost every religion is the teaching of morality to achieve the sumnum bonum or the highest Good. It is perhaps at this point, or one of the reasons that religion and culture clash. Faith cannot remain simply as something like a psychological process, rather involves indeed, in doing something. Faith inevitably expresses itself in works, because all men live in the world they see and experience it and religious faith is seeing and experiencing the world as being under the ultimate control of sovereign personal love.

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In this way we can say that faith involves in activities, say, religious activities to differentiate from worldly activities. It is what Wittgenstein says that the inner is in need of the outer.