
THEISTIC COSMOLOGY OF RICHARD SWINBURNE AS A PHENOMENON OF THE THEOLOGICAL RENAISSANCE

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Abstract

The subject of this article is the theistic cosmology of Richard Swinburne, which was a noticeable phenomenon of the theological renaissance at the end of the last century, which even now enriches the present age with new theological meanings. Swinburn sees the main task of his work as a consistent systematic development of a new theological paradigm that would use the achievements of modern science. This mental experiment is carried out by the author from the positions of probabilism, is based on the selection of inductive evidence for the existence of God, and ultimately should demonstrate the proper probability of the central position of the religious worldview - 'God exists'. This, according to the author, is the core of his own 'hypothesis of theism', which explains the emergence of the Universe, the reasons for its appearance, the existence and functioning of its constantly operating laws, its focus on the emergence of animals and the emergence of man. Particular attention in the article was paid to the epistemology of Richard Swinburne, his understanding of the method, not only as a tool for finding and fixing the ultimate theological meanings, but already more as a certain way of building the entire theological system, a system that, in turn, became an intermediary between faith itself and culture.

Keywords: theology, God, science, epistemology, hypothesis

1. Introduction - formulation of the problem

Today, the secularized world throws more and more tangible challenges to religious consciousness in general and to Theology in particular, although at the same time it stimulates the efforts of functionaries who represent them with new motivational impulses for the formation of sophisticated means of expressing faith. The achievements of the secularized world, among which and next to which Christian theology exists, prompt the latter to meet the high intellectual guidelines of the current culture, to acquire signs of persuasiveness, comprehensibility, uncontroversiality and, in general, to take into account the

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requirements and norms of common sense. However, trying to reflect reality, moreover, claiming to be the Truth, religion and its ideas arise and function within the subjective and accordingly cannot be forcibly adjusted (like, for example, scientific hypotheses and theories). However, not only a religious intellectual, but also any ordinary believer prefers to find such arguments in everyday life that would undoubtedly indicate that his faith is not an illusion, that it meets the highest requirements of historical truth. In this sense, the prominent Catholic theologian Hans Küng was not mistaken and did not even exaggerate when he categorically stated: “Where faith is based on illusion, there is no faith, but superstition” [1]. Such a situation, in the end, necessarily requires from theology a convincing answer to the main question - how justified are the judgments of theologians about God, Creation, grace, miracles, and whether religion in general can correctly reflect and interpret reality? After all, it does not make any positive sense to build complex theological concepts and put forward groundbreaking theological ideas, when the ancient worldview question is not resolved - about the content of faith and the actual state of affairs, without comparing the content of religious ideas with the real situation of what a person believes in. Without exaggeration, we can say that these questions are now quite acute, and no modern theologian can avoid them. Among the various measures currently used by religious ideologues in order to adapt religious dogmas to the factors of a changing world, the theological interpretation of the achievements of modern science is now extremely important. A fairly wide range of current hierarchs and well-known theologians of various Christian denominations, along this path, at least partially, share and support the opinions of outstanding scientists regarding the existing global dependence of scientific knowledge and the truths of religious faith in explaining the world and its correct interpretation. In his famous lecture *Religion and Science* (May 1937) Planck wrote: “Both religion and Science need for their activities the belief in God, and moreover God stands for the former in the beginning, and for the latter at the end of the whole thinking. For the former, God represents the basis, for the latter - the crown of any reasoning concerning the world-view.” [2]

In this vein, intellectual searches are especially productive in the field of natural theology, where, among other things, the main goal is to search for and present convincing arguments for the existence of God, based solely on the power of reason. These searches are productive and quite effective because it is natural theology that uses a wide range of means in justifying, arguing and presenting its positions, while appealing to reason. Among its cognitive tools are the data of experience, and the truth of the fact, and the main forms of logical reasoning - deductive, inductive, traductive and introspective self-observation, and, of course, the focus on finding the best explanation. This exciting intellectual pursuit delights even those who give full and complete preference to revealed theology, which is a direction in the justification of the nature and existence of God, addressed primarily to faith, and not to reason.

A very old intellectual tradition of substantiating the truths of teaching by the means and forces of the mind goes back to the arguments of the Athenian aristocrat, the great ancient philosopher Plato and is reflected in his book X 'Laws' (4th century BC). It directly concerned that direction of evidence for the existence of God, which was later called cosmological. Following the great initiative of Plato, subsequent thinkers certainly paid special attention to the ways of proving the existence of God, which were called ontological, cosmological, teleological and moral, as well as evidence from religious experience. Many of them devoted all their passion, all their talent to this fascinating and important intellectual pursuit, and put life itself on the altar of service to the idea. The intellectual relay race was preserved in all the interchanges of epochs and cultures, it significantly declared itself in the 20th century, especially in the field of analytical philosophy of religion, an approach that involves the study of this range of problems using the methods of analytical philosophy. Its distinguishing feature in general and the analytical philosophy of religion in particular are the clear principles of clarity, consistency, conclusiveness, scientific nature in substantiating their own concepts and close attention to research methodology.

In this cultural atmosphere in the sixties of the twentieth century, as a response to the powerful challenges of the secularized world, a number of works on metaphysics appeared, designed to fundamentally update and adapt the traditional theistic context to new cultural realities. An extremely gifted philosopher and theologian - Richard Swinburne - a professor at Oxford who associates himself with Orthodoxy, makes an attempt to qualitatively change Christian theology itself; its epistemological foundations are intended to lay the foundation of the new Christian cosmology. The philosophical and theological project of the new theistic cosmology, in which the spirit of its time was most fully embodied - ambitious and significant - to combine the truths of faith and the achievements of modern science under the auspices of a religious worldview. It is presented in one of the most extraordinary theological ideas of modern times - the theistic system of theologian Richard Swinburne.

2. Presenting main material

Emerging in the wake of the theological renaissance of the second half of the twentieth century, Richard Swinburne's ideas, as well as other conceptualizations similar to them, were aimed at criticizing and substantiating traditional theistic evidence for the existence of God; the theologian and philosopher is determined to offer the community of high-browed intellectuals unambiguous and comprehensive answers to the key questions of the religious worldview. The construction of a new theistic cosmology is being implemented mainly within the limits of various inductive proofs of the existence of God, followed by their religious and philosophical assessment.

The breadth of the project and its immensity are comparable only to the intention of academically minded scientists to create a unified theory of everything or to find the 'God's equation': "It would be the holy grail of

Physics, a single formula from which, in principle, one could derive all other equations, starting from the Big Bang and moving to the end of the Universe” [3], that is, the only formula from which, according to Albert Einstein and Michio Kaku, equations can be derived for all states of the Universe, from the beginning of the world to its end - that capacious and short equation that would allow ... “to read the thoughts of God“ [3]. Swinburn sees the deep main task of his work as a consistent systematic development of a new theological paradigm that would be fully consistent with the achievements of modern science. This ratio is carried out by the author from the standpoint of probabilism, is based on the selection of inductive evidence for the existence of God, and ultimately should demonstrate the due probability of the central position of the religious worldview - ‘God exists’. This, according to the author, is the core of his own ‘hypothesis of theism’, which explains the emergence of the Universe, the reasons for its appearance, the existence and functioning of its constantly operating laws, its focus on the emergence of animals and the emergence of man. Natural theology, in the force field of which his theological thought predominantly pulsates, attracting new scientific data, is presented in his numerous works, but to a greater extent in his trilogy - ‘The Coherence of theism’ [4], ‘The Existence of God’ [5] and ‘Faith and Reason’ [6].

However, any probabilistic proofs cannot stay outside the metaphysical systems within which they were formed and functioned. Their undoubted value and importance for these systems lies in the fact that they perform the function of rationalizing faith and are called upon to serve as a support in the believer’s intention to confirm the truth of his faith and come out theoretically armed to meet his ideological opponents. In addition, it is well known that if faith is entirely irrational, then in this situation the theologian loses a significant part of the apologetic possibilities, and on the other hand, the possibilities of communication between theological discourse and scientific discourse are narrowed. Rather, therefore, Richard Swinburne in his works certainly raises the metaphysical, natural, ethical aspects of the formation of a new methodology in the context of the general process of rationalizing the experience of faith. In itself, he sees the substantiation of the ultimate meanings of being as two interrelated, coherent processes - on the one hand, the presentation of his metaphysical judgments about God and the subsequent demonstration of their consistency, on the other, the argumentation of the sufficient probability of the existence of such a God. Accordingly, the identification of the meaning of the statement ‘God exists’ and the attempt to establish its (statement) coherence are associated with the theologian’s confirmation of the truth of this statement by means of inductive apologetics.

A thorough definition of the essential and necessary features of the concept of ‘probabilism’ is provided in ‘A Dictionary of Philosophy’ by Antony Flew: “The doctrine particularly associated with skepticism, to the effect that no definite knowledge can be attained: opinions and actions should therefore be guided by probability” [7]. Richard Swinburne in the preface to the book ‘The Existence of God’ separately and specifically draws the reader’s attention to the

fact that the logical valence of inferences about God of this kind is connected with the concept of probability and cannot have a reliable-truth character, as in deductive inferences. "I shall, however, argue that, although reason can reach a fairly well-justified conclusion about the existence of God, it can reach only a probable conclusion, not an indubitable one. For this reason, there is abundant room for faith in the practice of religion, and my trilogy on the philosophy of theism ends with a volume on Faith and Reason." [5, p. 2]

It is known that the essence of induction consists in establishing some general position based on the observation of individual phenomena. At the same time, we consider this or that phenomenon to be explained if we managed to find the reason that caused this phenomenon to exist or to find such a general law to which this phenomenon is subject. The only and universal explanatory principle to which the author of the 'hypothesis of theism' resorts and on which all his inductive apologetics is based is, of course, God.

However, before finally finding out what exactly causes this phenomenon, anyone makes various assumptions, because any research must take place according to a certain plan, from the point of view of the general idea; such a plan and general idea of theological research in Richard Swinburne is the 'hypothesis of theism' or the thought about the supposed cause of the widest range of phenomena. Such a first ultimate cause for the theologian is God. The concept of 'God' is the oldest global worldview concept. According to Karen Armstrong, a well-known English religious scholar and historian of religion, "this is... one of the grandest ideas of all time" [8]. Its content opened a view of the divine reality, as the Self-existent basis of Being, the supreme Spirit infinite in all perfections, transcendent and unbounded, which cannot be described by its usual words and concepts. Among the indispensable tasks of any knowledge of God, the realization of which is devoted to either broad theological theorizing or individual highly specialized works, there is, among other things, the disclosure of the peculiarities of the relationship 'God-world'. The main semantic meaning of statements about God in certain religious in philosophical contexts is necessarily accompanied by corresponding theological connotations that reveal the nature of the relationship between God and the world and between God and man. Natural theology is especially close to this, the field of interest of which, first of all, includes the clarification of questions of 'natural' reality and the interpretation of the facts of the 'natural' experience of human existence.

The specifics of the religious-philosophical understanding of the relationship between the divine and the earthly are determined by certain established ideas and differ only within minor limits. In the Christian knowledge of God, where the issue of the relationship between God and creation plays a decisive role, a differential typology of the relationship between God and the world was developed, which was based on two sources - biblical ideas and philosophical reflection. The main terms in which representatives of Christian theological and philosophical thought, as a rule, reproduce the understanding of the mentioned relationship are: theism, deism, pantheism and panentheism [9].

In the book ‘The coherence of theism’, the author draws the attention of readers to an important problem of Theology - the presence of God outside of time, his specific, unique existence and action in the historical perspective, action in the unity of the present, past and future: “God’s timelessness is said to consist in His existing at all moments of human time - simultaneously. Thus He is said to be simultaneously present at (and a witness of) what I did yesterday, what I am doing today, and what I will do tomorrow. But if t_1 is simultaneous with t_2 and t_2 with t_3 , then t_1 is simultaneous with t_3 . So if the instant at which God knows these things were simultaneous with both yesterday, today, and tomorrow, then these days would be simultaneous with each other. So yesterday would be the same day as today and as tomorrow - which is clearly nonsense. To avoid this awkward consequence we would have to understand ‘simultaneously’ in a somewhat special stretched sense. The ‘simultaneity’ holding between God’s presence at my actions and those actions would have to differ from normal simultaneity.” [4, p. 228] That is, the entire grandiose thought experiment, theistic in content, undertaken by Richard Swinburne, is directed, on the one hand, inward and is associated with the development and systematization of exclusively metaphysical propositions, as well as ‘outside’, when the thinker theologizes a number of external phenomena and simultaneously with this forms the methods and standards for verifying one’s own theological judgments. In this regard, the author of the ‘hypothesis of theism’ extensively examines the cosmological issues of the Universe, starting from the Big Bang, the emergence of a fundamental pattern of the world order, its (world order) fine-tuning, up to the emergence of man, as well as topical theological problems of the existence of evil and the theodicy of God, predestination and free will of man and so on.

Developing his own hypothesis of theism, the author initially correlates the initial probability of its truth by its simplicity, and, moreover, by its consistency with the so-called ‘background knowledge’. This is how the author argues his opinion in the book ‘The Existence of God’: “If we assume that all our empirical data are among the things to be explained, then our background knowledge will be mere tautological evidence; and so our concern will be with the intrinsic probability of theism, and that... is basically a matter of how simple a hypothesis it is” [5, p. 93]. In the justification system of the theologian, background data is already existing knowledge or knowledge of related industries that is used in assessing the likelihood of any position in Science, without verification. In terms of organizing a large-scale study, this is an undoubted convenience because it allows one to explain universal systems without taking into account background knowledge, to evaluate them as ‘tautological data’. Interpreting such a grandiose phenomenon as the Universe, Swinburne operates with background knowledge as tautological data, besides, he focuses on the orderliness in the structure of the world, the regularity of its laws. Starting from the fact of the existence of an ordered Universe, the theologian, through chains of reasoning, follows to the position ‘God exists’. At the same time, he wonders whether the existence of the Universe is a simple brute fact or whether the existence of the world order can be somehow explained. Of course,

the argumentation of the ultimate meanings of being of an onto-epistemological order can be reduced to an exclusively naturalistic explanation of this phenomenon, as well as to well-known results of a special kind. However, in the reasoning of Richard Swinburne, the Universe is destined to find its final meanings only through a religious context. And in the available categorical alternative situation that characterizes the state of things in the form of an 'either-or' dilemma in resolving the eternal worldview question about the content of faith and the actual state of affairs, Swinburne, of course, defends the existence of God as a universal explanatory idea. In the non-trivial theistic plan-prospect of searching for the ultimate causes of being, the theologian, of course, gravitates towards their personal explanation incomparably more than the existing cosmological hypotheses based, according to the author, on inanimate causality and impersonal determination. From the existence of the transpersonal being of God, the theologian, using the idea of possible worlds, derives his personal attributes and gives a detailed theological interpretation of the latter. God, for the theologian, acts as the Alpha and Omega of being, as such, and such a personal simplest explanation of everything, according to the theologian's convictions, is more significant and convincing than, say, polytheistic systems or a demiurge with limited capabilities, who 'works' with existing matter. It is simple, and therefore (according to the author) effective for understanding the properties of things.

The results of painstaking theological work have become the author's substantive provisions of a theological and axiological nature. The God of theism, Swinburne unfolds his thought, following the theological traditions equally accepted by both Western and Eastern Christianity, is unlimited in basic possibilities, He in His omnipotence at every moment supports existence of the world in time. However, the world itself is contingent, not necessary, since it does not have a reason for its own existence in itself and is entirely dependent on an external causal factor - God, while God himself does not need, according to the author, any explanations, for he is a necessary being, existing by virtue of itself independently of anything else.

It is known that the verification procedures resorted to by Theology, as a type of disciplinary discourse, are fundamentally different from the nature and structure of proofs accepted in Science. And yet, as evidenced by the conclusions of separate studies of the nature of religious and scientific knowledge, religious knowledge can be considered as an equal competitor in importance to scientific hypotheses, without trying to equate the position of religious consciousness with the content of scientific assumptions [10]. In addition, in its study of the nature of reality, as theologians emphasize, Theology should not deviate from the general criteria of common sense, which guide science. Among them, the most important are: a) compliance with the data (criterion of 'existential relevance'); b) internal consistency, completeness and general reasonableness ('adequacy' criterion); c) simplicity ('economy' criterion); d) productivity in relation to new ideas [11].

Fulfilling the task of rationalizing faith, being associated with the relevant content of the religious worldview, these theistic proofs do not have logical apodicticity, they are not unconditionally necessary, and for the proselyte they mean little in themselves, their significance is acquired only if they are included in a broad theological context, in a certain metaphysical system, where they acquire a truly religious tonality and colouring. In other words, the apologetic value of this kind of evidence is low if they are aimed at a qualitative change in the consciousness of a sceptic, a freethinker or an atheist, however, being tied to a certain theological system, they can act as a significant factor in strengthening faith and rationalizing it. Rather, because of this, Richard Swinburne devotes much attention in his research to the development of evidentialism. Proponents of evidentialism are convinced that a knowing subject can unconditionally name such a result of his activity, which is based on some inductive proof (evidence) of its truth, as knowledge.

In this regard, it should be noted that not every hypothesis can be of value to the research community. In order for a hypothesis to have such a value, it must be properly reasoned; at this stage, its formulation and verification of truth is completed. It is known that in the methodology of Science, testing the truth of a hypothesis involves establishing that the consequences that should follow from it really coincide with the phenomena we observe; it also involves finding that the hypothesis we have adopted does not contradict any other laws that we consider to be true, any other hypotheses that we continue to consider probable. The author is quite serious about the procedure for verifying his own hypothesis, increasing the degree of its probability; this is decisively facilitated by the fact that he is widely informed and adequately competent in the advanced achievements of contemporary science, in addition, he is distinguished by outstanding analytical abilities and a penchant for broad scientific synthesis. His scientific interests are amazingly wide - from the Theory of probability, the Theory of relativity, Quantum physics, Astrophysics, Chemistry, Microbiology to modern Humanities. Using the cognitive resources of the probabilistic approach, he uses knowledge from these areas of Science to confirm the judgments of his scientized epistemology, aimed at the theistic explanation of things. Swinburne turns his research interest first and foremost to the basic nomological structure of the Universe, expressed in its (Universe) fundamental laws; he, like any diligent theist, claims that it is the result of a grandiose creationist volitional act of creating the world out of nothing, extremely remote in time. In this regard, Swinburne's 'inductive theology' in the gradual process of accumulating the facts of reality should, in accordance with the philosopher's intention, be confirmed cumulatively and correlated with cosmological proof of the divine creation of the world from nothing.

The evidence base of Richard Swinburne's 'hypothesis of theism', on the one hand, relies on the nomological ordering of the world, on the other hand, uses the powerful evidentiary power of the idea of 'fine tuning' of the Universe. This well-known concept of theoretical physics shows the basis of the world not as arbitrary, but as strictly defined constants, initial parameters and conditions

for its existence, the slightest change of which would not allow the emergence of not only life in the Universe, but would also call into question the existence of the microcosm and the macrocosm as a whole. The logic and algorithm of the theologian's argument use this mysterious phenomenon of the Universe and interpret it not as a consequence of chance or a happy coincidence, but as a direct consequence of intelligent design. The strong demonstrative possibility of the criterion of simplicity in the concept of Richard Swinburne is effectively used in close connection with the arguments of fine-tuning the Universe, and in such a way as to ultimately convincingly show both adherents and biased critics that the Universe in time immemorial, even in the first moments of Planck time, is specially fine-tuned on the emergence of the human body by God, and without God's influence on the share of chance in the myriad fluctuations at the subatomic level, this would never have happened. The various arguments to which the thinker appeals, increasing the degree of probability of the hypothesis put forward to confirm, a significant number of facts to which, following the traditions of probabilism, he resorts, should, according to Swinburne's plan, combine synergistically, forming a cumulative effect in the very procedure of proof, and that there is above all hopes - to achieve the ultimate goal of the initiated study of the topic - changing knowledge and transforming them into a set of beliefs in the very structure of the individual's worldview.

And yet the author cannot avoid a well-known flaw in the procedure of proof - the so-called 'circle in proof', which is inherent in the system of theological argumentation - when the thesis is substantiated with the help of arguments, which, however, themselves rely on the thesis for their justification. From the very beginning of his argument, he proposes to take on faith what he is trying to subject to the verification procedure using the means of inductive apologetics. The scheme of theological evidence, including the Orthodox one, with which the author associates himself, invariably follows the following algorithm - the eternal and unchanging God, theologians teach, offers man absolute and universally valid truths, unchangeable, once and for all certain, which a person is not at all able to comprehend limited means of the mind, despite all its, even the most daring cognitive acts, since they are comprehended exclusively by the heart. However, this does not exclude a change in the very form of Theology, its improvement on the path of comprehending the content of divine Revelation. The content of this improvement itself is quite peculiar, since its immutability is already predetermined. Consequently, any theological study of a topic always and inevitably returns to where it started, that is, these changes are largely changes in appearance, and not in essence.

The principle of simplicity is an indisputable criterion, which guides the philosopher through the study of the vicissitudes of cosmogenesis from the Big Bang to the emergence of man, and the selection and interpretation of empirical material. However, a simplistic interpretation of it in this process of research will be extremely far from both the meanings that the author of the 'hypothesis of theism' puts into his understanding, and from the hopes that inspire the philosopher, considering him to be the key to the effectiveness of knowledge, hence this is far from primitive simplification, lapidary and not even economical

explanation of the world order, but the ultimate perfection of the explanation. For the author, the question of fundamental importance is whether the 'hypothesis of theism' - 'God exists' is simple enough to be verified and ultimately true.

The author of the 'hypothesis of theism' asks the question whether the existence of the Universe is a primordial given, simple evidence that exists on its own, regardless of anything, or whether this fact has special explanation and interpretation. The academic scrupulousness that pervades Swinburne's theology compels him to go back to the very origins of knowledge and clarify the specifics of the explanatory function of Science; he also considers and typologizes different kinds of explanation. However, all the explanatory measures and procedures of the theologian have a pronounced religious colouring and, in the end, are designed to force the individual, through chains of inference, to mentally proceed from the fact of the existence of the Universe to the conviction that God certainly exists. But the author is convinced that the strength and persuasiveness of an explanation depends to a decisive extent on the very a priori probability of phenomena: "The explanatory power of an explanation depends crucially on the prior probability of the phenomena, how likely it is that phenomena would occur irrespective of whether the proposed explanation of them is correct. So, a crucial factor in determining the force of an argument from phenomena to God's existence is whether those phenomena would be at all likely to have occurred but for God's agency." [5, p. 73]

It has already been noted above that the criterion for the correctness of a hypothesis is its correlation with the facts being studied. In addition to this, the researcher must also make sure that the hypothesis he has accepted not only does not contradict the observed facts, but it is the only possible one, that it is only with its help that the entire set of observed (investigated) phenomena finds a completely sufficient justification for itself, that is, when practice, results are revealed that can only follow from a certain system of knowledge. However, in an attempt to meet the requirements of the law of sufficient reason - in search of arguments for their own statements, one can get into a situation with an infinite regression of explanations. Here the question of unconditional truths arises, by citing which we avoid the movement of evidence to infinity and consider judgments sufficiently substantiated. The existence and functioning of the most general laws of Nature by scientists is taken as a 'brute fact', that is, a position that does not require further confirmation. However, in the theistic cosmology of Richard Swinburne, the initial principle of the study of the problem, the arrangement and analysis of the material is the existence of God.

The whole system of Richard Swinburne's theology is based on the probabilistic method - the systematic selection of inductive evidence for the existence of God and the calculation of the degree of probability that the proposition 'God exists' is true. However, the creator of the new theistic cosmology builds the framework of the theological system widely using both deductive and traductive reasoning and inference methods. So, in particular, with the help of deduction, he deduces a number of divine attributes, reveals the

essential relationship 'God-world', explicates his version of theodicy, sets out questions of an ethical nature; presenting numerous illustrative material, designed to support speculative theses by appealing to the evidence of everyday experience, the author resorts to inferences by analogy. Moreover, if in traditional theological systems natural theology always anticipates the theology of revelation, then Richard Swinburne has a very pronounced bias in the field of apologetics. Moreover, the author considers and defends his own 'religious science teaching' as an example of traditional apologetics, which in all respects corresponds to the characteristics of classical theism.

So, what do we mean by the term 'method' when we are talking about a specifically theological way of obtaining knowledge in general and Richard Swinburne's own method in particular? Here it is possible to reduce the volume of the corresponding concept to its instrumental understanding - as a set of techniques and operations for acquiring new knowledge; then the theologian's method is a purely inductive method of arguing and establishing the degree of probability that the proposition 'God exists' is true. However, here, apparently, one should agree with the opinion of the prominent Canadian researcher, methodologist of Theology B. Lonergan, who rejects such a narrow understanding of the method in its application to Theology. The effective method of Theology, according to his convictions, is necessarily connected with scientific knowledge, takes into account the context of modern Humanities, inextricably linked with advanced philosophical ideas and searches [12]. Lonergan finds it possible to supplement such an interpretation of the method with the following remark about it as a normative pattern of repetitive and interconnected operations that bring cumulative and progressive results [12, p. 18]. In such a broader understanding of the method, in its application to the epistemology of Richard Swinburne, the theologian sees the method not only as a tool for finding and fixing the ultimate theological meanings, but even more as a certain way of building the entire theological system, a system that in turn becomes mediator between faith and culture itself. Moreover, the intellectual efforts aimed at understanding "God's plan for building the Universe" [13] from time to time directly enriched this culture itself, caused its strange rise and progress. "It should be recognized - writes the well-known Ukrainian specialist in the field of Philosophy of science I. Teshmistro - that the discovery of God in Nature and in oneself, as well as an intense dialogue with him, served as the source of a powerful, unprecedented rise in culture, literally in all its spheres. Even the great creators of Science, Galileo and Newton... quite sincerely believed that the whole point of their activity was to unravel the mathematical scheme according to which God created Nature." [13, p. 14-15].

However, intellectual attempts to comprehend reality, its root cause and origin, - in the words of Martin Heidegger - are a real "miracle of miracles" - "Why is there an existence at all, but not nothing?" [14] worried sages, thinkers and philosophers at all times. These daring intellectual attempts did not always succeed. Numerous opponents of Richard Swinburne doubt that he has succeeded significantly in resolving this range of issues. Why is the basic structure of the world the way it is and has no other structure? - in this matter,

passionate critics of the theorizing of Richard Swinburne, in particular Adolf Grünbaum, an American philosopher of Science, professor at the University of Pittsburgh, member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, see the most vulnerable point of his concept [15]. However, with regard to Swinburne's ideological opponents, the initial prejudice of their approaches to this range of issues causes suspicion. Therefore, one can hardly agree with the conclusions of the same Professor Adolf Grünbaum, who, summing up the results of the research of cosmologists of the twentieth century, argues that scientists have no reason to recognize the creative role of the deity as the basis of being [16]. Such statements are biased, and, in fact, are the result of too hasty generalizations, that is, in fact, are generalized false conclusions. And yet, the original advantages of the theologian's intention, when he tries to win over the advanced discoveries of science, from time to time become his weak points, when the author in discussions with academically minded scientists is not always at the height of his argumentation. This is all understandable, since the time of universal scientists, say, such as Galileo Galilei, is long gone, and the current differentiation of sciences makes competence in all fields of knowledge completely impossible, and the author of the 'hypothesis of theism' is forced to wage protracted rear-guard battles with representatives of rapidly developing natural history.

Although, if the author's metaphysical ambitions were sacrificed to his theological intent, and they were entirely focused on confirming and justifying that theological intent in the spirit of analytical philosophy, the burden of proof, very imprudently undertaken by the author, could be blamed on his biased critics, the proponents of the ideas of the famous populariser of Science Richard Dawkins. Most of them, without due respect for the requirements of the law of sufficient reason, persist in presenting the weak and dubious hypothesis of the spontaneous origin of life and its further evolution, up to the appearance of man, as a scientific theory.

In this case, the demonstration possibilities of Bayes' theorem, to which the thinker appeals, turned out to be insufficient. It is known that the available apparatus of the theory of probability and, first of all, this important theorem of it make it possible to calculate the probability of any event, provided that other events statistically related to it are sufficiently known and, based on the known fact of the event, it is possible to establish the possibility of that it was caused by a specific cause. In addition, according to the Bayes formula, it is possible to more accurately recalculate the probability, taking into account both previously known data and new observational data. For Swinburne, this seemed interesting, since the very use of Bayesian statistics and the Bayesian interpretation of probability made it possible to use them as a powerful argument in the way of increasing the personal confidence of readers in his assumptions, because he gave a sufficient number of arguments. The very results of calculating the a posteriori probability of theism, according to the initial data, according to the author, are equal to $\frac{1}{2}$. Numerous supporters of Swinburne unanimously recognize such theoretical calculations as weighty, and the probability $\frac{1}{2}$ is quite solid. Although it is well known that even without complex mathematical

calculations, practice has long shown a person that if the hypothesis of theism about the existence of a supernatural source of things (God) can correspond to the actual structure of being, then the probability of this hypothesis can be equal to $\frac{1}{2}$; in probability theory, and this is known to specialists, the probability of the lion's share of statements is equal to the probability of their negation, and this is known even without special calculations.

However, the appeal to the traditional religious argumentation of the theologian pursuing his apologetic goals is quite justified, since the appeal to religious experience significantly increases the likelihood of the hypothesis of theism. In Bayes' theorem, on which the author places great hopes, the data of religious experience are included in the numerator of the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$, which significantly increases the degree of probability of judging the existence of God. Moreover, Richard Swinburne pays special attention to the fact that sometimes some rational arguments in favour of faith can be less significant than the religious experience of revealing God and experiencing an encounter with God. In the book 'Faith and Reason', he especially emphasizes this thesis: "The arguments considered so far purporting to show that arguments to the existence of God, and more generally arguments about fundamental religious matters, will not work all proceed from general philosophical considerations. There are also arguments which are internal to the Christian religion in the sense that they argue that if the Christian religion is true, it cannot be shown to be true by rational argument from premises reporting data available to atheist and Christian alike; or that, even if this can be shown, someone who comes to believe as a result of such argument will not have the kind of belief required for religious faith. People should come to Christian belief on this view by hearing the preaching of the Christian Gospel or reading the Bible and coming to feel 'Yes that's true'; by an inward religious experience of the presence of God making the subject aware of Christian truth." [6, p. 106]

To increase the probative power of the data of religious experience, Swinburne puts forward the principle of trust, according to which human perceptions and religious experiences must be recognized as sufficiently weighty due to the lack of reliable grounds for doubt. The author reveals the essence of his understanding of the idea of trust in the following words: "The Principle of Credulity is concerned with a subject's grounds for believing that things are as they seem to him. Clearly, in ordinary life we use also a wider principle. Other things being equal, we believe that what others tell us that they perceived probably happened. By 'other things being equal' I mean in the absence of positive grounds for supposing that the others have misreported or misremembered their experiences, or that things were not in fact as they seemed to those others to be. Clearly, most of our beliefs about the world are based on what others claim to have perceived - beliefs about geography and history and Science and everything else beyond immediate experience are thus based. We do not normally check that an informant is a reliable witness before accepting his reports. The assumption that things are (probably) as others claim to have perceived them has two components. One is the Principle of Credulity - that (in the absence of special considerations) things are (probably) as others are inclined

to believe that they have perceived them. The other component is the principle that (in the absence of special considerations) the experiences of others are (probably) as they report them. This latter principle I will call the Principle of Testimony.” [5, p. 322]

However, the legitimacy of using the methodology of calculating statistical regularities regarding specific religious concepts and establishing with its help the degree of probability of statements about the existence of God, his actions in the world, the reality of a miracle, grace, sacrament, creation, etc., is very doubtful. Because it is applied to recurring events marked by empirical similarity. In the methodology of Theology, they approach the situation when these or other religious testimonies are not evaluated according to their quality, but only interpreted from the point of view of the laws of Statistics, with great caution. Hence, for example, belief in a miracle can be declared extremely improbable, and therefore meaningless, since, they say, a person should rely on the most probable, that is, choose the highest odds. Richard Swinburne draws attention to the correct understanding of the meaning of the concept of ‘miracle’ in the book devoted to the study of miracles ‘The Concept of Miracle’: “There are many different senses of the English word ‘miracle’ (and of words normally so translated into English). In this chapter I shall distinguish these different senses, and show how they are related. I shall end by justifying my taking a particular sense of the word for subsequent philosophical analysis. I shall in subsequent chapters consider in detail what it means to say that in this sense a miracle occurred, and what would be evidence that it did. My analysis of this sense should indicate the way in which claims about miracles in other senses of the word are to be analysed, and so supported or refuted.” [17] The misunderstanding in this situation manifests itself in the fact that the critic of miracles here does not evaluate the evidence in favour of the miracle, but only compiles (adds) evidence against the latter. At one time, the famous Viennese doctor and philosopher Sigmund Freud expressed himself in the following way regarding a similar situation: ‘Believability is not necessary for the truth, and the truth is not always believable’. Yes, human experience and the practice of common sense have long made it obvious that sometimes the odds against an event are quite significant, but the evidence in favour of it can be quite convincing, and any prudent person in his intentions takes into account not only probability, but also the facts. Let’s mention here at least an ancient Latin maxim that characterizes the purity of thesis argumentation - ‘argumenta ponderantur, non numerantur’ (The strength of proofs is determined by their weight, but not by their quantity).

The misunderstanding here also arises due to the fact that the concept of ‘probability’, in its academic and scientific meaning, when probability is used in the formulation of scientific laws, begins to be applied to some historical events. As you know, the specificity of the latter, and miracles are conditionally included among them, is unique and unrepeatable, one historical event is unlike another. The formulation of a scientific law assumes the repeatability of events, their regularity is tied to the frequency of the event - the more often the

phenomenon under study is observed under similar conditions, the more likely the assumption expressing the law is. So, in such a situation, the specifics of studying historical events by a specialist-historian are ignored and evaluated exclusively from the point of view of the laws of statistics and the probability of repeated events, which is nothing more than a distorted understanding of probability and an improper extrapolation of the signs and principles of one cognitive practice to another.

Traditionally, theologians make a distinction between the essence of God, what He is (His 'being'), on the one hand, and His effective aspect, that is, what He does (His 'becoming'), on the other. Such a distinction, according to the definition of the theologians themselves, is very conditional, if only because when formulating judgments about the essence of God, we inevitably refer to His manifestations in the visible phenomenal world, based on how we understand his influence on the world structure. However, the recognition of the causal connection between God and the world, which allows the enrichment of static theology with dynamic metaphors, enables theologians to follow from the nature of the world to the essence of God. Thus, the proposition about the knowability of the world gives grounds for recognizing the intelligence of God, the sequence and orderliness of the processes of the creation of the world indicate God's devotion to the established laws.

The Society of Christian theists in its explanation of the nature of God is especially careful, where it is, of course, possible, to take into account the requirements of the principles of internal consistency, completeness and general validity of its ideas. These efforts acquire special significance for the theological tradition, which includes a large part of modern authors writing on religious topics, namely, the theology of the perfected being. Its vocation is to develop and justify the concept of the greatest and most perfect being - God, who possesses a number of certain qualities, without any internal contradiction. This is the immediate subject of thought of traditional (classical) theists. In the subject-problematic field of the above-mentioned searches, the authors inevitably touch on very subtle, and sometimes frankly painful questions that have historically faced theology in general. The existing situation here is complicated by the fact that God, in whom Christians believe and trust, is endowed in the Holy texts with different and, often, contradictory features. Moreover, reflections on God's actions in the world are often combined with the temptation to anthropomorphize him, to adapt him to human desires and ideas, which is characteristic of the so-called 'open theism' or, in a more pronounced form, for process theology. In this regard, the amplitude of Richard Swinburne's theological preferences varies from devotion to the classical models of theistic theology, when he plunges into the dimensions of pure abstraction and thinks about the existence of God, more or less traditionally, to quite stunning innovations, when the theologian begins to think about the effective aspect of God.

And yet the great plan, which was originally within the reach and strength of the mythical Titans, and which was not devastated and was not weakened, because it was saturated from the eternal and inexhaustible sources of the Spirit,

has not yet been fully realized and not completed. However, the theologian's elaboration of the 'hypothesis of theism', a specific approach to it, as a special explanatory construction that comprehensively interprets the first mystery of the world and, accordingly, the initial question of the worldview, makes it possible to consciously approach the clarification of the great existential alternative, that inevitably appears before every individual: the complete meaninglessness of human existence and the drama of a man utterly abandoned in the immensity of an indifferent Universe, rejecting the transcendent First Foundation of the being, or the fundamental meaningfulness of man's own existence in the world, which, according to his belief, is guided externally by the divine will of the Creator.

Being in the force field of the inductive method and widely drawing on the idea of fine-tuning the Universe, Swinburne gradually approaches the questions of Anthropology. Through a series of interrelated arguments, he attempts to show that without God, the Universe could in no way be tuned to the existence of the human body and the functioning of its consciousness. Rather traditionally, Richard Swinburne considers the problem of the existence of evil in the world - in its close connection with the problem of human free will - since the possibility of free choice by a person hides the potential danger of evil. But Swinburne's theodicy, if it can be defined as an attempt to theologically remove the irreconcilable contradiction between belief in an all-good God and the existence of evil in the world, the author turned out to be straightforwardly naturalistic and devoid of the required share of compassion.

3. Conclusions

Being Richard Swinburne's original creatively conceived system of philosophical theology, to the development of which he wholeheartedly devoted all his inspiration, his brilliant gifts, vast knowledge and intellectual intuition, is obviously not yet complete. However, even now it impresses with the breadth of coverage of specifically theological material, as well as the facts of reality, with the depth of analysis of various phenomena. Many fruitful ideas beyond its inductive cumulation of various factual material and subsequent generalizations of accumulated knowledge and bypassing the force field of the criterion of simplicity are still waiting for their further substantiation, which forces theological thought to pulsate again and again in the process of revealing the secrets of unearthly existence. However, the brave theologian, having recklessly assumed the burden of proof from the outset, was not always able to fill the gaps in understanding the put forward ideas with his own argumentation and show the advantages of his positions over alternative systems of world outlook. Although otherwise, representatives of prejudiced criticism of the reasoning of Richard Swinburne could face the extreme weakness of their own evidence base. For example, supporters of the concept of evolution, where, bypassing evidence and sufficient grounds, due to the lack of the necessary empirical material, the semi-fantastic idea of an uninterrupted chain of happy accidents is defended, accidents that allegedly initially led to the emergence of simple forms of life. And later

this idea was supplemented by the provision of other uncontrollable cases, through the combination of which supposedly an amazing variety and complexity of living beings appeared. And a reliable defense against numerous critics and ideological opponents of theism remained practically unused, it consisted in following the canons of classical theism, the theology of which traditionally cannot be other than supernatural, and, therefore, super-rational, that is, inaccessible to destructive criticism of any kind.

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