

Summary

The purpose of the dissertation is to present the abductive argument of Richard Swinburne in favor of theism. Richard Swinburne was born on December 26, 1934. He is a British philosopher, a retired professor of the University of Oxford, where he held the position of Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion (Oriental College). He has devoted all his philosophical activity to the justification of the Christian faith – he has intended to show that it is rational to believe in God.

The main thesis of the dissertation is that Swinburne's concept of theism does not remain consistent with the assumption that God is perfectly good. This inconsistency comes from the fact that human experience of suffering cannot be reconciled with God's perfect goodness, especially assuming that God allows or causes the suffering.

The structure of the work corresponds to the logical construction of Swinburne's line of reasoning. The first chapter – Methodology of Philosophy – describes the main philosophical methods Swinburne uses in presenting his arguments. It is divided into two parts: the first one (Theory of Explanation) primarily presents the Swinburne's construction of the concept of coherence, which is a prerequisite for considering any theory as probable or true. Moreover, this part discusses Swinburne's dual explanatory theory, according to which two types of explanation are possible: (1) scientific, based on the analysis of unintentional causation, and (2) personal, based on the analysis of intentional causation. At the same time, Swinburne tries to show that it is not possible to explain certain phenomena in the world only by means of scientific explanation. Thus, it is necessary to use a personal explanation in such cases, as far as they have intentions as their primary cause. Such intentions can be possessed and carried out only by a personal being.

When choosing explanatory theory and when looking for the causes of a given phenomenon, one should use the criterion of simplicity. According to Swinburne's argument, it is necessary to rely on the principle of Ockham's

razor, which states that one should not multiply beings beyond necessity. It means that if the explanation of the phenomenon of x is possible by referring to a smaller number of beings, then it should be done. In the light of the multiplicity of theories, which in the same (or very similar) degree meet the criterion of explanation of a given phenomenon, the criterion of simplicity must be the decisive one.

The second part of the Chapter 1 (Theory of Justification of Beliefs) presents the theory of justification of beliefs. Firstly, Swinburne's inquiries about the nature of beliefs are discussed. Secondly, this part of the dissertation presents certain criteria a subject should use in assessing the probable truth of a given belief. A key element in the individual acquisition of beliefs about the surrounding reality is the Principle of Credulity. It states that the subject should recognize the world as it appears. Thus, in Swinburne's understanding, a rational person is one that does not undermine what he perceives in the first place, unless there is strong counter-evidence.

The second chapter of the dissertation, The Philosophy of Theism, depicts arguments of the British philosopher in favour of his main claim that God probably exists. First of all, Swinburne defines the concept of God. According to his view, God is a personal being, who has no body and is therefore a spirit. It is an eternal being, perfectly free, omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good. God is a creator of all things and as such is a source of moral obligation for humans.

This chapter also discusses the philosopher's arguments in favour of theism. In accordance with the abductive nature of Swinburne's main claim (the high probability of the existence of God) there are minor arguments that complement each other: a cosmological argument, an argument based on the Bayes' theorem, an argument from purpose, an argument from consciousness, an argument from moral consciousness, an argument from Providence, an argument from religious experience, and an argument from miracles.

The third chapter of the dissertation, entitled the Apology of the Christian Doctrine, corresponds logically to the third and final stage of the Swinburne's

philosophical thought. It discusses his arguments for the probable truth of Christian doctrine. The British philosopher considers the Christian doctrine to be passed down by God to humanity in the form of a set of various propositions. Swinburne begins with setting the criteria for the type of Revelation that should be expected in case God exists. He insists that the main feature of Revelation must be the supranatural one. Therefore it should have the character of a miracle. This criterion is not met by any other type of event that is presented as actual revelation of God, including so-called Revelation of the Quran. Swinburne states that this event does not meet the criterion of a miracle to be expected. He thinks that the miracle of the Holy Book of Islam is not real: although being a beautiful literary work, Quran was probably created by an illiterate person – Muhammad – as considered by Muslims. As Swinburne points out, Revelation presupposes that God had very good reasons not only to incarnate, but also to establish the institution of the Church. On this basis, Swinburne tries to find out whether the church founded by Jesus Christ still exists today. In this regard the British philosopher indicates two criteria: (1) continuity in the aspect of purpose and organization, and (2) connectivity in the aspect of purpose and organization. After an appropriate analysis, Swinburne concludes that the Church of Christ does exist today, although it is divided, and therefore cannot function well. He believes that the criterion of identity with the Church founded by Jesus Christ is mostly fulfilled by the Orthodox Church.

Swinburne attempts to show that it is highly probable that God is indeed a Trinity. Despite the fact that Swinburne himself is an Orthodox believer, he argues in favour of filioque, recognizing that divine persons do not have haecceitas. Thus, the only thing that distinguishes them is the relationship to one another. In this case, if the Son of God and the Holy Spirit come from God the Father himself, then they would be identical with each other. The Holy Spirit cannot therefore come only from God the Father if the doctrine of the Trinity is to be preserved. It is logically necessary that the Holy Spirit comes from both God the Father and the Son of God at the same time.

By applying the Principle of Credulity, Swinburne accepts the Gospel narrative of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He insists that there is no reason to deny the credibility of testimonies describing the life of Jesus, or to acknowledge that the Resurrection did not take place. The British philosopher rejects five alternative theories about what supposedly happened after the death of Christ and why his body was not found in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

The last four sub-chapters of the third chapter of the dissertation (Original Sin and Penance, Theodicy) deal with the issue of original sin, the problem of evil, human free will and penance. The British philosopher believes that God had a reason to create substances which act in a free way – people. From the fact that people have free will, stems the possible origin of morally bad actions. The moral offenses committed by a man – sins – stand against the divine authority and, at the same time, the supreme benefactor of a man. As Swinburne argues, it gave the reason for God's Incarnation. According to the British philosopher, this is a kind of action that should be expected of God, although it is supererogative in nature. Incarnation is also an expression of God's great love for a man. Evil in the world is the result of human actions, which means that God cannot be morally blamed. Even the fact of unbowed human suffering does not make God guilty. This is because, as it was previously stated, (1) evil is the result of human activity, (2) a world without the possibility of real evil would mean creating a man without free will, as far as he would not be able to carry out his actions in a free way, (3) the gift of free will, in addition to the gift of life, is the greatest gift that man has received, (4) suffering is an opportunity for moral improvement of a man, (5) the creation of a man by God, and thus the moral obligation of God for human beings allows – in the opinion of the British philosopher – to believe that earthly suffering will be rewarded after death. Therefore, the fact of taking a moral obligation results in the existence of *visio beatifica*, a blessed state (Paradise, Heaven), because God – as perfectly good and omnipotent – necessarily keeps his commitments.

The last chapter of the dissertation (Criticism of Richard Swinburne's philosophy) presents the philosophy of Swinburne from a critical perspective.

It shows a polemic against Swinburne's philosophical views at various levels: from the critique of Swinburne's theodicy and his theory of the simplicity of the hypotheses made by Richard Dawkins, through John Hick's analysis of the Swinburne's concept of God, John Mackie's criticism of the Swinburne approach to the cosmological argument and argument from design, Herman Phillipse's criticism of Swinburne's argument from moral consciousness, to Agnaldo Cuoco Portugal's discussion of Swinburne's argument from religious experience.

The last chapter ends with the author's of the dissertation comments on Swinburne's thought. It is an attempt of criticism made from a practical point of view. The main objection to Swinburne's philosophy is that he limits philosophy to the analysis of concepts, and at the same time, deprives it from practical dimension. In the opinion of the author of the dissertation, philosophy like religion is the practice of the virtue, and therefore it cannot be reduced to a theory.