

Miracle as a Mode of Being Divine

Miracle as a Mode of Being Divine:

Modern Theological Interpretations

By

Igor Gudyma

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



Miracle as a Mode of Being Divine: Modern Theological Interpretations

By Igor Gudyma

This book first published 2026

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2026 by Igor Gudyma

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-5969-7

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-5970-3

**“The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”
Luke 18:27.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.....	ix
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	14
Theoretical and methodological principles of research	
§ 1. The phenomenon of a miracle, the peculiarities and problems of forming objective knowledge about it	
§ 2. Miracle and faith in it as an object of research and study: history and modernity	
Chapter 2.	43
Theological interpretations of God’s interaction with the world and the idea of a miracle	
§ 1. Religious-philosophical conceptualizations of the “God-world” relationship and the approximation of a miracle	
§ 2. Providence of God and miracles as elements of theological interpretations of the religious picture of the world	
§ 3. Theistic cosmology: the contingency of the world and the individual courage of being	
§ 4. The concept of “miracle”: the content of theological views	
Chapter 3	118
The current apology of the miracle: searches and problems	
§ 1. The religious doctrine of miracles and the concept of the original nomology (fundamental regularity) of the universe	
§ 2. Crossing the Boundary: The Concept of Divine Immanence in Contemporary Christian Apologetics. (The miracle and functioning of “interventional” terminology in theology)	
§ 3. The Christian doctrine of the miracle - between faith, understanding, and dialogue (The problem of the mode of reality of the miracle and the question of the “node of causality” in apologetics)	
§ 4. “Hume’s argument” against miracles: an analysis of the features of the proof	

Chapter 4	198
The place and role of the doctrine of miracles in the development of modern Christian epistemology: new trends and regularities	
§ 1. Theological scientology - the search for a long-term program of modernization of the miracle	
§ 2. The doctrine of miracles and achievements of modern natural science: an attempt at the convergence of truth	
Chapter 5	240
Conceptualizations of miracle in the religious and philosophical systems of modern Christian thinkers	
§ 1. Miracle as the being and reality of the Divine (reflections of a Christian thinker Clive Staples Lewis)	
§ 2. Conceptualization of Divine Presence in the Theistic Cosmology of Richard Swinburne	
§ 3. Divine Immanence in the Pantheistic Cosmology of Arthur Peacock	
§ 4. Theology of Miracle in the Age of Science - Reflections of Catholic Cardinal Walter Kasper	
Chapter 6	295
Belief in a miracle as a basic element of religious faith	
§ 1. Psychological content of belief in a miracle	
§ 2. At the pinnacle of faith is a prayer for a miracle	
Conclusions	315
Instead of an afterword.....	335

PREFACE

Thousands of years have passed since the idea of miracles appeared in religious consciousness, but stories of miraculous powers, healings, apparitions and blessings have survived all historical and cultural vicissitudes and trials and continue to excite humanity to this day. These are the most amazing and poignant stories that humanity has ever heard, reproducing the deepest hopes of people as mortals. They express the eternal and universal hopes of man to rise above the habitual aspects of his existence, despite all the obstacles and limitations of being, and to live freely, fully, in accordance with his destiny. The stories presented in the myths, scriptures and legends of various religious traditions do not simply excite the imagination, knocking it out of its usual rut, they significantly change the psychological space of man, dedicating him to the deepest secrets of being, turning ordinary everyday life into a special world. However, a miracle is not only a guide to another, transcendental dimension, the existence and reality of which it is, it is also an invitation addressed to a person from the dimensions of pure abstraction to live more sublimely and spiritually.

The monograph, the central theme of which is the specificity and content of the Christian theological teaching on miracles, carries out a philosophical and religious studies analysis of the traditional teaching of religion on miracles, clarifies the place and role of the corresponding idea in the system of Christian beliefs, reveals the fundamental religious and metaphysical foundations that determine the mode of existence of the concept of a miracle. The author examines a miracle in modern theological interpretations of the religious picture of the world, explores and evaluates the methods of argumentation inherent in modern theology of a miracle, which is currently focused on the effective solution of a number of religious problems, explicates the corresponding theological concept and, finally, reveals the psychological content of faith in a miracle.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of world culture, there is a circle of ideas that do not depreciate, do not suffer from time and lose their significance over centuries and even millennia. Time, obviously, has no power over them, because they confidently go through the ages, without losing their timeless, “end-to-end” and universal relevance. Many such ideas arose and were formalized within the framework of a religious worldview. Perhaps the most important among them, after the idea of God, of course, is the idea of a miracle, as the living and active soul and essence of any religion. Indeed, a miracle is of unsurpassed importance for understanding the specific nature of religion, because in it, in a certain sense, *aeternae veritates*¹ and the religious attitude to the world in general are expressed, since the miracle itself in the teachings of theologians is the embodiment of the omnipotence of God, his unique ability and prerogative to do the impossible. A God who has long withdrawn from the world and is no longer interested in the course of events in it and the destinies of people, a God who is incapable of doing the impossible, who cannot rise above the forces of natural things and act freely, unrestricted by anything, and therefore miraculous, and is an unnecessary hypothesis, which a person inevitably abandons over time, or a “respected uselessness” that will never become the object of prayer appeals, any worship and functional cult in general. It is evident that a God who has divested himself of all but name is a dethroned God; God, who surrenders at least a part of his omnipotence, eventually ceases to be an object of worship and loses connection with the world and man.

It is the history of the world’s religions and, especially, its original forms, that convincingly demonstrates that great sense of wonder and mystery, which to this day remains an integral part of human perception of the surrounding world. Without much exaggeration, it can be said that it was at the base of all the most daring human expectations, winged the imagination of people, and belief in a miracle as such always expressed the noblest hopes of people as mortals.

¹ Eternal Truths (lat.).

The exciting idea of a miracle, including its theological interpretation, remains largely unexplained. Even in modern theology, as well as in philosophy and science, in general, until now there is not even a slightly acceptable answer to the “question of miracles”, and the emergence of an adequate doctrine of miracles among theologians is only a dream or, sometimes, a good intention. The lack of an unambiguous solution to the question of the ontological status of the miracle, when in the extreme branches of verification of the mode of its reality it is assumed either a complete denial of the miracle, or its fanatical propaganda, complicates the situation even more. Not only religious ideologues - preachers, theologians and hierarchs, but also representatives of ordinary believers live in the hope of meeting a real miracle, prefer to find in the course of events of their own lives such evidence that would indisputably testify to faith, not as an illusion of a miracle, and as a phenomenon rooted in the very essence of human existence. Because if there is an illusion at the base of faith, then there is no faith, and only superstition reigns.

Miracles are extremely important in Christianity. Christianity began with miracles; it lives on with miracles to this day. It is indisputable that to this day practically all the main and characteristic elements of Christianity, namely, creation, all cases of Revelation, transmission of the Law, prophecies, incarnation, resurrection, ascension, advent and judgment, consist of miracles; after getting rid of the latter, Christianity will certainly lose its originality and uniqueness, because the central miracle of Christianity is the resurrection of God and the Savior of the faithful, Jesus Christ, and outlines the measure of what is essential in it, beyond which Christianity, under any conditions, will cease to be itself. Moreover, theologians of all major Christian faiths unanimously express confidence in the powerful potential of the doctrine of miracles and have no doubt that the latter will never exhaust its ideological resource. It is impossible not to agree with the well-known expert on Christianity, Peter Kreeft, who observed the following about the importance of miracles in this religion: “... Subtract miracles from Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, or Taoism, and you have essentially the same religion left. Subtract miracles from Christianity, and you have nothing but the cliches and platitudes most American Christians get weekly (and weakly) from their pulpits. Nothing distinctive, no reason to be a Christian rather than something else...”¹.

¹ The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict. Josh McDowell. 1999. Thomas Nelson Inc. P. 358.

It must be admitted that miracles have a great weight for Christianity, and its main miracle is the miracle of resurrection, not just one of the aspects of faith; we cannot remove it from Christianity without running the risk of completely distorting its meaning. The miracle still arouses the intense interest of faithful Christians, moreover, Christianity continues, in spite of everything, to live by miracles. Miracles are reported by official institutions, preachers and hierarchs of Christian faiths. Considering the above, a comprehensive and deep study of belief in miracles could be considered as, in a certain way, a response to the practical need of society for a constructive understanding of the peculiarities of the Christian religious tradition and for mastering the specific nature of religion as such, since, without proper awareness of miracles, in we will not have full and complete knowledge not only about the Christian faith, but also about the content and nature of religion in general.

The study of religion and its components, including belief in miracles, also acquires cultural significance, since, under the conditions of the dominance of a religious worldview in the public consciousness, the entire culture of humanity in the past, as a whole and in its individual elements, was organically connected with religion, was based on it, used it. And without proper knowledge of religion, its theoretical reflection and exposition - theology, as well as their important components, such as faith in miracles, we lose a significant part of the opportunities for adequate perception of the lion's share of the cultural heritage of humanity, and, therefore, for conscious and fruitful assimilation of the same cultural heritage. What has been said is reinforced by the fact that belief in a miracle became a precedent and a paradigm for the accumulation by individuals of a certain religious and worldview potential and a factor in its further initiation into the world of religious images and ideas. In addition, the belief in the miracle as such, together with the corresponding worships and feelings, is itself a phenomenon and an element of culture that deserves a separate and independent study. In addition, getting to know Christian theology, its in-depth study, is in itself a fascinating and worthy intellectual activity.

All the more so since intellectual efforts aimed at the secret of the first miracle in the history of the creation of the world, attempts to understand "God's plan of building the universe"¹ from time to time directly enriched this culture itself, caused its rise and progress. "It should be recognized,"

¹ Цехмістро І.З. Голістична філософія науки. Харків: Видавництво «Акта». С. 15.

wrote the well-known Ukrainian expert in the field of philosophy of science Ivan Tsekhmistro, “that the discovery of God in nature and in oneself, as well as 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.”¹

Moreover, the available data show that, both in the religious life of Christians and in Christian theology, a number of important events have recently taken place, the hidden causes of which have not yet received a proper official assessment of the church, however, are well known to relevant specialists; all this also needs careful study and exposition. So, in particular, it became obvious that the traditional attitude of theologians to science, as well as the underestimation of its epistemological possibilities, and its place and role in social development, became a thing of the past. Not only for religious intellectuals, but also for critical representatives of the general public of ordinary believers, it became a bitter truth that the belittling of the importance of science, which has a significant impact on the worldview of modern man, ultimately turns into a loss of trust of the flock and “forgetting God”. Therefore, modern Christian churches are mobilizing the entire arsenal of tools and advanced units of scientific experts in order to significantly modify the Christian worldview, introducing tangible corrections to its content, designed to testify to the proper academic reputation of theology.

Of course, the church on this path is not interested in science in itself, nor even in its stunning achievements, which determine the growth in popularity of the scientific worldview, but in the scientific worldview itself, or rather in its resource capabilities in the matter of confirming certain provisions of religious faith. The imminent need for their widespread involvement and further use is usually deeply realized by modern Christian apologists, who have fallen to the task of modernization and a new interpretation of their conceptual series. In this vein, among theologians, the opinion about the need to change the epistemological context of Christian theology, based on the data obtained by modern sciences, is increasingly being expressed. All the more so since the scientists themselves, for their part, are increasingly expressing interest in finding out the status of the modern scientific paradigm and determining

¹ Цехмістро І.З. Голістична філософія науки. Харків: Видавництво «Акта». С. 15.

the nature of its interaction with the religious paradigm and achieving between them, according to Lebanese State University professor Farah Suheil, “historical compromise”, and even “full cooperation”.¹

However, the experience of a miracle is not only the experience of joining the irrational, but also the experience of a person’s understanding of himself, comparison of himself with the external necessity of development. Therefore, in the study of miracles, the anthropological aspect is clearly tracked. After all, the psychological prerequisites for the emergence of such beliefs are rooted in those psychological processes of a person where their powerlessness and helplessness in the face of natural and social phenomena of existence are manifested, which they currently cannot overcome on their own and whose true essence they are also powerless to comprehend. The impossibility of real liberation caused a person to place his innermost desires precisely on a miracle as the only way to free himself from the dark and oppressive sides of human existence. And therefore, in today’s conditions, close attention to faith in him, as to the powerful removal of excessive psychological tension, is an urgent need of the hour. The emotional function of a miracle, when with the help of appropriate ideas and the experiences that necessarily accompany it, negative religious emotions were displaced by positive ones, makes it possible to understand the living and active soul of the corresponding faith and, ultimately, to get closer to the age-old mystery of man in general. Nowadays, it has become almost certain that the times of stereotyped and prejudiced attitude towards the miracle are receding into the past and giving way to the realization that it is not a delusion of the mind or, even, not an illusion. Because the significance of a miracle for a person lies in the fact that it concentrates and expresses the innermost desires of a person and the power of the corresponding faith - precisely in these real desires.

Awareness of the miracle in its anthropological content, as a special way of relating the individual to existence, allows us to talk about the philosophy of the miracle as a philosophy of freedom. The miracle here acts as a special “cipher of the transcendent” (Karl Jaspers), a specific way of encoding reality in the human mind, by interpreting the world as open to the influence of external causal factors. According to such interpretations of miracles, a person could hope for a chance to overcome the static nature of their existence, relying on the will of God, who was capable of doing things that were unheard of and unseen before, or even completely

¹ Фарах Сухейль. Религиозный феномен и современная наука. Вопросы философии. 2002. № 2. С. 174.

impossible. Thus, a miracle becomes the eternal hope of a person who, despite the dependence and limitations of his own existence, continues to secretly dream of the best, to hope to master the external necessity of the world's development and to transform foreign forces into friendly ones. Such an understanding of the miracle - this important component of the religious worldview, ultimately gives reason to think about human freedom in its metaphysical explanations.

The interpretation of a miracle as the fundamental principle or beginning of reality, a specific approach to it as a special all-encompassing and all-explaining idea, fully and comprehensively interpreting the first mystery of the world and, accordingly, the initial question of a worldview, allows us to consciously approach the clarification of the great existential alternative that inevitably arises before each individual: or the drama of human existence in the immensity of an indifferent universe, or the fundamental meaningfulness of one's own existence in a world which is directed from the outside by the divine will of the Creator.

Fixation of various, including non-theological, meanings of a miracle has, not surprisingly, a certain importance in the aspect of awareness of the new stunning achievements of science and the latter's specific search for its own philosophical and worldview foundations. The focus of science on the gradual disclosure of the Truth and the deepening of acquired true knowledge, its great modern discoveries on the way to uncovering the secret of the human genome, in the study of the near and far cosmos, its observations and experiments in the realm of the microcosm do not negate the fact that science, trying to understand the world in its objectivity, nevertheless reveals only a separate aspect of reality, because it does not exhaust the entire culture, but is only one of spheres that interact with other spheres of cultural creativity – morality, religion, philosophy. Moreover, the incompatibility of science and religion, according to Yuri Melkov, a specialist in the philosophy of science, is practically and to a large extent connected with the ancient traditional forced opposition of the facts of science to the facts of religion. In the history of their relationship, the researcher notes, it is impossible not to notice that “the fact of classical science as a phenomenon reflected in the mirror of the system of exact knowledge, as a phenomenon that corresponds to a deterministic law - opposes the miracle as a supernatural phenomenon.” However, the author adds, “modern science makes possible a different vision of this relationship. On the one hand, the event is not completely determined by the law; on the other hand, a miracle ceases to be perceived as a violation

of the absolute laws of nature. “¹ Therefore, an important goal of a wide range of modern works on apologetics is to try to show the miracle in the perspective of modern worldview categories.

Science, as a constantly developing entity, in its own historical dynamics and reproduction of the latter in the scientific picture of the world, always correlates to the search for new worldview ideas that are produced in various spheres of culture (philosophy, religion, art...). However, sometimes too old, time-honored conceptual acquisitions of other spiritual phenomena are also used to denote certain modern scientific assumptions. Religious ideas of supernatural causality, miracles (not being essentially scientific) are sometimes used to explain the content of our knowledge about the world. It is enough to recall the statements of Stephen Hawking about the universe, which was spontaneously created from absolutely nothing. Stephen Hawking, in particular, regarding the global prospects and consequences of creating a unified theory of everything that exists, in his famous work “A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes”, wrote the following: “If we really discover a complete theory, ... it will be a complete triumph of the human mind, because then God’s plan will become clear to us.”²

But behind this question are questions like “why?”: “why do the laws of nature have this and not another form, why are there laws in nature at all? Why is nature intelligent? Why - if we adhere to the “main question of philosophy” - “primary” are not particles and fields (not “matter”), but the probability of birth (or manifestation) of particles and fields, that is, specifically mental entities? ...The final basis for the existence of the probability of physical events and their purely logical organization in pure quantum states is the strange property of the world as an indivisible unit, which it manifests itself as at the so-called subquantum level. This unique property of the world in a certain way resembles our “I” (the substantial basis of our consciousness). “³

Paul Dirac's famous equation “ $(\partial + m) \psi = 0$ ”, which describes the phenomenon of quantum entanglement and which physicists consider perfect, evokes admiration and once again draws attention to the first

¹ Мелков Ю.А. Факт в постнеклассической науке. К.: Издатель Парапан, 2004. С. 164-165

² Хокинг С. Краткая история времени: от Большого Взрыва до черных дыр / Пер. с англ. СПб.: Амфора, 2001. С. 147.

³ Цехмістро І.З. Голістична філософія науки. Харків: Видавництво «Акта». С. 267-268.

foundations of existence, its true nature. The equation states: “If two systems interact with each other for a certain period of time and then separate, we can describe them as two different systems, but they already exist as a separate, unique system. What happens to one continues to influence the other, even across miles or light years.” This is quantum entanglement or quantum communication. That is, two particles that were once connected are connected forever. Regardless of the distance between them, even if they are at opposite ends of the universe, the connection between them is instantaneous.

In this context, one can hardly agree with the conclusions of the professor of the University of Pittsburgh, Adolf Grünbaum, who, summing up the research of cosmologists of the 20th century, asserts that scientists have no reason to recognize the creative role of the deity as the basis of existence¹, because such statements are in fact, - the result of too hasty generalization.

In the light of these trends in modern science and the hypotheses put forward by famous scientists, in order to explain the world from the point of view of a single principle, and not as an attempt to epistemologically justify and rehabilitate religion, statements are made that “now is the time for the European philosophy of science when it is necessary to turn to the category of miracle and use it to understand the worldview consequences of the scientific revolution and to form a new picture of the world on this basis” . There are attempts of such an appeal to ancient religious and theological concepts.

Let's take, at least, the results of research currently being conducted at the Large Hadron Collider at the European Center for Nuclear Research. As you know, these studies are aimed at finding a mysterious particle that no one has ever seen, but one that is predicted in the so-called “Standard Model” - the main theory of modern physics - the Higgs boson. As is known, the exchange of particles of one type - bosons - is responsible in the microcosm for any interaction between bodies, and the Higgs boson, in particular, according to the hypothesis of physicists, causes the creation of a mass of elements. According to the provisions of the “Standard Model”, everything around is immersed in a field that is saturated with Higgs bosons; the latter resist the change in speed of microparticles, creating their mass; Higgs bosons instantly react to any change in the movement

¹ Грюнбаум А. Происхождение против творения в физической космологии (теологические искажения современной физической космологии). Вопросы философии. 1995. №2. С. 60.

options of microparticles, generating mass and, accordingly, gravity. If this type of boson did not exist, no object in the world would have mass - and gravity itself would be absent as such. For this, as is known, it is called a “a piece of God.”

Moreover, the failures of the experiment, linked to attempts to bring the Large Hadron Collider up to its design capacity, forced some physicists to return to the religious and theological concept of miracles in order to identify the common cause of such a series of failures. Well-known specialists in the field of elementary particle physics - Masao Ninomiya from the Yukawa Institute in Kyoto and the Dane Holger Bech Nielsen from the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen, also known for his sense of humor, in an article with the telling title - “Model for Laws of Nature with Miracles. “, quite seriously put forward an assumption about the collider, which will probably never use all its resource capabilities. And this is due to the fact that, according to the authors, it is not natural causes, but an external supernatural causal factor (according to the authors, God), influencing the fate of randomness in natural chains of events, permanently prevents the launch of such accelerators of elementary particles. This is how the authors present their main idea: “The model seems at first to give too many miracles, but we can argue away a lot of them. Nevertheless, we propose that the interruption of the SSC-accelerator were an example of an (“anti”) miracle, that were indeed seen”.¹

Responding to the problem of failures in the way of effective use of this equipment prompted scientists to be convinced of the unnaturalness and fatality of the consequences of such exploitation. According to the authors of the article, the accumulation of large streams of Higgs bosons in collider accelerators, for which scientists create special artificial conditions, is unnatural and dangerous for the world. And in order to get rid of the danger that threatens the world and man in it, extraterrestrial forces intervene at a certain time in the work of the collider blocks, as if reminding people that only God can do the impossible. Thus, the researchers assume, the collider will never be able to be used to its full extent, as external causal factors oppose it.

If you bring the opinion of the authors of the article to its logical conclusion and at the same time, make separate generalizations of the worldview content, it will turn out that people will hardly ever, even with the help of the most daring technical achievements, which today are the

¹ <https://arxiv.org/pdf/0811.0304>

collider equipment, be able to create conditions, which would contradict the laws of nature. And so, once again, the age-old truth of religion and theology - the creation of something that rises above the laws of nature, and that contradicts them, i.e. - miracles, is the exclusive prerogative of God, the only one capable of doing the impossible, powerfully asserts itself.

As can be seen, the specific interpretation of certain important scientific hypotheses again takes place with the involvement of the terminological apparatus of religion and its theoretical outfit - theology, the elements of which appear to be semantically congruent with some assumptions, which until now have not been fully covered by natural-scientific concepts and categories. There is little doubt that, in attempting to provide a fundamental explanation of the nature of reality at the level of elementary particles, researchers sometimes do not abandon their attempts to simultaneously find channels of interaction between God and the surrounding world, to reveal the focus of his providential control over matter and energy in the universe (and the use of religious terminology to interpret the results of modern scientific research into the world directly confirms this). Moreover, miracles are not simply included in the grid of strictly scientific concepts and categories, but sometimes even become a fundamental principle for scientists in their own system of interpreting existence. That is, separate worldview structures that generalize the content of theoretical knowledge, which represents the subject of the development of science at its current historical stage, obviously reveal a veiled (and sometimes direct) connection with the supernatural. Physicist and philosopher Yuri Kulakov, in his report at the 20th World Philosophical Congress, evaluating the state of development of modern civilization, found it possible to speak about the fact that at the turn of the millennium, the grounds for statements about the opposition of science and religion disappear. Moreover, the author emphasized that science is currently not the only leading means of mastering reality, and in the conditions of the crisis of modern civilization there is a need to create a "unified scientific and theistic picture of the world."¹ Observations and experiments currently being actively conducted at the Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) and the Princeton Laboratory of Anomalous Studies (PEAP) are designed to provide specialists with empirical material for arguing the propositions of such an all-encompassing picture of the world and, ultimately, the corresponding worldview. Relying, on the one hand,

¹ Кулаков Ю.И. Синтез науки и религии. Вопросы философии. 1999. № 2. С.145.

on the achievements of modern science, in particular the physics of elementary particles, quantum mechanics, and, on the other hand, involving ancient esoteric knowledge of hermetic philosophy, Pythagoreanism, alchemy, Kabbalah, employees of these institutions prefer to prove that human consciousness is a special substance, which is capable of actively influencing the surrounding world, interacting with it, changing matter and energy.

No matter how religious activists and their ideological opponents try to clarify these questions, it is impossible to ignore the fact of today's cultural atmosphere, when the unity of the world is asked by scientists also with the involvement of ideas about the divine, which are later extrapolated to other fields of knowledge; that is, even academically oriented scientists, opening new horizons of the universe in the sphere of the smallest particles of matter and at the same time trying to understand the nature of the first foundations of existence, do not consider that the "hypothesis of God" is too outdated. The involvement of the idea of God in order to explain the facts of reality, the numerous attempts of "Western thinkers and scientists to inscribe the mystical worldview into the philosophical foundations of modern science" have now acquired such a scale that they have even become the subject of separate philosophical studies.¹ And it is difficult to draw a clear line between where the force field of modern scientific hypotheses and theories ends and the realm of metaphorical statements, allegories and postulates of religion begins, without a special philosophical analysis and further worldview generalizations. Therefore, finding out the meaningful content of a number of categories of religious consciousness, and among them the idea of a miracle, which by the will of fate turned out to be included in modern scientific research, is relevant; it acquires special importance in the search for new worldview orientations of modern civilization and the formulation of reasoned answers to the fateful questions that arise before it.

And, finally, the solution of the cryptogram of the miracle, as the first secret in the reality of the world, its world *quinta essentia*², where the unlimited-volitional and natural are symbolically combined in an inexplicable way, is directly related to the age-old attempts of man to provide a single explanation for all the facts of reality, find out the latter from the point of view of a single constant. Thus, the question of a

¹ Панфилова Т.В. Ссылка на Бога в науке: дань моде или идеологический прием. Общественные науки и современность. 2001. № 5. С. 124-131.

² The fifth essence (lat.).

miracle, in its broadest sense, not only and not so much as the truth of a fact, but the fundamental relation of the world to its first cause, the first basis, is practically reflected in the question of the initial mystery of the world, of reality in general and the nature of this reality. Such his formulation allows us to touch on the real (according to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz) main question of philosophy: “Why is there something at all, and not nothing?” and finally to understand the real, according to Martin Heidegger’s apt remark, “a miracle of miracles” - “Why does existing exist, but not nothing?”¹. And if one ever succeeds, either through carefully conducted observations or through a lucky guess, to eventually establish and subsequently show even the most ardent skeptic that a miracle is not only a consequence of the functioning of religious ideology, not only a creation of human consciousness and the fruit of rationalized piety, but a “fundamental the reality of the world, the meaning of the world and the openness of its existence”² and really treat it as an eternal human question, as a mystery (“where does everything come from?”), this will allow us to finally give an answer to the great philosophical question, which appears, according to Hans Küng, “on the extreme horizon of our spatial of temporal experience, at the beginning and at the end, but also in the middle of the world and man”³, to the oldest secret of the world, which representatives of various religious teachings call the name God. And talking about the unspeakable and interpreting the unexplained is probably the highest goal that philosophy has claimed to realize in all times of its existence.

Hence, *the goal of this study* is a philosophical and religious analysis of the traditional Christian teaching of the Christian religion about miracles and the objectification of the latter in the corresponding religious feelings and worship, as well as clarifying the specifics of current theological attempts to modernize this teaching. Given the fact that in the modern logic and methodology of science, special emphasis is placed on the subject of research, which does not coincide with the object and is not reduced to it, because the subject of research is usually interpreted by relevant specialists as that side of the object that is considered in a specific

¹ Heidegger M. Was ist Metaphysik? Antrittsvorlesung Freiburg. Br. 1929, Nachwort zur 4. Auflage 1941, Einleitung zur 5. Auflage 1941, Frankfurt, 1975. - S. 42, 47.

² Сошинский С.А. Чудо в системе мироздания. Вопросы философии. 2001. № 9. С. 97.

³ Кюнг Г. Начало всех вещей: Естествознание и религия. Пер. с нем. М., Библиейско-богословский институт св. апостола Андрея, 2007. С.176.

study, then in our case there is a need to talk about each of them separately. In accordance with the above, *the object of this study* was mainly the works of theologians, where, to one degree or another, the authors raise and solve the problems of basic theology (apologetics) and, together with this, consider the issues of the theological doctrine of miracles. These are mainly publications of modern Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox theologians, in which both the traditional Christian teaching about “the works of God” and the latest interpretations of it are taught. Also, a whole series of works and separate articles are analyzed, where the relationship between faith and reason is studied by theological means and the specifics and content of the centuries-old dialogue between religion and science are evaluated. The object of the study also includes the decrees and decisions of those official institutions of Christianity, which to one degree or another reproduce the current position of the Christian clergy, regarding the justification of God’s special providence, miracles, etc. Part of the object of research is data on paranormal experiences of individuals, altered states of their consciousness, extraordinary abilities of individuals, which were studied and evaluated by the author for the presence of signs of the supernatural. The *subject of the study* should be the entire theoretical context of the views of modern Christian theologians - their conceptualizations, theological models and analogies, hypotheses and conclusions that directly or indirectly convey the desire of religious ideologists to modernize Christian views on miracles and their intention to formulate an adequate teaching on miracles that can meet all modern requirements.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH

§ 1. The phenomenon of a miracle, the peculiarities and problems of forming objective knowledge about it

The modern system of techniques and operations for acquiring new knowledge is too diverse, as is science itself, and the study of belief in the supernatural, which in the field of religious studies is associated with a number of cognitive barriers and requires adequate epistemological actions, must begin with a clarification of the initial theoretical and methodological positions¹. The latter will be the source of those ontological predicates that will subsequently be introduced into the interpretation of an array of wide factual material and various empirical data. At the same time, their effectiveness should be manifested primarily in clarifying the ontological status of religion itself and identifying the levels of adequate religious knowledge in this area. Consequently, the choice of the topic is conditioned by the need to give a proper philosophical assessment of the new state of development of the science of religion, the aim and main objective of this section is to identify and interpret those effective epistemological phenomena that are used in the study of belief in the supernatural.

For scientific research, the supernatural is a rather unusual and complex object, since it is not a “thing” of this world and does not fit into the “ordinary” factual reality. The eminent French orientalist and historian Ernst Renan, in the preface to his famous work “The Life of Jesus”, categorically stated: “None of the miracles with which the old histories are filled took place under scientific conditions. Observation, which has never once been falsified, teaches us that miracles never happen but in times and countries in which they are believed, and before persons disposed to

¹ Claiming to Answer. How One Person Became the Response to our Deepest Questions by David Gooding and John Lennox. Publisher: Myrtlefield House Belfast, Northern Ireland. 2018. P. 129-131.

believe them”¹. It is also necessary to emphasize that individual cases of unprecedented and highly unusual events are described exclusively in subjectively significant terms and touch upon the deep mysteries of the human psyche. In such situations, it is difficult, or rather, almost impossible to establish and prove that a certain combination of natural or social phenomena or extremely strange human sensations (of a somatic and visceral nature), as well as previously unknown fluctuations in the general psychophysiological tone of the human body, indeed marked by originality, which may in some way testify to their supernatural origin. For example, a series of strange healings or the development of events in such a way that a person avoids a terrible danger, for example, not having time to board an airplane flight, which subsequently crashes, is subjectively perceived by many people and finds its external manifestation, i.e., described, only in terms of individual existence - in subjectively meaningful terms. They are interpreted and presented depending on the unique worldview of the person, and this is a serious obstacle to unbiased and objective reporting of these events. Thus, miracles and the supernatural in general may be too complex to be described and expressed as elements of subjective religiosity.

In the interpretation of theologians, say, a miracle, its nature, design and method of implementation, of course, belong to a higher, divine world. However, it would be wrong to reduce a miracle only to its supernatural substratum, since it is connected with this earthly world by the providential purpose of a miracle for the salvation of the human soul, which is amenable to this kind of divine action. However, it is precisely because of this that a miracle, in its earthly otherness, cannot be identified with natural regularity, which is the lowest, subordinate degree in the God-established hierarchy of being. And although a miracle is fundamentally unpredictable and cannot be derived from purely physical factors, it nevertheless occurs in these earthly conditions, where it reorients the development of the usual phenomenological series. “A miracle”, says the theologian and historian of science Charles Hammel, “is a phenomenon that has both a cause and an effect. The cause is the action of God, and the result develops according to the usual law inherent in nature”². In such a situation, it is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to separate the purely religious content of ideas about a miracle from the non-religious in it,

¹ The Life of Jesus (Great Minds) by Ernest Renan (Author). Paperback, 1991. 237 pages. P. 29.

² Charles E. Hummel. The Galileo Connection. InterVarsity Press, 1986. 293 pages. P. 127.

especially in stunning, impressive, extremely strange, but still natural phenomena of the world (for example, in the unexpected avoidance of a terrible danger, the strange healing of the sick etc.), which are subjectively perceived as a miracle, and therefore it is difficult to understand a miracle in itself as such, in its, so to speak, purely religious dimension.

It is necessary to realize that the very uniqueness of each individual miracle (of course, in the interpretation of theologians), as well as its secrecy and clarity, finiteness and inexhaustibility, transcendence and immanence make it impossible to study and evaluate it impartially. In addition, human knowledge, in principle, cannot cover the totality of existing phenomena and processes, in their connections and relationships, and consider them later, from the point of view of a single principle that subordinates them. “Just as it is true that we never embrace everything in its absolute totality”, said Martin Heidegger, “it is just as true that we are still in the midst of a totality of being that is somehow a little open to us. The comprehension of the totality of being is ultimately of a different nature than the feeling of oneself among being as a whole. The first is basically impossible. The second is constantly happening in our being”¹.

Consequently, a person cannot be completely convinced that all his experience will confirm naturalistic generalizations about supernatural phenomena or, on the contrary, will allow them to be interpreted from the standpoint of theism, because he does not have access to all this possible experience, especially to future experience. Therefore, decisions on supernatural issues, taken in a hurry, without taking into account what has been said, are the result, in the language of logic, of too hasty generalizations (of an inductive nature), i.e., in fact, these decisions are generally wrong. Consequently, directly formulated judgments such as “There is no supernatural in the world”, does not exist cannot be accepted unconditionally, as well as their objections, because they are only speculative works of consciousness, and not the truth of the fact. An even greater misunderstanding is the situation when some religious testimonies are not evaluated by their quality, but are only interpreted from the point of view of the laws of statistics. Hence, belief in a miracle is declared extremely unlikely, and therefore meaningless, because, they say, a person should rely on the most probable, that is, choose the highest chances. The misunderstanding in this situation is manifested in the fact that the critic of miracles here does not evaluate the evidence in favor of the miracle, but

¹ M. Heidegger. Was ist Metaphysik? Antrittsvorlesung Freiburg. Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt, 1975, 56 Seiten. S. 41.

only composes (adds) evidence against the latter. The famous Viennese physician and philosopher Sigmund Freud once said of a similar situation: “Plausibility is not necessary for truth, and truth is not always plausible.” Both human experience and the practice of common sense have long shown that sometimes the chances of an event are very small, but the evidence in its favor can be quite convincing. In other words, every prudent person in his intentions takes into account not only and not so much the probability, but also the facts. Let us recall here at least an old Latin phrase that characterizes the essence of the truth of a thesis - *argumenta ponderantur, non numerantur*¹

A misunderstanding also arises here because the concept of “probability” in its academic-scientific sense, when probability is used in the formulation of scientific laws, begins to be applied to certain historical events. As is known, the specificity of the latter is that these events - unique and inimitable, one historical event differs from another and unlike another. The formulation of a scientific law assumes the repetition of events, their regularity is related to the frequency of the case - the more often the phenomenon under study is observed in similar conditions, the higher the probability of the assumptions expressed by the law. In such a situation, the specifics of the historian’s study of historical events are ignored and evaluated solely from the point of view of the laws of statistics and the probability of recurrence of events, and this is nothing more than a distorted understanding of probability and an incorrect extrapolation of the signs and principles of one cognitive practice to another.

We can agree with the statement of the Catholic Cardinal Walter Kasper, who on this occasion stated the following: “Natural science today is well aware that it is in principle unable to cover all conditions”. Therefore, “a natural-scientific solution to the question of [the supernatural] ... can be infinite, i.e., this question can be defined as fundamentally unsolvable from a natural-scientific point of view”². Walter Kasper is also right when he says that the solution of this or that question about the nature and reality of a miracle is infinite in itself and has no clear prospects in natural science, because a person is able to understand what he wants only in the process of knowing more, clarifying general questions of an ideological nature, since it is not about facts as such, but about “the foundations of the

¹ The strength of evidence is determined by their significance, but not quantity (lat.).

² Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, T&T Clark International, London, 2011. P.110.

natural sciences, that is, the problems of reality as a whole and the meaning of this whole”¹.

Another problem of religious understanding of belief in the supernatural lies in the fact that in practice the scientist has to deal with a huge variety of manifestations of this belief. He, trying through methodical research to discover principles that will allow him to avoid confusion in working with large amounts of information, does not care about the lack of material. Moreover, having begun to clarify the true nature of the issue, as well as the content and specifics of the corresponding theological interpretations of the supernatural, the scientist is faced with a huge factual (of course, in its religious sense and interpretation) material that requires the introduction of religious phenomena and their interpretations of a certain order into this array and systematicity, so as not to be swallowed up or stopped by the uncontrollability of the latter. The complexity of the situation is aggravated by the fact that today, for example, 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. For example, you can hear about a strange and extremely incomprehensible avoidance of danger or read about the inexplicable, from the point of view of modern medicine, the healing of terminally ill; people, and this was noticed by the ancient Greeks, marvel at the rare, while getting used to the ordinary. However, in none of these cases is there an external supernatural causal factor in the course of these events that would invisibly guide such events. Therefore, in this regard, it is very important for the researcher to carry out one more additional cognitive act, which will precede all subsequent research, namely, the selection of elements of religious consciousness from close or similar secular phenomena. 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*²; that is, an attempt to discover the essential and necessary in 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.

And finally, the last and most important remark. Realizing the miracle as the truth of religion and theology, we turn to the supernatural to one degree or another, because the miracle is the main supernatural phenomenon.

¹ Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, T&T Clark International, London, 2011. P. 110.

² Acceptance of one instead of another (lat.).

However, the functionality of scientific methods is limited only by natural phenomena and processes; in the force field of scientific research, certain natural laws, communication parameters, variability are established. Thus, for science as such, there are no supernatural phenomena and events, because in the system of knowledge, where the supernatural is assumed, there is no spirit of science. On the other hand, the miracle itself, as the fullness of the embodiment of the absolute in the relative, has never been and could not be the subject of empirical ascertainment. When a researcher comprehends a miracle and ignores its supernatural substrate and content, he will deal in his research not with the concept of “miracle”, but with something else - similar, but not with a miracle, and therefore - will change the object of research. To this problem is added one more, purely logical aspect. If we comprehend the miracle and assume that it does not exist, simply does not exist, then the researcher in this case has nothing to study. If, on the contrary, in our reasoning, as a starting point, there will be an assertion about the reality of a miracle, then we, leaving the field of science, will plunge into theology. The German philosopher David Friedrich Strauss, in his seminal work “The Life of Jesus”, noted on this occasion: “... Hence we need not wonder those rationalistic commentators [of Gospels] have attempted to free themselves at any cost from a miracle ... and we have only to see how they proceed in this undertaking.”¹

Considering the above features of the scientific study of belief in the supernatural, in the works of scientists, among other issues, the task of distinguishing the cognitive status of certain statements formulated within the framework of the religious worldview regarding the mode of existence of supernatural reality and assessing the content of such statements for their compliance with objective reality inevitably arises. Since in social practice and in the formation of objective knowledge about religion, certain concepts are sometimes substituted as a result of their incorrect identification and obvious distortion of their content, this leads to incorrect conclusions, misconceptions and a distorted understanding of religion and its components. And yet it remains obvious that resistance to the supernatural has long been entrenched in the force field of scientific

¹ David Friedrich Strauss. *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (4th ed.). Translator: George Eliot. London, SWAN SONNENSCHNEIN & CO. Lim. 1902. P. 115.

research: “No miracle ever occurred in the presence of men capable of testing its miraculous character”, writes Ernst Renan¹.

Thus, for science as such, there are no supernatural phenomena and events, since a system of knowledge that assumes the supernatural clearly lacks the characteristics of scientificity. On the other hand, the miracle itself, as the full embodiment of the absolute in the relative, has never been and could never be the subject of regular empirical observation.

And it is necessary to emphasize that the epistemological status of theological judgments about the existence of the world may not be accepted by the author's ideological opponents, but this should not prevent an impartial approach to determining the probable degree of truthfulness of the judgment and its semantic correlation with the actual state of affairs. In the situation of encountering the inexplicable, the materialist should not shy away from recognizing that in this case the fact may falsify the atheistic basis or that the materialist theory does not have the necessary explanatory potential. Instead, it is inappropriate for the theologian to find evidence of the presence of the “supernatural” and uncritically recognize it where there is a natural explanation of the phenomenon. For example, the phenomenon of miracles as an object of study from the point of view of its methodology can be clarified through its supernatural origin in the theistic system of judgements about existence, while in another subject area it can only be explained by natural causes, say, as an element of human consciousness, depending on the worldview of the researchers. It is impossible to prove or disprove the interpretations he has, as well as their objections, due to the fact that a person is not able to deduce all the facts of reality with the help of deduction from any general provisions and, accordingly, prove the validity of his basic assumptions. Explaining the miracle, the system of judgments alternative to religion can focus on exclusively natural objects, in the nature of which, according to experts, there is perhaps the supernatural.

Since, as the history of science testifies, the initial foundations regarding the ontological status of the phenomenon under study may turn out to be false, although outwardly plausible, this will lead to the appearance of false chains of further conclusions. The researchers paid attention to the fact that rejection on personal convictions, as a true partially affirmative judgment of the type - “In some cases, the activity of God manifests itself

¹ The Life of Jesus (Great Minds) by Ernest Renan (Author). Paperback, 1991. 237 pages. P. 29.