

## **The Key Presupposition of the Enlightenment and Liberal Theology**

Liberal Theology assumes that there are no divine interventions. Often this is presented as the result of research, but in fact it is derived from determinism (also called ‘the causal nexus’), i.e. the doctrine that every event is necessitated by preceding events. I shall examine the function this doctrine plays in authors of the Enlightenment and of Liberal Theology, argue that it is wrong, and explain why it is important to see that it is wrong.

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1. The key presupposition in Troeltsch, Gilkey, Bultmann, and some contemporary authors.
2. Philosophical versions: Hobbes, Kant
3. ‘Determinism’, ‘causal nexus’. The key thesis, ‘mechanicism’: Every event is (has to be) caused by preceding (material) events through law-governed processes.
4. Implications for free will, for creation, for miracles – and thus for Christianity.
5. There are no good a priori arguments for mechanicism.
6. The laws of nature do not entail mechanicism.

7. The nature of causal processes does not correspond to mechanicism.

8. Practical advice for thinking and acting.

***Suggested Readings:***

Wachter, Daniel von, 2015, 'Miracles are not violations of the laws of nature because laws do not entail regularities', *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 7 (2015), 37–60, [http://von-wachter.de/tmp/Wachter\\_2015-laws-original.pdf](http://von-wachter.de/tmp/Wachter_2015-laws-original.pdf).

Troeltsch, Ernst, 1898, 'On the historical and dogmatic methods in theology', <http://faculty.tcu.edu/grant/hhit/Troeltsch,%20On%20the%20Historical%20and%20Dogmatic%20Methods.pdf>.

Larmer, Robert, 2014, *The Legitimacy of Miracle*.