

Section Three

COSMOS AND HISTORY

Richard Swinburne's Probabilistic Epistemology

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The purpose of this article is related to the study of the ideas of the modern Christian theologian Richard Swinburne; in addition, attention is drawn to the fundamentals of the new theistic cosmology proposed by the theologian. The author mainly focused on studying the most general provisions of the Christian religious-theological paradigm developed by Swinburne. The author was also interested in identifying and interpreting the problem of a convincing justification of faith. The main result of the study of the problem was the conclusion that the idea of a new theistic cosmology developed by the theologian is carried out by Richard Swinburne from the standpoint of probabilism, based on the selection of inductive evidence for the existence of God; all this should ultimately demonstrate the proper likelihood of the central position of the religious worldview – “God exists.”

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Introduction

Formulation of the problem. Solving the problem of the correlation between science and religion and the specifics of their interaction has always been and remains important for Christian theology, regardless of its confessional orientation and coloring. It acquires

special significance and sound in modern socio-cultural conditions, in a situation of accelerated scientific and technological progress development. The theologians' approach to the achievements of modern science is now taking on new forms, and the theological dialogue with the natural science worldview, an attempt to give a proper assessment of modern scientific discoveries, is becoming, according to theologian Alistair E. McGrath, "fascinating and worthy intellectual activity" (Christian Theology, 2016: 8). All these efforts of theologians are ultimately aimed at theoretically substantiating the idea of the compatibility of theology with natural science and, ultimately, to prove that truth is no longer a matter of dispute between faith and knowledge of the world. On the other hand, trying to give a fundamental explanation of the nature of reality at the microcosm level, even academic researchers sometimes, at the same time, do not completely abandon attempts to simultaneously find channels of God's interaction with the surrounding world, to identify the direction of his actions on the matter and energy of the Universe, and the use of religious terminology to interpret the consequences of modern scientific research of the world directly confirms what has been said. That is, individual ideological structures that generalize the content of theoretical knowledge, which is the subject of the development of science at its current historical stage, clearly reveal a veiled (and sometimes direct) connection with the supernatural.

Presenting main material

Researchers, who by the will of fate are included in the dialogue of faith and reason, can be divided into two camps. On the one hand, these are those who are engaged in certain branches of science and are at the forefront of scientific research in their field of knowledge, but, at the same time, ideological and philosophical assessments of the current state of affairs are sometimes superficial. On the other hand, there are scientists whose vocation is the formal and logical correctness of reasoning and further ideological generalizations, although the data of academic science they use are sometimes secondary and taken from popular scientific sources. Richard Swinburne is an Oxford professor, an Anglican theologian from the United Kingdom who converted to Orthodoxy in 1990, whose theological concept and method are the subject of this article. Swinburne's philosophical and theological project is ambitious and significant – to combine the truths of faith and the achievements of modern science under the auspices of a religious worldview.

This combination is carried out by the author from the point of view of probabilism, is based on the selection of inductive proofs of the existence of God and ultimately must demonstrate the proper probability of the central position of the religious worldview – "God exists." A detailed definition of the essential and necessary characteristics of the concept of "probabilism" is contained in Anthony Flue's *Philosophical Dictionary*: "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" (*Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1979: 268). 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 conclusions about God of this kind is connected with the concept of probability and cannot have a reliably true character, as in deductive conclusions: "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" (Swinburne, 2004: 2). Hence, the essence of

Richard Swinburne's probabilistic epistemology is that the validity of a belief is determined by its probability and the probability of other beliefs associated with it.

Probabilistic epistemology is, according to the author, the living and functioning soul of his own "hypothesis of theism," which is designed to explain the origin of the Universe, the reasons for its appearance, the existence and functioning of its constantly operating laws, its focus on the appearance of animals and the appearance of man. The natural theology, which the author builds by drawing on new scientific data, is presented in his numerous works, but most of all in his trilogy – "The coherence of theism," "The Existence of God" and "Faith and Reason" (Swinburne, 1993, 2004, 2005).

Traditionally, theologians distinguish 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"). The author, taking into account the traditions of the existing distinction, in addition to inductive proofs of the existence of God, deduces his main attributes by deduction, interprets the relationship "God-the world," considers the essence of God's providential concern for the world together with ethics, gives his vision of theodicy. The construction of a new theistic cosmology is carried out mainly within the framework and with the help of Swinburne's apologetics, which takes into account various inductive proofs of the existence of God, and gives them a proper assessment; therefore, here we are dealing with a special kind of faith, namely, "fides gauerens intellectum," that is, faith that seeks understanding (Anselm of Canterbury).

The main principle through which the epic of evolution from the Big Bang to the appearance of man is studied and on the basis of which the researcher selects and interprets empirical material is the principle of simplicity. In addition, the simplicity of the author is far from a primitive simplification, a lapidary, or even an economical explanation of the world order, but the ultimate perfection of the explanation. Here is how the author argues his own 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" (Swinburne, 2004: 93).

The author wonders whether the "hypothesis of theism» – God exists, is so simple as to be verified and ultimately true. In addition, he tries to proceed from the fact of the existence of the Universe and formulate a fateful question for his new theology – whether the existence of the Universe is an initial given, a simple phenomenon that exists by itself, regardless of anything, and also, in addition to this, whether there is an independent explanation and understanding of this fact. Having tried to give his own version of theism proper intellectual respectability and significance, the author tries to get to the very origins of knowledge and find out the essence of such a function of science as an explanation; he also examines and classifies various types of explanation. However, the logical and methodological procedure of interpretation by Swinburne himself, being rational in nature, is nevertheless theological in content, purpose and, of course, the results obtained – this is the initial setting and the maximum justification for the existence of God. This justification, therefore, must certainly lead the reader through the chains of conclusions from the fact of the existence of the Universe to the statement that God really exists.

However, in the search for grounds for their own arguments, anyone can find themselves in a situation with an infinite regression of explanations. And for any system of knowledge, there must be a series of inexplicable explanatory, that is, those unconditional truths, thanks to which we avoid the movement of proof to Infinity. In scientific theories, where we are talking about the original nomology of the Universe, there is also a place for inexplicable

explanations; thus, the existence and functioning of the most general laws of nature is taken by scientists as a “gross fact” that does not provide for further confirmation. However, in Richard Swinburne’s theistic cosmology, the initial principle of studying the problem, arranging and analyzing the material is the existence of God. He prefers to choose between the Universe as the end point [of explanation] and God as the end point.

As can be seen, from the very beginning of the explication of the content of the hypothesis of theism, the theologian suggests taking on faith what he is finally trying to subject to the verification procedure by means of inductive apologetics. The theory of argumentation of theology, including Orthodox theology, with which the author associates himself, in this situation unfolds its provisions as follows: God in the depth of his essential dignity can be comprehended exclusively by the “eyes of faith,” but faith, in turn, gets its confirmation, to a large extent, through God. The peculiarity of the practice of such proof, as can be seen, is that the thesis about the existence of God is proved with the help of a special argument (faith), the truth of which, in turn, is justified through a statement that itself needs to be proved (God).

Such a technique in Christian apologetics takes on a complex, Scholastic-veiled form, when not several judgments are compared, but a whole system of judgments or an integral theological concept is offered to the attention. Thus, these concepts are taken by theologians as interdependent, which is quite consistent with the logic of the Christian faith. After all, the eternal and unchangeable God, theologians teach, provides man with timeless and “cross-cutting” truths, unchangeable, once and for all determined, which a person is able to understand not by limited means of the mind, but exclusively by the heart. However, this does not exclude a change in the very form of theology, its improvement on the way to understanding the content of divine Revelation. However, the content of this improvement itself is quite peculiar since its immutability is already predetermined. Consequently, any theological study of the topic always and certainly comes to what it began with.

Using the theism hypothesis, Swinburne attributes the initial probability of its truth not only to its simplicity, but also to how consistent it is with basic knowledge. According to the author, the initial data is already available knowledge or knowledge from related fields, which are used to assess the probability of any position of science without verification. In methodological terms, this allows us to explain universal systems without taking into account background knowledge and evaluate them as “tautological data.” Giving a global assessment of such a large-scale phenomenon as the existence of the Universe, Swinburne uses background knowledge as tautological data. In addition, he focuses on the order and ordering of the world, the regularities of the laws of nature, and also studies and evaluates them from the point of view of the existence of the Universe itself. The consequences that should follow from the assumption of the hypothesis accepted by the author should correspond to the facts of reality, while background knowledge is evaluated for convenience as tautological, that is, simply taken into account; all this determines the degree of probability of the accepted hypothesis. However, simplicity is crucial in calculating the latter, which in no case should be ignored or underestimated.

As already mentioned, in his philosophical and theological reflections, Swinburne proceeds from the existing existence of an ordered universe to the position of “God exists.” Fundamentally important in the theologian’s theorizing is the question of the existence of the Universe only as a simple rough fact or that the existence of the Universe can be explained in some way. Attempts to bring ontological clarity to the field of knowledge can be reduced to an exclusively physical explanation of this phenomenon and to a similar argumentation of existing explanations. However, the global explanatory idea in theistic

conceptualizations is, of course, God. In a dilemma between the Universe, as the end point of all possible interpretations, and God, as a universal explanatory idea, Swinburne prefers the latter. In his own theistic scenario of the search for the root causes of existence, Swinburne, of course, seeks to explain them from the point of view of the personality of God, to an incomparably greater extent than existing cosmological hypotheses based, according to the author, on non-spiritual causality and impersonal determination. From the existence of the transpersonal being of God, the theologian, using the idea of possible worlds, deduces his personal attributes and gives a detailed theological interpretation of the latter. The theologian puts God at the center of the Universe while emphasizing that such a simple explanation of everything is more justified than polytheistic systems or a demiurge with limited capabilities which “works” with the existing matter. It is simple and, therefore (according to the author), effective for understanding the properties of the physical world. Swinburne, following the standards equally accepted by both Western and Eastern Christianity, talks about a God who is unlimited in basic possibilities; God, in his omnipotence, instantly supports the world’s existence in time. Such existence of the world is accidental, because it has no reason to exist by itself. Still, the world around us directly and directly depends on an external causal factor – God, then God himself does not need, according to the author, any explanation, because God is a necessary being who exists by virtue of himself independently of anything else.

In the book “The coherence of theism,” the author draws readers’ attention to another important problem of theology – the extra-temporal nature of God, his specific, unlike anything else, existence and action in the historical perspective, 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” (Swinburne, 1993: 228). The author is sufficiently knowledgeable and fully competent in the advanced achievements of science. He freely operates with the facts of reality and gives them a proper assessment. The breadth of his scientific interest is amazing. It covers probability theory, relativity theory, quantum physics, astrophysics, chemistry, molecular and evolutionary biology, and the humanities. Being within the limits of a probabilistic approach, he uses knowledge from these fields of science to confirm the judgments of his scientized epistemology aimed at a theistic explanation of existence. Swinburne shows that the nomological structure of the Universe, expressed in its (Universe) basic laws, is a consequence of an extremely distant, in time grandiose creationist volitional act of creation of the world out of nothing. Thus, Swinburne’s “inductive theology” in the process of unfolding reasoning should, according to the author’s plan, be confirmed cumulatively and correlated with cosmological proof of the divine creation of the world out of nothing.

When one of the proofs of the theologian’s thesis of God the Creator is based on the fact of the nomological orderliness and harmony of the world, the other attracts the phenomenon of “fine-tuning” of the Universe. It is known that this concept of theoretical physics shows the basis of the world not as arbitrary, but strictly defined constants or initial parameters and

conditions of the existence of the world, the slightest change of which makes the existence of the microcosm and the macrocosm – atoms, stars, the Universe as a whole – impossible. The theologian interprets this mysterious phenomenon of the Universe not as a random formation, but from the point of view of intelligent design. The explanatory value of the criterion of simplicity is considered by the author in inseparable connection with the arguments of fine-tuning the Universe so as to ultimately prove to both his supporters and ardent ideological opponents that the Universe is specially finely tuned for the appearance of the human body by God. And such an occurrence is not a happy coincidence, but the creation of God. Thus, a large number of sources from which the theologian prefers to deduce the existence of God, a significant number of facts to which, following the tradition of probabilism, he appeals, according to Swinburne's plan, should be combined, forming a cumulative effect in the very procedure of proof. And this, which is above all hopes, should achieve the ultimate goal of the research started on the topic – changing knowledge and beliefs in the very structure of the reader's worldview.

However, the burden of proof assumed by Swinburne, in unraveling some of the ancient mysteries of existence, in establishing and interpreting the fundamental reality of the world, the deep meaning of the existence of the world, is sometimes likened to fetters that the theologian is desperately trying to break. All the powerful intellectual efforts of the thinker, aimed not so much at the truth of the fact as at the fundamental attitude of the world to its root cause, do not fully justify the author's hope, because sometimes they only wander around the initial mystery of the world, too far from reality as such. Why is the nomological structure of the world as it is and has no other structure? In this question, passionate critics of Swinburne's theorizing see the most vulnerable point of his concept (Grünbaum, 2004: 587). The fact that the author's idea was to become a strong theoretical basis for the "hypothesis of theism" and provide it with proper verification and strong backs, in fact, became a "Procrustean test" of this great plan.

All the author's excursions into these areas of academic science have caused either passionate criticism, or more balanced, sharply directed reviews, in the light of which the author is not always armed with advanced counterarguments and psychologically convincing. Among the specialists of certain branches of science, to whom Swinburne is forced to appeal, in an attempt to base his rational proposals on a larger number of facts, from time to time there are disagreements with the author in the understanding and interpretation of certain scientific provisions. It is known that the time of universal scientists has long passed, and in the era of narrow specialization of science, such a position of the theologian – to cover all the facts of reality and give the latter a proper assessment, dooms him to protracted clashes with scientific knowledge and the loss of all confidence in preaching and theology. Although if it were not for Swinburne's excessive metaphysical ambitions to build a new theistic cosmology and, accordingly, to confirm and justify it in the spirit of analytical philosophy, on the traditions of which the educated author, then the burden of proof, rashly accepted by him, could be tried to transfer to his ideological opponents. But his critics, without due respect for the requirements of the law of sufficient reason, persistently present a weak and dubious hypothesis about the spontaneous generation of the living and the further evolution of the living, up to the appearance of man, as a scientific theory.

It is unlikely that the theologian will be supported in this regard by an appeal to Bayes' theorem, on which he has high hopes. As you know, this basic theorem of probability theory allows you to calculate the probability of any event under the conditions of knowledge of other statistically related events and, based on the known fact of the event, to make up

the probability that it was caused by a certain cause. Taking into account the specifics of the material with which the theologian deals, the formula of the theorem demonstrates its convenience in that it does not require knowledge of the absolutely exact probability of events, but involves techniques and operations with values “more than” and “very high.” The consequences of calculating the a posteriori probability of theism from the initial data, according to the author, are equal to $\frac{1}{2}$. Swinburne’s supporters unanimously recognize such theoretical calculations as weighty, and the probability itself $\frac{1}{2}$ is “quite solid.” Although even without complex mathematical calculations, the practice of common sense 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 real structure of being, then its probability can be equal to $\frac{1}{2}$; in probability theory, the probability of the lion’s share of statements is equal to the probability of their refutation, which is known to specialists even without special calculations.

However, the legality of using the methodology for calculating statistical patterns in relation to 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, mystery, creation, etc. is very doubtful. Because such a methodology is applied to recurring events marked by empirical similarity. The existence of God and his effectiveness as a creator are not included in the force field of statistical regularities that Bayes’ theorem takes into account, since they are unique features. The misunderstanding here arises, as can be seen, due to the fact that the concept of “probability” in its academic and scientific content, when the probability is used in the formulation of scientific laws, begins to apply to some historical events. As you know, the specifics of the latter (they conditionally include religious phenomena, miracles, unique and inimitable events) – lies in the fact that one historical event is different from another and unlike it. The formulation of the scientific law assumes the repetition of events; their regularity is tied to the frequency of the case – the more often the phenomenon under study is observed in similar conditions, the greater the probability of an assumption expressing the law. So, in such a situation, the specifics of studying historical events by a specialist historian are ignored and evaluated solely from the point of view of the laws of statistics and the possibility of repeating events, and this is nothing more than a distorted understanding of probability and illegal extrapolation of the features and principles of one cognitive practice to another.

Using an inductive approach and an argument from the “fine-tuning” of the Universe, Swinburne gradually approaches man’s problem. Through chains of reasoning, he tries to show that without God the Universe could in no way be attuned to the existence of the human body and the functioning of its consciousness. According to the author, the human body should be an instrument of knowledge and achievement of higher goals. In conscious existence, in responsibility for oneself, the world and other living beings, the theologian sees the content and essence of God’s providential plan for human freedom, its ability to bring order to their own lives, the world, and the lives of its inhabitants. Here the author is forced to touch on the age-old problem of religion and morality – the problem of existence in the world of evil. As we know, it appeared in the history of religious thought in very distant times – how did it happen that suffering and evil do not disappear before the majesty of the Supreme Justice and the omnipotence of God? Why, even with the miraculous healing of a specific injury, do the phenomena of physical defects not disappear in existence, where the laws that cause illness continue to apply? It turns out that even the miraculous cessation of the causal chains, the action of which would cause a negative coincidence, the drama of human existence and even death, does not repeal the universal law, the steadfastness of

which continues to generate tragic factors of suffering. The complexity of the age-old moral question in monotheistic religions and, to the greatest extent, in Christianity is exacerbated by the contrast between the generally benevolent divine providence and the presence of evil.

The theologian considers the problem of the existence of evil in the world traditionally – in close connection with the problem of human free will – the ability to make a free choice by man 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 faith in the all-good God and the existence of evil in the world, the author was straightforward naturalistic, and devoid of the necessary fate of compassion. Theologian David E. Jenkins points to this age-old moral question, which later became a difficult problem for theology. "A God who uses the openness of the Universe created by him, the openness and freedom of people created in his image, the secret of his own risky and life-giving love in order to make additional causal connections to this Universe from time to time, as a result of which only due to this unpredictability certain events and trends will be carried out, would be an annoying demigod, a moral monster who contradicts himself. God is not a capricious disgusting type and not a craftsman who sometimes gets a person out of difficult situations. This would be morally unbearable, and no reference to the secrecy and exclusivity of such actions could overcome this feeling. Однако however, no matter how he interacts or communicates with the world, he cannot interfere in the course of events as an additional seemingly random historical reason." These are the views of David E. Jenkins (Jenkins, 1987: 64).

If God exists, argues Richard Swinburne, this implies his responsibility for the existence of evil in the world he allows to exist. Interpreting the existing evil as moral, arising as a result of a person's free choice, and natural, such as, for example, incurable diseases or natural disasters, the theologian, in order to soften the thesis about God's responsibility for the dark side of life, is forced to assert that God foresees such suffering. Swinburne draws attention not only to suffering in the human world, but also to evil among the higher mammals, suggesting a higher organization of living beings more vulnerable to suffering. The existence of evil, according to Swinburne, generally acquires a cognitive purpose, since it orients a person in a situation of moral choice. Thus, the theodicy completes the author's painstaking analytical work on the theoretical development and substantiation of the thesis about God the Creator and the inventor of the world, which is the core of the hypothesis of theism. According to the author's intention, the latter was intended to convincingly prove that the existence of evil, the manifestations of which a person observes and suffers in everyday life, in fact, does not contradict the assumption made in the hypothesis of theism.

The author's reasoning, for the most part, as mentioned above, takes place in line with Western analytical philosophy, where the laws and factors of the physical world are carefully analyzed. But the author of the "hypothesis of theism" pays close attention to the metaphysical side of the issue, which can enrich it incomparably more than the relatively specific (from the point of view of theology) field of data that he used earlier. The theologian's intellectual efforts are aimed at establishing a meaningful connection between his concept and the facts of reality, overcoming the cumulative stage of development, when the author qualitatively changes the evidence and turns to traditional religious reasoning. The consequence of this orientation is theology, which is based on the concrete testimonies of believers, on religious experience. The theological significance of Swinburne's theistic intellect becomes even more important when he refers to religious experiences, to miracles as an important act of faith.

The theologian is aware that the problem of the religious understanding of belief in a miracle lies in the fact that in practice, the scientist has to deal with a huge variety of

manifestations of this belief (especially when it comes to the miracles of antiquity). The complexity of the situation is aggravated by the fact that today the concept of “miracle” has lost its clarity and unambiguity and has acquired too broad and extremely arbitrary interpretations, and the word “miraculous” now has too many meanings. Therefore, in this regard, it is very important for a researcher to carry out an additional cognitive act that will precede all subsequent studies of a miracle, namely, distinguishing elements of religious consciousness from close or similar secular entities and distinguishing the concept of «miracle». Ignoring their otherness will force us to deal with the ideas of miracles that exist in the public mind, devoid of a supernatural substrate, and, therefore, there is a danger of falling into a fairly common cognitive error – *qui pro quo* (accepting one instead of the other); that is, an attempt to discover the essence of belief in a miracle will be nullified by the danger of delusion about the latter, which will constantly arise as a result of the substitution of the corresponding concepts. Therefore, at the beginning of his book “The Concept of Miracle,” the author of the book tries to clarify this important issue for theology: “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” (Swinburne, 1970: 1). Further, Richard Swinburne speaks about the God-Man, who in a very distant past created this world, determined and laid the foundations of enduring laws, but does not lose touch with the world and man, interacting with the latter on a personal basis. The omnipotence of God, his unlimited acts of will, says the theologian, overcomes the necessity of natural law or temporarily suspends its action when God decides to intervene in the natural order of things to carry out his new decisions and determinations. Wishing to preserve the theological identity of his version of theism, Swinburne defines a miracle by noting God’s external causal influence on chains of events, which is not a permanent rule in God and infrequently happens because the world loses regularity, certainty, and order.

The argument that the theologian resorts to in pursuit of his apologetic goals is quite justified, since the appeal to religious experience greatly increases the likelihood of the hypothesis of theism. In addition, Richard Swinburne points out that sometimes some rational arguments for faith can be less significant than the religious experience of discovering God in one’s own heart and experiencing God. In *Faith and Reason*, he emphasizes this thesis: “The arguments considered so far purporting to show that arguments to the existence of God, and more general arguments about fundamental religious matters, will not work all proceed from general philosophical considerations. There are also arguments that 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 premisses reporting data available to atheists 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 is true”; by an inward religious experience of the presence of God making the subject aware of Christian truths” (Swinburne, 2005: 106).

In Bayes’ theorem, on which the author has high hopes, the data of religious experience are added to the numerator of the fraction $\frac{1}{2}$, which significantly increases the probability

of judging the existence of God. To increase the probative value of the data of religious experience, Swinburne puts forward the principle of trust, according to which human perceptions and religious experiences should be recognized as sufficiently significant due to the lack of reliable grounds for doubt.

Existing religious beliefs, especially when expressed in the language of theology, now seem to be expressed in the context of dialogue between theology and science. The idea, which is designed to express the main ideas of such a dialogue, presents the image of the latter in the form of a bridge. He, according to religious intellectuals, will promote mutual understanding and, at best, a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship between theology and science on the path of a joint understanding of truth and the search for meaning in life (Peacocke, 2013: 24). At the same time and at the same time, a number of problematic issues of Christian doctrine force modern theologians to overcome very difficult apologetic difficulties, to provide convincing answers to serious theological questions. "At its best Christian theology has always sought a balance between the twin biblical truths of the divine transcendence and the divine immanence," – convinced theologians Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson (Grenz & Olson, 2010: 9), and therefore the solution of these epistemological problems by Swinburne is also in search of an equation between these related Christian truths.

Conclusions

In an environment where the Christian church is forced to balance between the stability of fundamentalism and openness to innovation, theologians' attempts to offer an unambiguous, comprehensive answer to key questions of religious worldview become an infallible indicator of their chosen theological position – from orthodox or at least pious. One such attempt, in which the spirit of his time was most fully embodied, is presented in one of the most extraordinary theological ideas of our time – the theistic system of the theologian Richard Swinburne.

The project of a new theistic cosmology, on the altar of which the theologian has placed all his extraordinary talent, extensive knowledge and intellectual intuition, is too large-scale and ambitious. Its scope is actually within reach of a particular theological school or, at least, a wide range of students and followers. Perhaps that is why the author of the hypothesis of theism failed to fully realize it. Thus, a number of powerful theoretical positions and effective ideas advocated by the author, apart from his inductive cumulation of various factual material and further generalizations of accumulated knowledge and bypassing the force field of simplicity, did not find proper justification and therefore did not justify the expected results. In addition, the author of the concept, taking on the burden of proof, was not always able to fill the gaps in understanding the theses with their own arguments and show the advantages of their position over alternative systems of worldview. Although with regard to the latter, under certain conditions, it would be appropriate to study or at least evaluate the evidence base of concepts put forward by critics of the hypothesis of theism.

In addition, the author significantly impoverishes his own concept in full without involving the theoretical resources of classical theism with its reliance on Revelation and at the same time making concessions to theism adaptive. He is inclined to the latter, probably preferring to maintain the scientific orientation of his theorizing and their intellectual respectability and significance, which requires belonging to the community of Anglo-American intellectuals. However, building his inductive apologetics on the basis of inductive proofs and operations of explanation, he practically ignores the worldview specifics of the chosen problem, which,

as we know, does not fall under any calculations and can not be understood through the establishment of statistical laws. On the one hand, all this does not correspond to truly apologetic tasks. On the other hand, it does not take into account the fact that science has an inexhaustible remnant in worldview, which it cannot overcome by its own nature. In addition, any apologetics that sometimes makes significant concessions to the inquisitive mind that seeks awareness, but not blind faith, is built on rational grounds and is therefore open to rational criticism, which in Swinburne's beliefs has become avalanche-like. In this regard, the author's insufficient attention to the canons of classical theism, whose theology traditionally cannot be other than supernatural and therefore super-rational, i.e., inaccessible to destructive criticism, is particularly inappropriate and incomprehensible.

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