DOES IT STILL MAKE SENSE TO TALK ABOUT THE ABSOLUTENESS OF CHRISTIANITY?

Modern philosophy of religion after Hegel has often spoken of the absoluteness of Christianity, as evidenced by the classical work of E. Troeltsch Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902), and the twentieth-century philosophy of religion continued to take seriously this issue. However, in the last part of the twentieth century, with the pluralistic turn in philosophy of religion promoted by J. Hick, the issue has lost interest and, on the contrary, it has become customary to claim a non-absoluteness of Christianity. In my paper, I will try: a) to clarify the meaning of the absoluteness of Christianity in modern and contemporary philosophy of religion, b) to offer a critical assessment of Hick’s refutation of the absoluteness of Christianity, c) to propose a cumulative case for the absoluteness of Christianity.

Keywords: Absoluteness of Christianity, Religious Pluralism, Cumulative Case Apologetics

1. Introductory remarks

Starting from German idealism and its definition of Christianity as absolute religion, the issue of the absoluteness of Christianity has often been discussed in modern philosophy of religion as well as in modern Christian theology. The work of Ernst Troeltsch Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (1902) is surely the best-known attempt to approach this issue, but a claim to absoluteness of Christianity has continued to be proposed in the philosophy of religion of the 20th century. The book of the Catholic philosopher of religion Johannes Hessen, Der Absolutheitsanspruch des Christentums. Eine religionsphilosophische Untersuchung (1963), or that of the Evangelical theologian and philosopher of religion Ulrich Mann, Das Christentum als absolute Religion (1970), provide evidence of such a claim. However, starting right from the Seventies of the last century, the issue of the absoluteness of Christianity has become less and less plausible to the extent of disappearing altogether from the current philosophical discussion of religion. This concept has been sporadically and ambiguously maintained in the theological discussion, as today it is frequently substi-
tuted by the concept of the uniqueness of Christianity, a concept that really gives the impression of being a pale substitute of absoluteness. The most evident reason for this decline has been the emergence of the model of religious pluralism within the contemporary philosophy of religion. Its main author, John Hick, has explicitly supported the non-absoluteness of Christianity and his opinion, along with that of other authors, has become considerably influential to the point that using the concept of absoluteness in the religious field today exposes to the suspicion of having an intolerant attitude. In this paper, I aim at showing that it still makes sense to talk of the absoluteness of Christianity and that, although such an expression does not sound right nowadays, this issue does not deserve to be dismissed by the philosophy of religion. In order to do this, I will present an argument that consists of three parts: in the first part, I attempt to clarify the sense and function of the absoluteness of Christianity in modern philosophy of religion and recall the difficulty of its justification. In the second part, I critically evaluate Hick’s criticism of the absoluteness of Christianity. In the third part, I explain how the claim to the absoluteness of Christianity can be made to sound acceptable in our times.

2. Absoluteness of Christianity in modern philosophy of religion

Although the concept of Absolute was part of the philosophical lexicon in ancient times and the adjective absolute was applied to Christian claim since ancient Christian theology, it is just in modern Western metaphysics that this concept has received its full relevance. In modern philosophical terminology, and in particular in that of German idealism, the noun Absolute refers to God, whilst absoluteness is a property attributed to a subject different to the Absolute itself. For example, according to Hegel, the Absolute is the Spirit, that is God, and the reason why Christianity is the absolute religion is that it fully conceives God as Spirit. Therefore, absoluteness belongs to a subject who claims a truth raising a universal validity, not dependent on time and space, and in this sense, absoluteness means the opposite of relativity, contingency, and particularity. Absoluteness also implies the idea of the ultimate and conclusive validity and in this sense it means the opposite of temporariness, incompleteness and imperfection. So, attributing absoluteness to Christianity basically means to raise three claims: a) a claim to exclusiveness, according to which the ultimate divine truth is revealed only in Jesus Christ. If there are other revelations of God – as it happens in the inclusivist version of exclusivism – they cannot be considered as having the same absolute validity; b) a claim to universality, according to which the truth of Christianity

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3 For example, according to St. Augustine, Christian belief is «simplex et absoluta» (Contra Faustum, 12, 1). For more details, see the entry Absolut, das Absolute, in Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Bd. 1, Schwabe & Co., Basel - Stuttgart 1971, coll. 11-31.

is valid for all men and women, without distinction for populations, race, culture, as well as being valid for all times; c) a claim to finality, according to which the Christian revelation is of ultimate validity, that is it cannot be surpassed by other religions. As the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner has shortly stated, «Christianity understands itself as the absolute religion, intended for all men, which cannot recognize any other religion besides itself as of equal right»5.

The attribution of absoluteness to Christianity in the modernity can be considered, as observed by Reinhold Bernhardt⁶, an effect of the lack of legitimacy which Christianity has suffered since the Enlightenment and therefore as a reaction to the acquired awareness of its own particularity and historical contingency in the context of world religions. However, what this expression means, with a language different to previous eras, is the typical claim to truth of the Christian religion, which distinguishes it radically from any other religion, and at the same time advances a claim for universal validity. The claim to the absoluteness of Christianity finds its roots in that Jan Assmann calls the «Mosaic distinction»⁷ between the true God of Israel and the false divinities of the pagan religions. Nevertheless, unlike to Judaism, Christian claim takes on a universal character that possesses both an exclusivist and inclusivist meaning. The New Testament contains some assertions with an exclusivist meaning (At 4, 12 e Gv 14, 6) as well as others having an inclusivist one (At, 10, 35)⁸. Correspondingly, the absoluteness of Christianity has been asserted by Christian theology either as the negation of other religious claims to truth or as a declaration of superiority compared to other religious claims that seem incomplete or lacking.

Modern philosophy of religion has chosen this second concept of the absoluteness of Christianity. According to Bernhardt, it is possible to talk of a model of «hierarchical superiority»⁹ of Christianity over other religions. In this view, Christianity is mainly conceived as the culmination of the historical-evolutionary process, which shows it to be the complete fulfillment of an essential concept of religion. Thus, according to Hegel, Christianity is the absolute religion as it reveals God as Spirit, according to Schleiermacher as it expresses in a complete way the fundamental insight of each religion that is the mediation between infinite and finite, and according to Troeltsch as it claims a free and personal relationship between God and human beings. Finally, according to Otto, it presents the best possible combination of rational and irrational elements in the concept of the holy. However, this model is not necessarily inclusive: religions different to Christianity may be positively evaluated in some respects, but insofar as Christianity historically overcomes them, they eventually are irrelevant. For the model of hierarchical superiority to become inclusive it is necessary to consider the evolution of the history of religion as being necessarily oriented towards the abso-

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⁸ Obviously, in the New Testament there are rare passages, like 1 John 4,7, that may be interpreted in a pluralistic sense, but they are significantly less numerous than exclusivist/inclusivist passages and that’s one of the reasons why the pluralistic option has been minority in the history of the Christianity until the last century.
⁹ See BERNHARDT, Der Absoluthheitsanspruch des Christentums, pp. 71 f.
lute religion and culminating in itself. This is the case of the Hegelian philosophy of religion, but not more of Troeltsch’s philosophy of religion.

In any case, the justification of the absoluteness of Christianity by modern philosophy of religion has suffered a profound tension between the rational level and the historical one, which eventually determined its crisis. If an essential concept of religion is established *a priori* which is normative on the historical level, the risk is that Christianity, being the absolute religion, becomes the mere historical exemplification of such a concept. It is the Hegelian risk of overcoming religion in philosophy. If, on the other hand, the attempt is made to raise the notion of absoluteness from the history of religions, as ultimately Troeltsch attempted to do, it is possible only to establish the superiority of Christianity over other religions, but not in terms of absoluteness. Troeltsch’s claim that Christianity is the absolute religion but only up to the present point in history, is indeed inherently contradictory. If one religion is absolute, it cannot be historically overcome, and if it can, it is not absolute. Hence, it is no coincidence that Troeltsch, in the final phase of his reflections, sustained an essentially relativistic concept of absoluteness, which considers each religion as dependent on a specific cultural environment and evaluates the claim of absoluteness as plausible only in that setting.

This profound tension has forced the authors, who took the concept of the absoluteness of Christianity into the XX century, to follow other paths. For example, Johannes Hessen has proposed a phenomenological concept of religion, which refers to the essential features of the holy, moral values and worship of the divinity, and seen them completely fulfilled in Christianity. Unlike what happens in Hegel, such a concept of religion is not *a priori* established and deductively applied to historical religions, but it is inductively obtained from the religious experience itself. However, the impression is that Hessen takes his normative concept of religion from the Jewish-Christian experience of God, elevates it to an essential concept and finally takes back once again to its origin. In this view, the absoluteness of Christianity is just a *petitio principii* and completely lacks a rational justification.

More recently, from a theological point of view, Walter Kasper has distinguished a double sense of the absoluteness of Christianity: on the one hand, as *genitivus subjectivus*, it refers to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which is unsurpassable, on the other hand, as *genitivus objectivus*, to the claim of the Christian church (or churches) to possess the absolute truth. As Kasper observes, «the first thesis cannot be given up by Christianity. In contrast, the second is problematic. In the actual sense, God alone is the absolute and God is not possessed by anyone».

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10 As Troeltsch writes «es ist an sich nicht auszuschließen, daß eine höhere Offenbarung noch tiefere Postulate aufdecken möchte» (TROELTSCH, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, p. 198).


Does it still make sense to talk about the absoluteness of Christianity?

Luteness of Christianity cannot be directly referred to the Absolute? Is there an indirect way to refer it to the Absolute, which prevent to grasp the latter? If it is the case, which is? In fact, it is quite obvious that revelation implies that God is greater than his revelation. In this sense, God always transcends his revelation. It is also clear that, if the Christian God is the Absolute, his revelation cannot mean that he is splitting himself into many absolutes or making absolute someone or something different from himself. Nevertheless, if God is revealing in an unsurpassable way, is also claiming to the absoluteness of such a revelation and, as a consequence, to its real recognition by human beings. In other terms, the Absolute has the power to confer the property of absoluteness to the medium of his revelation as well as to the human belief that actually corresponds to it. In this sense, if Christianity cannot give up its absoluteness as genitivus subiectivus, it cannot even give up it as genitivus objectivus.

We can find a confirmation of this view in Karl Barth’s thinking about non-Christian religions. As it is well known, in his Kirchliche Dogmatik, Barth criticized the claim to the absoluteness of Christianity as religion, that is as a mere human phenomenon, by maintaining, at the same time, such a claim as «divine revelation», that is as faith in Jesus Christ. The theological background of that claim was that, according to Barth, God «repeats» himself in his revelation. In this view, the criticism of the absoluteness of Christianity as religion did not make any substantial difference in his interpretation of the relationship between Christianity and other religions. Christianity, as faith in Jesus Christ gifted by the divine Spirit, is «die wahre Religion», and Barthian theology remains a classical expression of Christian exclusivism. Do we have the same result in Kasper, as I suppose, although its theology is a classical expression of Christian inclusivism? Does the mentioned double sense of the absoluteness of Christianity have just a rhetorical function?

Anyway, given these difficulties and ambiguities, it is no surprise that the concept of absoluteness of Christianity has entered a critical stage and has been ultimately rejected by the contemporary philosophy of religion.

3. The non-absoluteness of Christianity

In his article The Non-absoluteness of Christianity, John Hick recalls two historical-cultural causes for the rejection of the absoluteness of Christianity and makes several arguments supporting such rejection. The first cause is the current awareness of religious diversity and our greater acquaintance with other religious traditions. The second cause is the awareness of negative effects produced by the combination of the claim to absoluteness of Christianity and the violent, greedy nature of human behaviour, which has produced phenomena like anti-Semitism, colonialism, gender discrimination and so on. Hick’s arguments against the absoluteness of Christianity are basically two: on the theological level, the relativity of the messianic claim of Jesus and his role as unique mediator for salvation, and, on the philosophical level, the affirmation of a kind of axiological parity among the great religious traditions. If the latter are examined, as Hick states, «we find in each case a complex mixture

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14 K. Barth, Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, I/2 (1938), Theologischer Verlag, Zürich 1993, pp. 356 f.
of valuable and harmful elements\textsuperscript{16} and therefore «in face of these complexities it seems impossible to make the global judgement that any one religious tradition has contributed more good or less evil […] than the others»\textsuperscript{17}. In particular, Christianity does not seem to produce a greater number of saints compared to other religious traditions or to be a promoting factor for wealth and economic prosperity around the world. Neither Christianity is the only ideological support for promoting values like freedom and tolerance, which are typical of modern Western society.

The causes which Hick explains and the arguments he sustains to support the rejection of the absoluteness of Christianity are, to my mind, highly questionable. The first cause, the greater awareness we have today of religious diversity, has undoubtedly undermined the plausibility of a naive affirmation of the absoluteness of Christianity, but not of a reflective affirmation, that is subjected to critical scrutiny. As previously stated, the concept of absoluteness of Christianity proposed by modern philosophy of religion may be exactly considered as a response to the problem of religious plurality in modern times and to its capacity to undermine religious claims to truth. The second cause, that is, the awareness of negative effects on the ethical and social level that the affirmation of the absoluteness of Christianity would have caused, does not seem to be tied specifically to the latter. Forms of social discrimination or oppression that have religious causes, also exist in religious contexts that do not make a claim to absoluteness (as, just for example, in Hinduism), and, more generally, they do not necessarily have religious causes. In this regard, it seems that Hick confuses absolutism, which is an attitude arising within very different ideological and cultural contexts, with the claim to absoluteness of one particular religion.

As I am not a theologian, I will not focus on Hick’s Christological interpretation. I will just point out that it seems to reduce the figure of Christ to that of a religiously inspired man and therefore seems to go beyond any orthodox Christian theology. I will only take into consideration his argument concerning axiological parity among different religions, which equals the argument of epistemic parity that he supports for justifying his religious pluralism.

From an empirical point of view, it may be difficult to identify which religious tradition has a greater influence in promoting positive moral values, but the superiority of certain religions over others appears evident in principle. Satanism, UFO cults and many other new religious movements are not able to promote any consistent moral view. On the contrary, they are disputable and eventually deserved to be rejected from a moral point of view. However, even from an empirical point of view differences among religions should not be dismissed. As the sociologist Peter Berger has stated with reference to the current phenomenon of religious terrorism, it is true that not all Islamic people are terrorists, but we need to ask ourselves why the majority of religiously inspired terrorists are Islamic\textsuperscript{18}. Weighing up the benefits and damages which religions bring to humanity and maintaining \textit{a priori} that a perfect balance exists or

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\textsuperscript{16} Ibi, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibi, p. 30.
that we are not able to understand how the scale is turned only seems a convenient strategy in favour of religious pluralism.

Now, in my opinion, most of the fortune religious pluralism enjoys today depends on its political correctness, and there is much rhetoric connected to it, which hinders a critical analysis. Actually, religious pluralism is questionable from different perspectives. I will limit myself here by briefly raising some questions. Can it be stated that all religions have epistemic parity or does epistemic parity only apply to the so-called great religions or world religions? In this latter case why only these? Is marking out a distinction between «great religions» and others not a form of implicit exclusivism? What is at the base of the claim that great religions are all oriented towards a unique Reality? How do we know it? Are we assuming in a hidden way a philosophical meta-theory? How is it possible that contradictory statements regarding the nature of such a unique Reality are equally true? What is the rational explanation for belonging to one or another religion if ultimately there is no significant difference in value among religions? Is there only a contingent explanation and therefore irrational? Finally, why does it seem reasonable to distinguish within the religious traditions an authentic or true core, when for instance faced by religious fundamentalism we say its exponents are not real Islamic believers or real Christian believers, instead we do not talk any more of a true religion in contrast to one or many false religions?

To my mind, similar questions do not find a coherent answer by religious pluralism and therefore we need to search for a different solution by taking into account religious exclusivism or inclusivism, which are theories about religious diversity capable of facing the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity in a way that it can still make sense. This move should not puzzle anyone, because, as Gavin D’Costa has noted, religious pluralism, at least Hick’s version of religious pluralism, has the same logical structure as religious exclusivism and, if it is the case, the real alternative is not between religious exclusivism/inclusivism and religious pluralism, but between religious exclusivism/inclusivism and religious relativism. In fact, this latter means either the bare refutation of any claim to absoluteness or the irreducible plurality of many claims to religious absoluteness, which eventually gives up any rational scrutiny. In both cases, religious relativism seems a feasible option neither for philosophy of religion nor for interreligious theology.

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20 P. Schmidt-Leukel recognizes that religious pluralism is often confused with relativism, but, according to him, there would be an essential difference. The first would permit a critical assessment of religions, while the second simply denies the existence of criteria for supporting the claim to superiority of one or more religions (see P. Schmidt-Leukel, Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology, Orbis Books, New York 2017, p. 4). However, Schmidt-Leukel completely lacks to specify how this critical assessment can be done. In a previous book (see I., God Beyond Boundaries. A Christian and Pluralist Theology of Religions, Vaxmann, Münster - New York 2017, p. 41), he mentions the categories of truth, goodness, and holiness as capable of forming an interreligious judgment and therefore a critical assessment of the religious diversity. They should establish three criteria, respectively of rational, ethical and soteriological type. However, these categories are not determined and their application remains vague. In the end, the reason why Schmidt-Leukel does not offer any valid criteria it is that, if some explicit criteria would be really established for a critical assessment of religions, the theory of religious pluralism would clearly show its exclusivist/inclusivist face. In this view, not even the distinction proposed by K. Ward between hard pluralism and soft pluralism is useful for overcoming the impasse. Soft pluralism does not claim that all religions or at least the great
4. The absoluteness of Christianity today

The possibility of justifying the claim to the absoluteness of Christianity in today’s cultural context depends on the rational plausibility of exclusivism and inclusivism, but also on the observance of certain preliminary conditions, which should accompany the discussion about such theories.

In his book *Das Christentum als absolute Religion*, Ulrich Mann states that the claim to the absoluteness of Christianity in the current cultural context can only be made in connection to an «absolute tolerance»21. However, the concept of absolute tolerance seems contradictory. In fact, it is quite evident that in every field of human thinking and activity there are always limits to what can be tolerated simply because not everything is tolerable, and it is not clear why we should make an exception for the religion. In a similar way, it seems incoherent to limit, as Mann claims, the religious exclusivism on the practical level, minimizing it on the doctrinal level22. In the religious sphere, as in other spheres, it must be a correspondence between the doctrinal level and the practical one, otherwise the practical attitude is just a matter of an arbitrary choice. These claims of Mann only show how one can be puzzled in approaching the issue of the absoluteness of Christianity.

In my opinion, the preliminary conditions sufficient for making the issue of the absoluteness of Christianity in the contemporary philosophy of religion morally acceptable, are the same which A. Plantinga focused on in his defence of religious exclusivism23. The first is that religious exclusivist must be aware of the current state of religious diversity. The second is that he or she has to recognize in different religious traditions the existence of a seemingly genuine devotion and piety. The third is that he or she should be aware that there are no rational arguments that conclusively demonstrate the absoluteness of one’s own religion.

If these conditions are respected, then Plantinga’s defence of religious exclusivism can be also appreciated for making clear that whoever raises a claim to religious absoluteness is not in principle someone who is behaving in an irrational way. If the belief in the absoluteness of one’s religion is acquired by someone whose cognitive faculties are properly functioning, in a suitable cognitive context and without ends which differ from the truth of the belief itself – in sum, if such a belief is in agreement with the religious traditions are equally true; it claims that «no tradition has the completeness of truth about God, that all contain many revisable and corrigible beliefs, and that we should look to other traditions to complement, correct or reshape our own» (K. Ward, Truth and the Diversity of Religions [1990], in Ch. Meister [ed.], *The Philosophy of Religion Reader*, Routledge, London - New York 2008, pp. 26-39, here p. 37). Anyway, if some beliefs are revisable and corrigible, there must be some criteria for doing that and Ward, like Schmidt-Leukel, lacks to establish them. Again, if they were established, then soft pluralism would be overturned into exclusivism/inclusivism. In sum, religious pluralism does not seem a coherent theory because it necessarily oscillates between the extremes of religious relativism and religious exclusivism/inclusivism.

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22 «Absolutheit und Toleranz können zugleich nur so behauptet werden, daß die Exklusivität ihren Ort primär in der praktischen Religion hat und daß sie in der Theologie nur so knapp wie nötig und so zurückhaltend und vorsichtig wie möglich behandelt wird» (ibid, p. 59).
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deliverances of reason, without implying that it possesses self-evident propositional content – then such a belief does not violate any epistemic obligation. Expressed in terms of what R. Swinburne calls the «principle of credulity», this means that if it seems, in an epistemic sense, that one’s own religion is the real one and the believer makes a claim to absoluteness, and if there are no valid reasons against such a belief, then the believer has the epistemic right to hold this belief. As Plantinga has observed, in a context characterized by religious diversity, the awareness of the variety of religious beliefs could serve in the first instance as a rebutting or undercutting defeater compared to the belief in the absoluteness of one’s own religion, but in the long term might even promote a better justification of this belief24.

Obviously, the defence of Plantinga’s exclusivism serves any type of religious exclusivism, not just the Christian one, and this indeed highlights the limits of its position concerning the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity25. A defence of the claim to the absoluteness of Christianity cannot be solely based on subjective reasons which abide by specific epistemic obligations but must present objective reasons, which at least potentially, are comprehensible and acceptable to those who are not Christian. Such a defence is not necessarily connected to exclusivism, but rather can be equally fulfilled by sustaining inclusivism, which I believe in effect to be the best approach. In any case, a defence of the absoluteness of Christianity in philosophy of religion seems, to my mind, to have greater possibilities of success if it is conceived as a cumulative case, which leans on several arguments, each of which is able to bring a certain degree of evidence.

The advantages of a cumulative case for the absoluteness of Christianity seem to be at least three. Firstly, it considers all the rational arguments held by the classical and evidential apologetics without excluding any. For example, the argument of the miracles has been dismissed by modern philosophy of religion, in particular by Troeltsch, but this dismissal is highly questionable as it depends on the acceptance of the premises of naturalism. If these premises are adequately disputed by the theist, then miracles continue to offer a plausible argument, in so far as in itself it is not conclusive as evidential apologetics maintains. The same thing can be stated regarding the Incarnation of God. If we agree that the Incarnation of God expresses in a maximal and unsurpassable way the closeness of God to the human being and there is no logical contradiction in asserting it, there is some evidence that God became Incarnate in Jesus Christ26.

Secondly, a cumulative case for the absoluteness of Christianity is more aware of the limits of human rationality and the mystery of God compared to classical and evidential apologetics. In comparison with the latter, a cumulative case approach is a many-step approach which puts together «a series of converging arguments and evidences that, taken together, form a hypothesis that (it is claimed) superior in explanatory power to

24 «Knowledge of the fact of pluralism could initially serve as a defeater, but in the long run have precisely the opposite effect» (ibid., p. 56).
26 For this line of reasoning, see R. SWINBURNE, Faith and Reason, Clarendon, Oxford 20052, pp. 233 f.
any of its competitors. Thus, no single argument can reach conclusive evidence, but a series of converging arguments can offer the best explanation of all available evidence.

One of the main objections to cumulative case apologetics is the so-called «ten leaky buckets objection». As P. Feinberg summarizes it, «the ineffective arguments when combined cannot make one good argument, just as ten buckets that all leak water cannot in combination hold water»\(^{28}\). However, this objection underestimates the explanatory power of different arguments that do not reach conclusive evidence, because it exactly overestimates that of a single argument. But, usually, the more an argument is considered to be conclusive and the more it risks losing its explanatory power. Let us take the case of the ontological argument: according to Anselm of Canterbury the \textit{unum argumentum} should provide absolute evidence of the existence of God, yet no other argument of natural theology like this is fiercely contested in its validity and in many cases dismissed. The epistemic attitude of the cumulative case apologetics is humble in comparison with other types of apologetics but no less effective. As R. Swinburne stated, «arguments that are not deductively valid are often inductively strong; and, if you put three weak arguments together, you may often get a strong one, perhaps even a deductively valid one.»\(^{29}\).

Finally, I think a cumulative case for the absoluteness of Christianity, because of the inductive and probabilistic nature of its arguments, might be seen by those who have different or no religious beliefs as more respectful of today’s cultural and religious diversity. Undoubtedly, there is something paradoxical in a claim to absoluteness that is raised through arguments that do not appear conclusive, but this fact confirms that certainty in religious matters is an epistemic condition only gained through free consent to the truth.

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  \item \textsuperscript{27} J.K. Beilby, \textit{Thinking about Christian Apologetics. What it is and why we do it}, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove (IL) 2011, p. 98.
  \item \textsuperscript{29} R. Swinburne, \textit{The Existence of God}, Clarendon, Oxford 2004, p. 13, footnote. In this context, Swinburne replies to the objection of the leaky bucket raised by A. MacIntyre and A. Flew.
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