THE EMERGENCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD WITHIN THE PARADIGM OF CHRISTIANITY[1]

Luka Popov

UDK 001:1
27:001
113
https://doi.org/10.32701/dp.27.1.4
Original scientific paper
Received: 17.12.2025
Accepted: 11.3.2026

Abstract

Modern science rests upon a set of foundational presuppositions that are not themselves empirically demonstrable yet are indispensable for the scientific enterprise. These include the existence and knowability of the universal laws of nature, the universality of logic, the basic reliability of human senses, and the mathematical intelligibility and structural unity of fundamental laws. Historical analysis reveals that these presuppositions achieved their most systematic and coherent articulation within medieval and early–modern Latin Christianity. This paper argues that the Christian doctrine of creation—particularly the concepts of a rational Creator who governs through secondary causes, the *imago Dei*, the Incarnation, and divine simplicity—provided the metaphysical and epistemological framework that rendered the scientific method not only possible but intellectually compelling. While not denying the significant scientific achievements of other civilizations, this thesis is advanced as a qualified philosophical–historical proposal and situated within the broader historiographical debate concerning Christianity and the rise of modern science.

Keywords: philosophy of science, scientific revolution, Christian metaphysics, laws of nature, rationality, *imago Dei*, Incarnation, divine simplicity

* Dr Luka Popov, Zagreb, E–mail: luka.popov@gmail.com

1 An earlier version of this report was presented at the First CePOZiR Conference, held in Zagreb from 24–26 September 2025, in the section "The Relationship between Science and Religion." The conference was organized by the Centre for the Study of the Relationship between Science and Religion at the Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb.

Introduction

The practice of modern natural science presupposes several metaphysical commitments that lie outside the scope of empirical verification yet are necessary for scientific inquiry to be meaningful. Thomas S. Kuhn's concept of "paradigm" (Kuhn 1962) may be extended to include these constitutive metaphysical elements that structure scientific reasoning.

Four such foundational presuppositions are particularly critical:

1. The material universe is governed by discoverable, universal laws of nature.
2. The laws of logic are universal and binding on all reality.
3. Human sensory experience provides reliable (though fallible) access to objective reality.
4. Fundamental structures of nature are mathematically intelligible and exhibit explanatory unity.

These axioms cannot be justified by the scientific method itself without circularity. The expectation that nature will continue to behave lawfully cannot be derived deductively from finite observation—a point famously articulated by David Hume in his analysis of induction (Hume 1748). Likewise, the universality of logic and the reliability of sensory cognition function as preconditions of empirical investigation rather than its conclusions.

The historical question, therefore, arises: under what intellectual conditions did it become conceivable—and indeed compelling—that nature should be investigated through systematic experimentation and mathematical formulation?

The thesis defended here is not entirely new. It has been advanced in various forms by historians and philosophers such as Pierre Duhem (1913–1959), Robert K. Merton (1938), Stanley Jaki (1988), and Alister McGrath (1998). At the same time, it has been qualified or criticized by scholars, including John Hedley Brooke (1991), Steven Shapin (1996), George Saliba (2007), and Joseph Needham (1954–2008), who emphasize the complexity of historical causation and the significant scientific achievements of non–Christian civilizations. The present study does not attempt a comprehensive civilizational survey. Rather, it advances a more limited philosophical–historical claim: that the specific constellation of presuppositions underlying modern science achieved systematic coherence within Latin Christendom in a distinctive way.

1. *Historical Observation: The Unique European Development of Systematic Science*

Impressive technological and mathematical achievements occurred in ancient China, India, and the Islamic world. Islamic astronomers such as al–Tusi and Ibn al–Shatir developed highly sophisticated mathematical models, some of which influenced Copernicus (Saliba 2007). Chinese civilization achieved extraordinary advances in engineering, navigation, metallurgy, and applied mathematics (Needham 1954–2008).

Nevertheless, none of these civilizations produced, in comparable institutional continuity, a self–sustaining tradition of theoretical natural science centered on universal, mathematically formulated laws tested by controlled experiment. The systematization of observation, reduction to minimal explanatory principles, and the expectation of predictive mathematical laws became characteristic and enduring features specifically within Latin Christendom from the High Middle Ages onward.

Moreover, the founders of virtually every modern scientific discipline (Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Boyle, Newton, Leibniz, Linnaeus, Mendel, Pascal, Gassendi, Steno, etc.) were devout Christians, many of them Catholic or Anglican clergy. This attitude was already fully formed in the High Middle Ages: Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175–1253), Bishop of Lincoln and the first Chancellor of Oxford University who formulated an early version of the experimental method and insisted on the mathematization of nature, while Bonaventure, Franciscan Minister General and Doctor of the Church, developed a comprehensive theology of creation as a "book" written in mathematical language (Grosseteste ca. 1230; Bonaventure 1259–1262).

The present claim is not that non–Christian cultures lacked rationality or scientific achievement. Rather, it is that the particular combination of metaphysical commitments characteristic of early modern European science crystallized there in uniquely systematic form. This historical correlation demands an explanation.

2. *The Christian Metaphysical Foundations of the Scientific Paradigm*

Before examining their theological articulation, it is necessary to clarify why the four presuppositions listed above function as conditions of possibility for science.

First, the expectation of universal laws cannot be logically derived from finite empirical observation without presupposing the uniformity of nature.

As already noted, Hume's critique of induction makes clear that such uniformity is assumed rather than demonstrated (Hume 1748).

Second, logical reasoning structures all scientific argumentation and cannot be empirically verified without circularity.

Third, empirical science depends on basic trust in sensory cognition; radical skepticism would render experimentation meaningless.

Fourth, the expectation that nature is mathematically intelligible underlies the search for unified explanatory principles.

These commitments, therefore, operate as trans–empirical foundations of scientific practice.

2.1. The Existence and Autonomy of Secondary Causes (Laws of Nature)

Certain theological and cosmological currents outside Latin Christianity—such as forms of Ash'arite occasionalism in Islamic theology—emphasized divine immediacy in ways that complicated the concept of stable secondary causes. Al–Ghazālī, for example, argued that causal connections in nature are not necessary but depend entirely upon God's continual volitional action (Al–Ghazālī 1095/2000).

In contrast, the biblical narrative of a six–day creation followed by divine rest (Genesis 2:2–3) was interpreted by the Church Fathers and medieval scholastics as implying that God, after the initial act of creation, governs the world through stable secondary causes (*causae secundae*). This doctrine, articulated with particular clarity by Thomas Aquinas, provided a theological rationale for expecting nature to exhibit regular, discoverable laws rather than arbitrary divine interventions (Aquinas 1265–1274, I, q. 105, a. 5; I–II, q. 91, a. 2).

Already in late antiquity, Augustine had argued that God created the world with *rationes seminales*—seminal principles implanted in creation that unfold according to divinely established order (Augustine 401–415, V.4–5). Basil of Caesarea similarly described the created world as governed by stable ordinances, reflecting divine wisdom rather than capricious divine action (Basil ca. 370, I.6). Medieval scholastic theology systematized this patristic intuition by distinguishing between God as primary cause and created agents as genuine secondary causes, thereby preserving both divine sovereignty and natural regularity (Aquinas 1265–1274, I, q. 22; I, q. 105).

This expectation was explicitly articulated by thirteenth–century pioneers of the scientific method such as Robert Grosseteste, who insisted that nature operates "according to its own laws divinely implanted in it" (Grosseteste ca. 1225–1235, 51–52), and Bonaventure, who taught that the created world possesses stable seminal reasons (*rationes seminales*) implanted by

God and knowable through human investigation (Bonaventure 1259–1262, II.12). In this theological framework, empirical investigation did not represent competition with divine action but rather participation in the rational order established by the Creator.

It is important to note that this doctrine of secondary causality did not imply a limitation of divine freedom. On the contrary, medieval theologians understood divine freedom to be expressed precisely in the establishment of a stable and intelligible created order. The contingency of creation meant that its structure could not be deduced a priori but had to be discovered empirically; yet its origin in divine wisdom justified confidence that such investigation would not be futile.

In affirming the real efficacy of created causes, Latin Christian theology established a conceptual framework in which natural regularities could be investigated without theological anxiety. The stability of secondary causes rendered the search for universal laws both metaphysically coherent and religiously legitimate. Empirical investigation thus became not merely permissible but intellectually meaningful within a theological vision of creation as ordered, contingent, and rational.

2.2. The Universality of Logic and Human Rationality (Imago Dei and Divine Logos)

The prologue to the Gospel of John identifies the divine *Logos* (Reason/Word) with God Himself: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Early Christian theologians such as Justin Martyr, Augustine, and Boethius concluded that rationality is intrinsic to the Godhead and that human reason participates in the divine *Logos* (Justin Martyr ca. 155–160, 1 Apology 46; Augustine 397–400, 2.40.60; Boethius ca. 520, 5.pr6) because man is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27).

This theological conviction has direct epistemological implications. If reality itself proceeds from divine Reason, and if the human mind participates in that rational structure by virtue of the *imago Dei*, then a fundamental congruence between mind and world may be expected. The universality of logic is not merely a feature of human thought but reflects the intelligible structure of being itself. Scientific reasoning presupposes precisely this congruence: that logical inference corresponds to objective reality rather than merely to subjective mental constructions. Joseph Ratzinger (later Benedict XVI) articulated this point with particular clarity:

> *Christian faith in God means first the decision in favour of the primacy of the logos against mere matter. Saying 'I believe that God exists' also implies opting for the view that the logos — that is, the idea, freedom, love — stands not merely at the end but also in the beginning, that is in the originating and encompassing*

> *power of all being. In other words, faith means deciding for the view that thought and meaning do not just form a chance by–product of being; that, on the contrary, all being is a product of thought and, indeed, in its innermost structure is itself a thought. To that extent faith means in a specific sense deciding for the truth, since, to faith, being itself is truth, comprehensibility, meaning, and all this does not simply represent a secondary product of being that arose at some point or other but could have no structural, authoritative meaning for reality as a whole.* (Ratzinger 2004, 151–152)

In his Regensburg lecture, Benedict XVI further emphasized that within classical Christian theology, divine action is not arbitrary will detached from reason, but intrinsically rational: God acts "with logos" and never in contradiction to rationality (Benedict XVI 2006). This conviction reinforced the expectation that creation itself would exhibit logical coherence rather than metaphysical unpredictability.

Such confidence is not trivial for scientific practice. Empirical investigation presupposes that contradictions cannot simultaneously hold in reality and that valid inference reveals genuine structures of the world. Yet logical principles cannot themselves be established by experiment without circularity; they must already be trusted as universally binding.

It should be noted that Islamic philosophical traditions also developed sophisticated accounts of divine rationality, particularly within the Mu'tazilite and Avicennian traditions. However, as Benedict XVI reminds us in the aforementioned Regensburg lecture, certain strands of Ash'arite theology emphasized divine will in ways that some historians have argued could weaken the conceptual necessity of rational coherence in creation (Al–Ghazālī 1095/2000; Saliba 2007). The present claim is not that Islamic thought lacked rational metaphysics, but that within Latin Christianity, the identification of *divine Logos* with both cosmic order and human rationality achieved a uniquely systematic articulation that directly supported confidence in universal logical intelligibility.

The expectation that reality is rationally structured—and that the human mind can genuinely know that structure—thus emerges not as an arbitrary assumption but as a theological consequence of the doctrine of the *Logos* and the *imago Dei*. This metaphysical grounding helps explain why the search for universal, law–like regularities appeared not only methodologically useful but ontologically justified.

2.3. The Reliability of the Senses (The Doctrine of the Incarnation)

Empirical science presupposes that sensory experience provides genuine—though fallible—access to an external, objective reality. Without such trust, experimentation would lose epistemic force: observation would no longer

function as a corrective to theory, and empirical verification would collapse into subjectivism or skepticism.

Within certain philosophical and religious traditions, the material world has been interpreted as illusory, inferior, or metaphysically secondary to a higher spiritual realm. Classical Gnostic currents, for example, regarded matter as a degradation of spiritual reality, while some strands of Neoplatonism treated the sensible world as a diminished emanation of the intelligible. In parts of Indian philosophical traditions, the concept of *māyā* was interpreted as emphasizing the provisional or deceptive character of empirical appearance. These traditions are internally diverse, and many contain sophisticated realist elements; nevertheless, they illustrate that confidence in the full ontological status of sensory reality is not universally self–evident.

Christian theology, by contrast, affirms the goodness of material creation: "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). This affirmation reaches its most radical expression in the doctrine of the Incarnation: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The eternal *Logos* does not merely appear in material form but truly assumes human nature. The Incarnation thus represents not only a soteriological claim but also a profound ontological affirmation of embodied existence.

Because God "can neither deceive nor be deceived" (*nec fallere nec falli potest*) (Gasparri 1930, 24–25), and because the Incarnate Word truly participated in human sensory life, Christian theology provides a strong metaphysical grounding for the basic reliability of the senses. Sensory knowledge is not an illusion to be transcended but a genuine avenue of access to created reality.

Thomas Aquinas articulates this epistemology with philosophical precision: human knowledge begins in the senses (*nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*), and the intellect abstracts universal forms from sensible experience (Aquinas 1265–1274, I, q. 84). While sensory error is possible due to cognitive limitation, such error does not imply that reality itself is deceptive. Rather, fallibility presupposes an underlying correspondence between perception and world.

For the development of experimental science, this distinction is crucial. The scientific method relies on the capacity to refine, correct, and extend sensory data through instruments and controlled observation. Such refinement presupposes that sensory experience, when properly ordered and disciplined, discloses genuine features of reality. Within the Christian metaphysical framework, this expectation is coherent: the same rational Creator who establishes the order of nature also endows human beings with faculties proportioned to that order.

Empirical investigation, therefore, becomes not merely practically useful but theologically intelligible. The world is not a veil to be escaped but a Creation to be studied. The Incarnation, by affirming the reality and goodness of matter, reinforces confidence that the sensible world is worthy of sustained rational inquiry.

2.4. The Simplicity and Beauty of Natural Laws (Divine Simplicity and Goodness)

Medieval theology defined God as *actus purus* and perfect simplicity. The doctrine of divine simplicity affirms that God is not composed of parts, not subject to division, and not metaphysically complex (First Vatican Council 1870; Aquinas 1265–1274, I, q. 3). At the same time, God is affirmed as supremely good and beautiful (Mark 10:18; Psalm 27:4). Within the Christian intellectual tradition, creatures were understood to participate analogically in the perfections of their Creator. The created order was therefore not regarded as arbitrary or chaotic, but as reflecting—however finitely—the unity, intelligibility, and goodness of its source.

Bonaventure repeatedly described creation as structured according to "number, weight, and measure" (Wisdom 11:20), presenting the world as a *speculum* (mirror) of divine wisdom (Bonaventure 1259–1262, II.1–12). Robert Grosseteste, in his *De luce*, proposed that the physical structure of the cosmos unfolds from a single simple principle—light—governed by geometrical and mathematical regularity (Grosseteste ca. 1225–1235). Such accounts do not constitute modern physics, but they reflect a theological expectation that nature exhibits intelligible structure and internal coherence.

It is important, however, to clarify what is meant by "simplicity" in the context of science. The claim is not that physical laws must be aesthetically pleasing in a subjective sense. Rather, simplicity functions methodologically as a regulative principle in theory formation. Scientific practice typically favors explanations that reduce diverse phenomena to unified underlying principles, not merely for reasons of elegance but because such unification increases explanatory power and predictive coherence. The search for minimal axiomatic structures, symmetry principles, and mathematical economy reflects this methodological commitment, traditionally associated with the principle often termed "Ockham's razor" (Ockham ca. 1323; Weinberg 1992).

This preference for unification is not logically deducible from empirical data alone. Experience presents a multiplicity of phenomena; the expectation that this multiplicity can be reduced to a coherent mathematical structure presupposes confidence in an underlying unity of nature. Within Christian metaphysics, divine simplicity and unity provided an ontological analogue for such expectation. If creation proceeds from a single rational

source, then the hope that it exhibits deep structural coherence is not irrational but metaphysically grounded.

This theological background does not claim that every scientific theory must be simple in an absolute sense, nor does it eliminate empirical complexity. Rather, it sustains the conviction that beneath observable complexity there exists intelligible order. The enduring scientific pursuit of unified field theories, symmetry–based models, and mathematically elegant formulations may be understood as a historical continuation of this expectation.

Thus, while mathematical simplicity is not itself empirically demonstrable as a metaphysical necessity, its methodological centrality in modern science finds a natural resonance within the Christian doctrine of divine unity and intelligible creation.

3. *Creation as a Theological Book and the Question of Secular Inheritance*

Christian tradition has long viewed the created order as a second "book" through which God speaks (CCC 1997, §1147; cf. Wisdom 13:1–9; Romans 1:20). Natural philosophy was therefore understood not as a rival to theology but as a legitimate mode of rational engagement with divine wisdom manifested in creation. The metaphor of the "two books"—Scripture and Nature—became common in medieval and early–modern thought, reinforcing the conviction that the investigation of nature is compatible with, and even encouraged by, faith.

Within this framework, the study of natural phenomena was interpreted as participation in the rational order established by the Creator. If the world is the work of divine wisdom, then examining its structures and regularities becomes an intelligible and meaningful task. Scientific inquiry thus acquired theological legitimacy rather than being perceived as an intrusion into sacred territory.

At the same time, the same biblical texts that affirm the revelatory character of creation also contain warnings. Wisdom 13:1–9 criticizes those who admire created realities without ascending to their source, and Romans 1:25 warns against worshiping the creature rather than the Creator. These passages do not condemn the investigation of nature itself; rather, they caution against absolutizing creation and detaching it from its metaphysical grounding.

In the modern period, scientific practice increasingly developed within methodological frameworks that bracketed explicit theological claims, while retaining many of the metaphysical presuppositions historically nurtured within Christian thought. The expectation of universal lawfulness, rational intelligibility, and mathematical unity continued to structure scientific rea-

soning even as appeals to divine causality were often set aside for methodological purposes.

This development may be described not simply as rejection but as transformation: metaphysical assumptions originally articulated within a theological context were retained while their theological formulation became less explicit. Whether such presuppositions remain philosophically stable when detached from their original metaphysical context is a broader question in contemporary philosophy of science and philosophy of religion (Plantinga 2011; Polkinghorne 1994).

The present argument does not attempt to resolve that question. Its claim is genealogical rather than polemical: that the intellectual environment within which systematic experimental science first flourished was shaped by theological convictions regarding creation as intelligible, ordered, and meaningful. Recognizing this historical lineage neither diminishes scientific autonomy nor collapses science into theology; rather, it situates the emergence of modern science within a broader narrative of metaphysical reflection on the intelligibility of reality.

Conclusion

The modern scientific method and its underlying paradigm did not emerge inevitably from human reason alone. They developed within a specific metaphysical soil: the Christian doctrine of a rational, good, and personal Creator who freely brought into being an orderly and contingent cosmos governed by secondary causes, and who created human beings in His image with reliable rational and sensory faculties.

Few historical civilizations articulated a comparable cluster of presuppositions in such a systematic and self–conscious manner. The birth of modern science within Latin Christendom was therefore not accidental but historically intelligible within the theological framework that shaped its intellectual horizon. Acknowledging this historical and philosophical lineage does not diminish the achievements of science; rather, it situates them within the broader development of Western intellectual history and invites continued reflection on the metaphysical assumptions that sustain scientific practice.

References

Al–Ghazālī. 2000. *The Incoherence of the Philosophers (Tahāfut al–Falāsifa).* Translated by Michael E. Marmura. Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press. (Original work published 1095).

Aquinas, Thomas. 1265–1274. *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. 1947 edition. New York: Benziger Bros.

Augustine. 397–400. *De doctrina christiana*. Edited by Joseph Martin. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 32. Turnhout: Brepols, 1962.

Augustine. 401–415. *De Genesi ad litteram*. Edited by J. Zycha. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 28. Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1894.

Basil of Caesarea. ca. 370. *Hexaemeron*. In *Nicene and Post–Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. 8, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955.

Benedict XVI. 2006. "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections." Lecture delivered at the University of Regensburg, 12 September 2006.

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict–xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben–xvi_spe_20060912_university–regensburg.html.

Boethius. ca. 520. *The Consolation of Philosophy*. Translated by David R. Slavitt. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Bonaventure. 1259–1262. *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*. In *Opera omnia*, vol. 5, 295–316. Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1891.

Brooke, John Hedley. 1991. *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Duhem, Pierre. 1913–1959. *Le système du monde: Histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*. 10 vols. Paris: Hermann.

First Vatican Council. 1870. "Dei Filius: Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith." In *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, edited by Norman P. Tanner, 2:804–811. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990.

Galilei, Galileo. 1623. *Il Saggiatore*. Rome: Giacomo Mascardi.

Gasparri, Pietro. 1930. *Cathecismus catholicus*. Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis.

Grosseteste, Robert. ca. 1225–1235. *De luce seu de inchoatione formarum.* In *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste*, edited by Ludwig Baur, 51–59. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters 9. Münster: Aschendorff, 1912.

Hume, David. 1748. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Tom L. Beauchamp. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Jaki, Stanley L. 1988. *The Savior of Science*. Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway.

Justin Martyr. ca. 155–160. *First Apology*. In *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Ante–Nicene Fathers 1, 163–187. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885.

Kuhn, Thomas S. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McGrath, Alister E. 1998. *The Foundations of Dialogue in Science and Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Merton, Robert K. 1938. *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth–Century England.* Osiris 4: 360–632.

Needham, Joseph. 1954–2008. *Science and Civilisation in China*. 7 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ockham, William of. ca. 1323. *Summa Logicae*. Edited by Philotheus Boehner. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1974.

Plantinga, Alvin. 2011. *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Polkinghorne, John. 1994. *Science and Christian Belief*. London: SPCK.

Ratzinger, Joseph. 2004. *Introduction to Christianity*. Translated by J. R. Foster. New Revised Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. (Original work published 1968).

Saliba, George. 2007. *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Shapin, Steven. 1996. *The Scientific Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Weinberg, Steven. 1992. *Dreams of a Final Theory: The Scientist's Search for the Ultimate Laws of Nature*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Sažetak

POJAVA ZNANSTVENE METODE UNUTAR PARADIGME KRŠĆANSTVA

LUKA POPOV

Moderna znanost počiva na skupu temeljnih pretpostavki koje same po sebi nisu empirijski dokazive, ali su nužne za znanstveni pothvat. Među njima su postojanje i spoznatljivost univerzalnih zakona prirode, univerzalnost logike, temeljna pouzdanost ljudskih osjetila te matematička razumljivost i strukturno jedinstvo temeljnih prirodnih zakona. Povijesna analiza pokazuje da su ove pretpostavke svoju najsustavniju i najkoherentniju artikulaciju postigle unutar srednjovjekovnoga i ranonovovjekovnoga latinskog kršćanstva. U radu se tvrdi da je kršćanski nauk o stvaranju — osobito pojmovi razumnoga Stvoritelja koji upravlja svijetom putem sekundarnih uzroka, *imago Dei*, utjelovljenja te božanske jednostavnosti — pružio metafizički i epistemološki okvir koji je znanstvenu metodu učinio ne samo mogućom nego i intelektualno uvjerljivom. Ne poričući pritom značajna znanstvena postignuća drugih civilizacija, ova se teza iznosi kao kvalificirani filozofsko–povijesni prijedlog te se smješta u širu historiografsku raspravu o odnosu kršćanstva i nastanka moderne znanosti.

Ključne riječi: filozofija znanosti, znanstvena revolucija, kršćanska metafizika, zakoni prirode, racionalnost, *imago Dei*, utjelovljenje, božanska jednostavnost

* dr. sc. Luka Popov, Zagreb, E–mail: luka.popov@gmail.com