

Would a Rational God Endorse Faith Beyond Evidence — 22

Phil Stilwell
Independent Scholar
ORCID: [0009-0009-3725-8682](https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3725-8682)
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Central claim

The title’s answer turns on “beyond evidence.” Trust, commitment under acknowledged risk, or undefeated noninferential warrant may extend beyond public propositional evidence without exceeding total truth-directed warrant. But confidence praised precisely for exceeding that total warrant is overbelief, and a rational, truth-committed deity would not endorse overbelief as a rational norm for belief. This does not disprove theism or divine authorship.

Preview:

Target practice	Rational comparator	Decisive test	Conclusion
Faith praised precisely because confidence exceeds total truth-directed warrant.	Trust, hope, commitment, or noninferential belief that does not inflate confidence beyond its grounds.	After all grounds and defeaters are counted, does the associated confidence still exceed their support?	If yes, the target is present; evidential immunity is its clearest form. If no, assess the attitude on other grounds.

Evidence here includes argument, testimony, experience, memory, and any defensible noninferential warrant. Openness to revision is necessary but not sufficient: confidence must also be proportionate to the total support.

Visual preview:



The left branch separates belief, trust, hope, and action; the center weighs all truth-directed grounds and defeaters against confidence. On the right, two-way arrows depict evidence-responsive calibration, while the shield and one-way loop depict confidence held above its warrant. The vertical reference line represents the stipulated truth-directed standard; the image does not classify faith or theism as irrational.

Abstract

The answer to the title question depends on what *beyond evidence* means. Faith may extend beyond public propositional evidence without exceeding a person's total truth-directed warrant, which can also include testimony, experience, memory, argument, and defensible noninferential warrant after relevant defeaters are counted. The target is narrower: *overbelief*, or confidence exceeding that total warrant. The analysis has two stages. First, classify the attitude called faith: trust, practical commitment under acknowledged risk, and undefeated noninferential warrant need not inflate confidence. Second, when faith does involve belief or credence, ask whether the confidence is proportionate to all truth-directed grounds and whether relevant defeaters can genuinely lower it. Accuracy-based epistemology explains why deliberate surplus credence carries an expected truth-directed cost. The faith-reversal test then diagnoses an aggravated form: a method that treats favorable evidence as confirmation and every unfavorable result as a reason for greater commitment cannot provide public error correction. Contemporary philosophy of faith and New Testament faith-language reinforce the need to distinguish belief, credence, trust, hope, acceptance, and action. If a Christian account does not inflate confidence beyond total truth-directed warrant, the critique does not apply. If it praises surplus confidence or evidential immunity as rational belief, a rational, truth-committed deity would not endorse it under that description. This result does not disprove theism, settle divine authorship, or deny faith's practical or relational value. It demands precise answers to two questions: what attitude does faith add, and is any associated confidence proportionate and genuinely revisable?

Keywords: faith; evidence; epistemic warrant; rationality; credence; trust; Christian epistemology

1. The Claim Under Pressure

The answer to the title question is conditional. If *beyond evidence* means extending beyond public propositional evidence while remaining within total truth-directed warrant, then the argument supplies no reason for a negative answer. If it means confidence beyond that total warrant, the answer is no: a rational, truth-committed deity would not endorse such confidence as a rational norm for belief. The paper calls that target *overbelief*. It asks two questions throughout: *what attitude does faith add, and is any associated confidence proportionate and genuinely revisable?*

Imagine a teacher who tells students that inquiry matters, provides them with methods for checking an answer, and then praises the students whose confidence remains high even when those methods fail to support it. The problem is not that the students act while uncertain. Nor is it that they trust a teacher who has already proved reliable. The problem is that the teacher converts a gap between confidence and warrant into a virtue. If confidence may rise with favorable evidence but may not fall with unfavorable evidence, the classroom no longer teaches rational inquiry. It teaches protected conviction.

The theological question is the same. A *God-concept* is a specified conception of a deity, including the properties and intentions attributed to it. The target here is a *rational, truth-committed God-concept*: a deity who understands truth-directed norms, does not cultivate avoidable falsehood, and expects human confidence to respond appropriately to the grounds available to human agents. The paper asks whether that specified conception can coherently prescribe overbelief as rational truth-directed belief. It concludes that it cannot.

The key definition must not be rigged against every religious position. *Evidence* here is not restricted to laboratory measurements or arguments that can be placed on a public spreadsheet. It includes perception, memory, testimony, personal experience, background knowledge, and any alleged noninferential warrant that a theory of rationality can defend. *Total truth-directed warrant* is the support that remains after relevant counterevidence and defeaters are included. Overbelief occurs when a person's confidence is stronger than that total warrant supports. A belief based on powerful testimony or undefeated religious experience may lack public force without being overbelief for the person who has it. Conversely, calling a conviction "faith" does not supply warrant that the conviction otherwise lacks.

The argument therefore targets a practice, not a tribe. It applies to any Christian teaching, sermon, apologetic method, or personal rule that praises surplus confidence because it is surplus—especially when doubt produced

by evidence is treated as disloyalty. It does not apply merely because a person trusts, hopes, acts under uncertainty, accepts a proposition for practical purposes, or regards a belief as properly basic. Those alternatives must be assessed on their own terms. Nor does the argument claim that a deity could never permit a practically useful false belief. Its conclusion concerns what the stipulated deity could prescribe *as rational truth-directed belief*.

This precision preserves the paper's challenge rather than weakening it. The crucial audience is the defender who moves between two claims: under scrutiny, faith is redescribed as ordinary evidence-sensitive trust; in devotion, the same faith is praised for holding confidence above what all relevant grounds support. Those cannot serve as interchangeable accounts. Rational belief requires both proportional confidence and genuine downward revision. Complete insulation is the clearest violation, not the only one.

The governing bridge

1. A rational, truth-committed deity would not prescribe, as a rational norm for belief, confidence that exceeds a person's total truth-directed warrant.
2. The target faith norm requires or praises precisely that excess as rational belief.
3. Therefore that deity would not prescribe the target faith norm as a rational norm for belief.

The inference is deductively valid. The live dispute concerns the second premise: which Christian accounts of faith, if any, actually require overbelief?

2. Four Things Commonly Called Faith

The first stage is classification: what attitude does faith add? Debate becomes confused because *faith* can name several attitudes and practices. Belief is a coarse yes-or-no attitude in much ordinary speech; *credence* is a degree of confidence; acceptance can be a policy for reasoning or action; trust is a relational stance toward an agent; hope can orient action without predicting success; and commitment can persist through risk without freezing every judgment. Audi treats religious commitment as a form of life wider than assent to propositions, while McKaughan distinguishes belief-centered faith from trusting acceptance and hopeful affirmation (Audi, 2011; McKaughan, 2013). Morgan's historical and theological work likewise places trust, trustworthiness, faithfulness, and entrustedness near the center of early Christian *pistis* and *fides* (Morgan, 2015, 2022).

These distinctions matter because only one row in Table 1 contains overbelief by definition. A person may rationally trust a friend while admitting a substantial chance of betrayal. A researcher may commit to a risky project without claiming that success is probable. A Christian may hope that a doctrine is true while acknowledging that the public evidence is indecisive. None of those attitudes requires inflated credence.

Reading of faith	What faith adds	Evidence and defeaters	Verdict here
Evidence-responsive trust	Reliance on a person or testimony judged trustworthy	Confidence is proportionate to reliability evidence and changes with it	Outside the target; potentially rational
Practical commitment or hope	A policy to act, persevere, or orient life under risk	Action may persist while credence remains proportionate and revisable	Outside the target; practical merits need separate assessment
Properly basic belief	Alleged noninferential warrant rather than an argument from other beliefs	Rationality depends on proper function, truth-conduciveness, and undefeatedness	A live alternative, not automatically overbelief
Overbelief	Confidence stronger than total truth-directed warrant	Confidence remains above what all relevant grounds support; insulation is an aggravated form	The target; incompatible with the specified rational ideal

Table 1: The faith fork. The table maps distinct attitudes and their updating rules; it does not claim that every Christian community occupies the final row.

The table prevents a verbal victory. If a defender says that faith is simply trust based on adequate reasons, the reply should not be that all trust is irrational. The right questions are whether the purported source has been identified, how its reliability was established, whether the resulting confidence matches the complete grounds, and what evidence could overturn the assessment. If the confidence is proportionate and genuinely revisable, the position is not overbelief. It may be wrong, but it is not guilty of the specific incoherence examined here.

The practical categories also block a familiar slide from action to belief. People must often act before evidence becomes decisive. A physician selects a treatment, a voter selects a candidate, and a friend decides whether to extend trust. Practical stakes, deadlines, and relationships can justify action under uncertainty. They do not automatically justify raising one's estimate of what is true. The source of the practical reason must not be smuggled into the credence as though choosing made the chosen proposition more likely.

3. Why Overbelief Conflicts with Truth-Directed Rationality

Classification alone does not settle rationality. The second stage asks whether the associated confidence is proportionate to total truth-directed warrant and genuinely open to downward revision. This stage has two parts: an accuracy argument explains why any surplus credence is epistemically costly, and a symmetry requirement asks whether the same standards of support and updating are applied to rival traditions.

3.1 The accuracy pressure

Accuracy-first epistemology starts from a modest idea: confidence is better, other things equal, when it represents the truth more accurately. Joyce develops an accuracy-based defense of probabilistic coherence; Leitgeb and Pettigrew show how demanding accuracy constrains both measures of inaccuracy and Bayesian norms (Joyce, 1998; Leitgeb & Pettigrew, 2010a, 2010b). For a binary proposition, let p be the credence supported by the agent's total truth-directed grounds and let c be the agent's actual credence. Under the Brier score, expected inaccuracy is minimized at $c = p$:

$$p(1 - c)^2 + (1 - p)c^2 - [p(1 - p)^2 + (1 - p)p^2] = (c - p)^2.$$

The equation says something exact but limited. Given the stipulated warrant-proportionate credence and a strictly proper quadratic score, any departure costs expected accuracy, and the cost grows with the square of the departure. It does not say that ordinary agents can read an exact p from the world. It does not prove that one controversial theory of evidence is complete. It does not show that all rational people must hold identical credences despite different experiences or permissive evidence. It identifies the burden carried by deliberate surplus confidence: within an accuracy-first framework, the mere fact that the surplus is called faith does not remove its cost.

The theological bridge is then ordinary. A truth-committed deity may permit human error, finite evidence, ambiguity, action under risk, and perhaps even practically useful false confidence. What such a deity cannot coherently do is prescribe avoidable miscalibration *as rational truth-directed belief*. Praising people for keeping c above the best support available to them under that description rewards a predictable source of error. The rational alternative is not certainty. It is honest calibration: strong confidence where warrant is strong, modest confidence where warrant is mixed, suspension where the evidence is balanced, and revision when the balance changes.

3.2 Epistemic and practical value must be separated

Overbelief does not always lower expected practical utility. A false but encouraging conviction might improve performance; a risky commitment might sustain cooperation; a person might rationally refuse to reopen a settled question every hour. Those possibilities depend on acts, states of the world, payoffs, search costs, and time horizons. Without a specified decision problem, a claim that overbelief necessarily lowers utility is false.

That concession sharpens the paper by fixing its conclusion at the epistemic level. A belief can be comforting, identity-forming, cohesive, or motivational without becoming better supported as a description of reality. Practical value may justify a policy of action or attention. It does not by itself convert a low evidential probability into a high one. A rational deity could value courage, loyalty, patience, or hope while still refusing to present inflated confidence as rational truth-directed belief. Indeed, preserving the distinction allows those virtues to be named honestly rather than purchased by misdescribing credence.

3.3 The symmetry test

Religious diversity exposes the need for symmetry. Christians are not the only people who report testimony, tradition, transformation, communal belonging, sacred experience, or steadfast trust. If those sources license confidence beyond defeaters for one tradition, a relevant difference must explain why parallel sources do not do the same for incompatible traditions. A method that insulates whichever conviction a person already inhabits is a poor truth filter even when it produces admirable loyalty.

The point is not that all religious evidence is equal or that every believer has the same grounds. It is that a rational norm must permit comparative testing. “My faith authorizes surplus confidence, but rival faith does not” is not a differentiator until the asymmetry is supported independently. Without that support, the rule rewards location and inheritance rather than accuracy.

4. What New Testament Faith Does—and Does Not—Show

This section applies the first-stage question to scripture: do the cited texts require overbelief, or do they commend trust, hope, fidelity, and reliance under uncertainty? The texts do not settle that classification merely by using faith-language.

Several passages are often recruited into a simple contrast between faith and evidence: Hebrews 11:1 links faith with hoped-for and unseen things; 2 Corinthians 5:7 contrasts walking by faith with walking by sight; John 20:29 blesses later believers who did not see what Thomas saw (National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 2021). Those texts matter, but they do not by themselves define one technical epistemic rule according to which confidence should exceed total truth-directed warrant.

First, New Testament faith-language belongs to a relational field that includes trust, fidelity, testimony, promise, reliance, and faithfulness. Morgan argues at historical scale that *pistis* and *fides* are deeply embedded in relationships of trust and trustworthiness rather than reducible to assent without evidence (Morgan, 2015). Her later account makes trust dynamic, risky, and responsive within a relationship (Morgan, 2022). That does not establish the truth of Christian claims, but it defeats a lexical shortcut from the word *faith* to overbelief.

Second, unseen is not the same as unsupported. People rationally believe many things they have not personally observed because memory, testimony, instruments, traces, and explanatory relations carry information. Hebrews 11 presents agents responding to promises they take to be trustworthy; whether that trust is warranted depends on the source and defeaters, not simply on visibility. John 20 contrasts Thomas’s direct experience with the situation of later hearers, but the Gospel also appeals to testimony and signs. A person may question whether those sources are sufficient without pretending that the text asks every reader to believe with no grounds at all.

Third, a devotional commendation of steadfastness is not yet a rule for setting credence. A community may encourage action, hope, or fidelity amid hardship while members remain uncertain about outcomes. McKaughan’s

distinction among belief-plus, trusting acceptance, and hopeful affirmation shows why the rationality question changes with the attitude under discussion (McKaughan, 2013). The critic must identify which attitude is being required before diagnosing overbelief.

This interpretive caution removes two distractions. The paper need not claim that every biblical author teaches one philosophy of evidence, and it need not import a separate argument about exclusive salvation. The central conclusion is stronger when it is narrower: wherever a Christian interpretation does make confidence beyond total truth-directed warrant praiseworthy as rational belief, that interpretation conflicts with the rational, truth-committed God-concept under examination. Other interpretations remain open, but they cannot defend overbelief by changing the meaning of faith only when challenged.

5. The Strongest Alternatives

The strongest alternatives all challenge the classification of faith as overbelief. Each survives the present argument only if it supplies genuine warrant or changes the attitude at issue without leaving any associated confidence above total support. This common test keeps the literature review tied to the paper's central theme.

5.1 Properly basic and noninferential warrant

Plantinga's model of warranted Christian belief is a serious alternative to evidentialism. On the model, theistic and Christian beliefs can be produced by properly functioning cognitive faculties in an appropriate environment and can possess warrant without being inferred from propositional evidence (Plantinga, 2000). If that model is true and the relevant beliefs are undefeated, then the believer's confidence may exceed what an outsider can reconstruct from public arguments without exceeding the believer's total truth-directed warrant.

This paper does not refute that possibility by definition. It draws two boundaries. First, noninferential does not mean immune to defeaters. A belief's source, proper function, environmental fit, and responses to disagreement and counterevidence remain epistemic questions. Second, private warrant and public confirmation are different achievements. A person may be internally or externally warranted while lacking grounds that should move an outsider. An apologist cannot simply cite the believer's alleged faculty as public evidence without offering some way to distinguish it from incompatible, equally confident religious faculties.

The result is a fair fork. If a properly basic belief has genuine truth-directed warrant proportionate to its confidence, it is not overbelief as defined here. If "properly basic" is used to leave confidence above total support after relevant defeaters have accumulated, the label does not solve the problem; it restates the miscalibration. Complete insulation merely makes the defect unmistakable.

5.2 Belief, credence, and two kinds of evidence

Jackson argues that faith can go beyond evidence in one sense without becoming epistemically irrational, partly by distinguishing evidence relevant to outright belief from evidence relevant to graded credence (Jackson, 2019). This is exactly the sort of objection the paper must accommodate. The word *evidence* can be narrower than total truth-directed warrant, and full belief may not reduce neatly to a point on a credence scale.

The reply is not to deny those distinctions. It is to relocate the target. If faith goes beyond one evidential category while its confidence remains proportionate to all truth-directed grounds relevant to the attitude, the argument here does not classify it as overbelief. The target is surplus confidence after the account's own legitimate warrant has been included. No terminology guarantees that such surplus exists, but no terminology can turn it into a truth-directed virtue either.

This response also prevents a technical theory from becoming a rhetorical escape hatch. A preacher who tells an audience to remain certain despite serious counterevidence is making a claim about confidence, whatever philosophers eventually say about the metaphysics of full belief. The relevant question is practical and public:

may the evidence actually reduce the audience's confidence, or has the conclusion been protected in advance?

5.3 Faith as commitment and evidence-seeking

Accounts centered on trust, hope, and action offer a constructive path. Dormandy argues that seeking evidence can itself express faith rather than betray it (Dormandy, 2018). McKaughan treats acknowledged risk as compatible with authentic commitment (McKaughan, 2013). Audi's broader account of religious commitment and Morgan's theology of trust likewise refuse to reduce faith to unsupported assent (Audi, 2011; Morgan, 2022).

These positions blunt a crude anti-faith argument while reinforcing the present one. They show that a religious life need not depend on inflating credence. A person can trust while testing, hope while admitting uncertainty, and act while continuing to learn. If evidence-seeking can be faithful, then the familiar accusation that doubt or investigation necessarily reveals spiritual failure loses its force. A rational, truth-committed deity could prefer honest inquiry to performative certainty.

5.4 Steadfastness under counterevidence

Buchak defends faith as a commitment that can rationally remain steadfast when counterevidence arrives, especially because long-term risky projects would collapse if every temporary setback reopened the basic decision (Buchak, 2017). The insight is important. Rational agents need stopping rules, evidential thresholds, and stability over time. A marriage, research program, or moral project cannot be re-litigated from zero after every adverse signal.

But steadfastness is not immunity. A rational commitment distinguishes noisy or expected setbacks from evidence that undermines its foundation. It states, at least in principle, what scale and pattern of counterevidence would justify revision. Otherwise steadfastness becomes an every-outcome strategy: supportive evidence confirms the commitment, while adverse evidence merely proves that faith must become stronger. Such a rule may preserve identity, but it cannot discriminate truth from a protected error.

5.5 Divine testimony and loyalty

A final reply says that testimony from a perfectly reliable deity is decisive evidence. Conditionally, that is correct: if a message has been identified as testimony from an infallible source, its reliability would overwhelm ordinary testimony. The difficulty lies in the identification. Competing texts, traditions, experiences, and interpreters claim divine authority. Using the authority of a contested message to establish the source of that same message is circular unless independent grounds break the circle.

Loyalty does not remove the problem. A deity may value fidelity in action without valuing false confidence. Human relationships make the distinction familiar: a trustworthy friend may ask for patience during uncertainty, but asking a friend to ignore decisive evidence of betrayal would corrupt rather than perfect trust. A rational deity could ask for courage, endurance, or moral commitment while leaving credence proportionate to the believer's actual warrant.

6. The Faith-Reversal Test

The second-stage question becomes especially revealing here: is the confidence genuinely revisable? Overbelief need not be completely insulated; any confidence above total truth-directed warrant is already the target. But evidential immunity is its clearest and most dangerous form. It appears when a faith practice handles every possible evidential result as a success. Favorable events become confirmation. Unfavorable events become tests, mysteries, attacks, or occasions to prove loyalty. Silence becomes an invitation to trust. Conflicting testimony becomes evidence that outsiders lack the right spiritual posture. No observation is permitted to lower confidence enough to threaten the commitment.

The every-outcome problem

1. A method publicly confirms a claim only if some relevant outcomes would count against the claim.
2. An evidence-insulated faith method treats favorable outcomes as confirmation and every unfavorable outcome as a reason to preserve or intensify commitment.
3. Therefore no relevant outcome counts against the claim under that method.
4. The method may preserve commitment, but it cannot provide public confirmation.

This result concerns the method's evidential contribution, not the believer's entire epistemic position. It does not by itself prove overbelief, because independent testimony, experience, argument, or noninferential warrant might still support the confidence. It shows instead that the every-outcome rule adds no public confirmation and cannot be used to justify confidence above what those independent grounds support. Premise 2 still requires an all-things-considered assessment of the relevant teaching or practice.

This is the faith-reversal test: ask the believer to reverse the valence of the evidence. If an answered prayer supports the deity's care, would a long pattern of unanswered prayer lower confidence? If communal transformation supports a tradition, would equally profound transformation in a rival tradition lower confidence? If the beauty of a sacred text confirms its source, would moral or factual difficulty count against the same inference? The test does not assume that one negative datum defeats a worldview. It asks whether the update rule is genuinely two-directional.

The institutional risk follows structurally, without a sweeping historical claim. A community that praises upward updates as insight but treats downward updates as moral failure shifts authority away from inquiry. Leaders and inherited interpretations gain protection because members bear a spiritual cost for reporting what the evidence did to their confidence. The practice can arise without conspiracy and can coexist with sincere belief. Its function is nevertheless epistemically dangerous: it makes error harder to detect from within.

Christians who reject that structure should say so plainly. They can define faith as trust that seeks evidence, distinguishes temporary noise from genuine defeat, and permits confidence to change. They can specify what would count against an interpretation, a testimony, or an apologetic argument. They can refuse to turn uncertainty into vice. Those reforms do not abandon faith; on several major philosophical and New Testament accounts, they recover its relational and practical core.

The remaining position is exposed. If a defender insists that the virtue consists precisely in believing more strongly than total truth-directed warrant allows, the dispute is no longer semantic. The norm deliberately rewards miscalibration. Attributing that norm to a rational, truth-committed deity generates the incoherence stated at the outset.

7. Conclusion

The title therefore receives a conditional answer. Faith that extends beyond public propositional evidence may still remain within total truth-directed warrant, and this paper does not rule it out. But faith praised precisely as confidence beyond that total warrant is overbelief. A rational, truth-committed deity would not endorse overbelief as a rational norm for belief. Accuracy-based epistemology explains why surplus credence carries an expected truth-directed cost, while the faith-reversal test shows why a norm that can absorb every outcome cannot function as public confirmation.

The paper's two questions keep that conclusion stable. First, what attitude does faith add? Christian faith can be trust grounded in testimony or experience, hopeful or practical commitment under acknowledged risk, an allegedly properly basic belief, or an evidence-seeking relationship. New Testament faith-language does not

collapse these possibilities into one instruction to believe without grounds. Second, is any associated confidence proportionate and genuinely revisable? An account escapes the target only when confidence does not exceed total truth-directed warrant; openness to some revision is necessary but not sufficient. When every possible outcome protects the confidence, the account exhibits the clearest failure of public error correction. None of the non-overbelief alternatives is vindicated merely by escaping this argument, but each deserves assessment without caricature.

The practical demand is semantic and epistemic honesty. Say whether faith changes confidence, action, trust, acceptance, or hope. Count all relevant grounds, including counterevidence. Ask whether confidence matches that total support, and state what could rationally lower it. Apply the same rule to rival traditions. If faith is evidence-responsive, let it respond fully enough to restore calibration. If confidence remains above its warrant—especially if it is protected from all defeaters—do not present that surplus as rational truth-directed belief. Theism, divine authorship, and faith’s practical or relational value remain open; overbelief as an epistemic virtue does not.

A. Formal Reconstruction of the Central Thesis

Syllogistic reconstruction

- Premise 1.** If a belief norm requires a person’s confidence to exceed that person’s total truth-directed warrant, a rational, truth-committed deity would not endorse that norm as a rational norm for belief.
- Premise 2.** The target faith norm requires or praises confidence that exceeds a person’s total truth-directed warrant as rational belief.
- Premise 3.** Evidence-responsive trust, practical commitment under acknowledged risk, and undefeated noninferential warrant do not by themselves require that excess and therefore are not instances of the target norm.

Conclusion. A rational, truth-committed deity would not endorse the target faith norm as a rational norm for belief. This conclusion does not disprove theism or divine authorship, deny faith’s practical or relational value, or condemn faith understood according to the non-overbelief alternatives in Premise 3.

Validity

Premises 1 and 2 entail the first sentence of the conclusion by universal instantiation and modus ponens. Premise 3 is not needed for that entailment; it fixes the argument’s scope and prevents the valid inference from being expanded into a claim about every form of Christian faith. The argument does not deduce the falsity of theism, the falsity of Christianity, or human authorship of scripture.

Support for the premises

Premise 1 follows from the stipulated rational and truth-committed God-concept and the accuracy cost of deliberate miscalibration. Its epistemic wording matters: practical usefulness alone neither supplies nor defeats truth-directed warrant. Premise 2 is interpretive and must be shown for each teaching or practice, not inferred merely from the word *faith*, from going beyond public propositional evidence, or from imperfect responsiveness alone. Premise 3 applies the distinctions developed above. The argument’s application to a particular doctrine is only as strong as the evidence that the doctrine requires confidence above total truth-directed warrant as rational belief.

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