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QUESTION OF GOD – TODAY

A b s t r a c t. Contemporary atheism, which has its roots in the Enlightenment as well as in the 18th and 19th-century critique of religion, differs from the historically more distant forms of negating God's existence or His effectiveness in the world. These approaches assume that the human intellect has freed itself from the Dark Ages of metaphysics and theology of revelation to find its natural state in immanentism and secularism. In this way, the non-existence of God becomes unquestionable, because He is nothing more than an imaginary being, whose existence cannot be proved empirically or granted an *a priori* status. At the same time, some prominent thinkers challenge the conceptual viability of positivism. Their arguments pertain to the intellectual and existential questions that are inseparable from the spiritual nature of the human being. They also point to the argumentative conviction that the human being displays a predilection to investigate the transcendent origin and purpose of the world. Reference to God allows a reappraisal of the historical evidence of the historical act of God's revealing Himself through Jesus Christ. Faith in God, who is present in the world, gives hope even in the face of death, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer confessed shortly before his execution by the godless Nazis.

Key words: God; Existence; Faith; Revelation; Critique of Religion.

A respected contemporary philosopher, Volker Gerhardt of Humboldt-University Berlin, recently has presented a project of "Rational Theology." His book has the significant title: *Sense of Being. An approach to the Divine*.¹

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¹ (Berlin, 2.Edition, 2015).

The issue is to indicate, before the question of Revealed Faith, philosophically, the rationality of natural faith in the existence of God. Starting with the analysis of self-consciousness which cannot be separate from world-consciousness he reaches the remarkable conclusion: "As long as man perceives himself as person he understands the world which renders himself, and those of him alike, possible. It is in the understanding of himself that makes him rely on the world-consciousness. Inasmuch as he does not extend this too far man has every reason to name, or to call himself, and the world containing everything else outside of him, 'divine', in the recognition of her immense diversity and the magnitude of her beauty, of her fears, together with all of her given possibilities, engaged in every word and deed. Whoever under such conditions is not afraid, and despite everything else, to believe in himself, has good reason to believe in the Divine in God."²

In the introduction of his book, Volker Gerhardt speaks a bit ironically of how a leading professor of philosophy at one of the major German Universities used to explain rather authoritatively, and without the benefit of doubt, that *today* God is no longer a subject of philosophy. He used the phrase of Nietzsche "*Tod Gottes*-The Death of God" to prove definitely that it is not rationally possible to treat an unexisting being. During his dramatic presentation, this esteemed colleague did not realize the fact that Nietzsche's phrase "Death of God" is not the conclusion of a neutral scientific result of research. Thus the terror of nihilism is evident, which voids our being of any security or direction. In the meantime, the same professor seems to have realized that the question of God cannot be killed as long as human beings in their fragile existence deal with the quest of their individual being, and the being of all of humanity, of whom he acknowledges, that I am a part of as well.

Thus God is a very meritorious and inevitable subject which is linked to the question of my own self, whether I believe in God or deny as an atheist his existence, or whether I skeptically doubt God's interest in me.

A priori it would be absurd to try to prove or disprove by means of natural science or the methods of natural science, *quasi more geometrico*, the existence of a thing or a living being beyond the empirical world as precisely part of this world because God, per definition, does not belong to the universe. He is neither part of the empirical or phenomenal world nor is he an imminent force in her, but rather he is the transcendent origin and cause. Moreover, now the task is to demonstrate relatively to the human spirit, and

² Ebd., 340.

the one and the whole of the world, that the question for the transcendent origin and goal of man and the world is both **reasonable** and **rational**.

To discover the sense of the totality of existence in its transcendent origin does not mean to be condemned having to invent it. How would that be possible for mortal beings?

Out of faith in God emerges another consequence that we do not need to justify to ourselves that we exist, or that we take the place of others, or that we may become burdensome to others as children, or as infirmed or elderly. On the contrary, God justifies that I am and that I am who I am. To beg pardon for one's existence is an offense to God. In believing in the good and merciful God, the feeling disappears that everything is without sense and futile. The apostle gives this expression: "But when the kindness and generous love of our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of his re-birth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:4-5)."

The atheistic conviction that intellectual history and the breathtaking progress of natural and technical sciences, as well as global and digitalized ways of knowing, cohesively would lead into total immanentism and secularism, is contradicted by the fact that the human being always asks anew, and wants to ask, the existential questions regarding his origin and destiny. The question about the sense of being and the goal of our existence thus cannot be dismissed by positivism as devoid of sense, or irrational, and hence it cannot be forced to silence.³

In his book *Der letzte Gottesbeweis* the philosopher Robert Spaemann offers the following statement: "Until now sciences have not offered one single serious argument against the rumor about God but have only made recourse to the approach of the scientific *Weltanschauung*, or scientism; Hence what Wittgenstein called the superstition of modernity. Contemporary science is exploration based on conditions. Contemporary science does not ask what something is in its essence, or why it exists, but it asks what are the conditions of its being, or of its origins. To be, to be onself, effectively means emancipation from the conditions of becoming. The unconditional, thus God, by definition, cannot logically appear within a scientific and imminent framework based on conditions, for example, like the role of a projector

³ Charles Taylor offers a fundamental analysis of the philosophical and religious orientation of our times *Eine grundlegende Analyse der geistigen und religiösen Situation der Zeit* bietet Charles TAYLOR, *A Secular Age* [German Edition: *Ein säkulares Zeitalter* (Frankfurt a.M, 2009)].

while viewing a movie screen [...] The alternative is not to be phrased: The possibility of scientific explanation of the existing world or faith in God but renouncement of understanding the world, resignation, or faith in God [...]. The faith in God is faith in God as ultimate foundation of the world who in himself is not without foundation hence faith is not irrational but God is light, transparent in himself, and hence he is his own foundation.”⁴

Here we are not dealing with the specific philosophical question whether a preference is to be given to a transcendental or an ontological approach respectively, or given the impossibility of separation of self-transcendence and world-transcendence, whether in the cognitive act a synthesis of both points of departure recommends itself to reason. Both of these approaches lead either to God as an absolute spirit, the infinite consciousness of God as himself, or to being that exists in himself without outside cause (*ipsum esse per se subsistens*). Considering in philosophical theology reason as the *locus* for the insipient asking of the question of God we do not intend mere instrumental reason or simply intelligence as strategy of survival, which according to Nietzsche does not distinguish us fundamentally from “intelligent animals.” He intends by the use of the term “reason” to mean “the capacity by which man transcends himself and his environment and he himself relates to a reality transcendent of himself. To believe that God is means that he is not our thought, but we are his thought.”⁵

Considering the intimate links between the philosophical and theological approach to the question of the knowledge of God, for clarification I would like to emphasize their fundamental difference. Looking at Divine Revelation, we do not only affirm that God is the absolute spirit, and that he is being, subsisting in himself and for himself. For the believing Christian the highest knowledge consists in the fact that God is love (1 Jn 4:8.16) in the communion of Father, Son and Spirit. By means of reason we can attain the knowledge that God is mystery and the Unknown to us but that He in his self-revelation makes himself known to us in his Word and the Holy Spirit, freely giving himself to be loved.⁶

The contemporary estrangement from God, in its whole spectrum, beginning with the depersonalization of God in pantheism and deism to resignatio-

⁴ (München, 2007), 11.

⁵ Robert SPAEMANN, *Der letzte Gottesbeweis* (München, 2007), 20.

⁶ THOMAS VON AQUIN, *De pot.* q.7 a.5. ad 14.

nal agnosticism and aggressive neo-atheism, declaring all religion harmful and to be fought against⁷, ultimately has two roots:

At first, there is *philosophical epistemology*. It reduces the spectrum of metaphysical reason to the point, especially with Kant, that God merely remains as an ideal of pure reason respectively as a postulate of practical, or moral, reason. Thus, theology as science, appears to have become totally obsolete.

Secondly, connected to the first point there is *scientific Weltanschauung*. The point of departure is modern natural science. Despite reducing themselves methodologically to the empirically verifiable, and mathematically describable, thus the logical structure of matter, natural sciences effectively, in connection with monistic materialism, reduce all being and all objects of knowledge to the empirical alone. Knowing as knowledge of the empirical is opposed to faith as knowledge of God in a sense revealing way. As a paradoxical consequence, knowledge becomes faith for those believing thus in scientific knowledge and progress; and faith, in its essence a personal cognitive and free relation to God, is reduced to empirical knowledge alone. Thus God becomes a necessary or superfluous hypothesis to explain the existence or the utility of natural processes [God as constructor of the mechanical world clock or the intelligent designer of nature or programmer of evolution].

Positivism as so called “scientific *Weltanschauung*” draws a reductionistic consequence for the definition of man: Man is nothing other than matter, nothing other than a machine, an animal, and his brain is nothing more than a computer, to be surpassed by artificial intelligence. He is one species among others with a typical tendency to declare himself superior to other species. Therefore, for example, an animal with a higher output of intelligence is to be considered above a mentally ill person, or above an embryo or a toddler incapable of counting. It becomes clear thus in ethics that the difference between good and evil has been replaced by the categories of the useful and the purposeful and the quantifiable. In his work *Systeme de la nature* (1770) Paul Henri d’Holbach reduces empirical naturalism to eternally existing matter. Simply due to mechanical, and today must be added biological and chemical laws, matter by way of evolution of living beings gives herself *gestalt* in the form of being and species. Life itself and consciousness of man thus would appear to be higher forms of self-organizing matter. Con-

⁷ Cf. the pertaining analysis: Alexander KISSLER, *Der aufgeklärte Gott. Wie die Religion zur Vernunft kam* (München, 2008).

tents of ideas of consciousness like the idea of God and moral imperatives thus appear to be results of products of sensuality and the will to survive. Nothing would correspond to the ideas of our mind other than matter and evolution. They are either vestiges of the infantile phase of a person, or of the species conditioned by developmental psychology, or read in terms of social politics, instruments of power of church and state. Only when the blockages of metaphysics and revealed religion, mainly Christianity, have been overcome would man have unconditioned insight into his situation and he would become free from superstition and religious fanaticism by which the clergy keeps captive the people in dependency. Tolerance on the basis of agnosticism and relativism has the task "so they opine" to sweep away the unflexible dogmatic faith of the Church. A sensual lifestyle would free us from the legalistic morality of Christianity which they perceive as being against the free expression of our bodies.

A radically anti-religiously coined illuminism was convinced to be able to free humanity from all evils and prepare a luminous and lofty future on the condition of pedagogically implementing atheism in a society where autonomy would replace theonomy and anthropocentrism would replace theocentrism. Similar consequences result from insights of neurology in the interpretation of monistic materialism when even the most abstract thinking efforts of the human brain would have a measurable quantifiable material energy; thus the brain is reduced to nothing more than a computer which merely processes information. The spirit would simply be an epiphenomenon of matter. Hence in connection with evolutionary biology newer philosophy would approximately empirically prove that man has neither reason capable of transcendence, nor the capability of distinguishing truth from lies, nor the possession of will, capable in self-initiated freedom to opt for good and reject evil. The definition of the true good will thus be decided by the majority, or even the minority, of thus illuminated citizens on behalf of the ignorant and dependent, minority.

Against this hypothesis it is legitimate to ask, if the human spirit does not exist, to whom would this theory make any sense? Every insight presupposes the ontological distinction between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge.

Positivism in natural social and historical sciences, as well as critical rationalism, renders obsolete the philosophical and theological reflection about the fundamental and existential questions concerning the origin and destiny of human existence. As opposed to the joy of the Gospel, the prospect of such an anthropology provokes a collective depression in the human

heart. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), coined one of the fathers of analytical philosophy, expresses a consciousness of time without transcendence, proper to monistic naturalism as he speaks about “the world as a random coincidence within the change of lunar systems.”⁸ In reference to a possibly overwhelming emotion, when faced with the insights of astrophysics, or of evolutionary science, Jacques Monod expressed the shattering sensation of man as being lost in the infinite space and time of the cosmos: “The old covenant is broken, man finally knows he is alone in the incompassionate vastness of the universe out of which he randomly came forth.”⁹ There remains only one solution, to make the best out of oneself in this brief earthly existence before falling into eternal oblivion. That sense of the absence of God within the hopeless dimension of time and space here on our tiny planet finds an echo within us as man gives up his tragic existence, or to numb the pain of his transience.

The nameless committal of the dead, as is chosen unfortunately by many today, is just the tragic consequence of this existential nihilism. As the recycling of my ashes as fertile soil within the cycle of nature is not an act of love, the disappearing in eternal anonymity constitutes an absurd renouncement of my dignity as son and daughter of the loving Father in heaven. The biblical experience with the God of Israel who protects and frees his people expresses a consoling certainty: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name: You are mine (Is 43:1).”

In historical perspective, even as Christians are corresponsable for the loss of the credibility of Revelation, when they subject religion to the purposes of society and state -as in the case of the Gallican Church in the Ancien régime- or in the attempt to justify the contents of faith by outdated worldviews of natural sciences, there remains but a systematic complex of radically rendering immanent our comprehension of global reality.

The core of specific atheism, as it took its origin in the background and in strict contradiction to Western Christianity, appears to me as the contradiction between grace and freedom sensed to be insurmountable. Is there space for human freedom when God is everything and He alone operates, or does man need to fend for freedom against an overpowering God?

The opinion of Bertrand Russell, being pragmatic for the Western critique of religion in the thought of empiricalism and sensualism- which begins with

⁸ *Warum ich kein Christ bin* (München, 1963), 24.

⁹ *Zufall und Notwendigkeit* (München, 1971), 219.

David Hume and continues with Ludwig Fuerbach to Sigmund Freud: religion, in particular Christianity, appears to be the result of an illness born out of fear. The Western critique of religion thus accuses Judaism, Christianity and Islam to be slave religions because of their demand for unconditional submission. "The entire idea of a ruling God is born out of oriental totalitarian despotism. This is a concept totally unworthy of a free man."¹⁰ With all due respect, you could expect better biblical knowledge. Is the memory forgotten of the God of Israel who reveals himself as the liberator of his people out of the house of slavery in Egypt or out of Babylonian captivity? In the New Testament the liberation of the whole of creation "out of slavery and the being lost to the freedom and the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:21)" are the fruit of the redeeming work of Christ on the Cross.

That God, being refused in this approach, appears to be just a hypothesis of idealistic speculation or of a false approach to the doctrine on grace as a stopgap of natural scientific research; but is not the living and merciful God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and the Father of Our Lord and God Jesus Christ who has given us being and wants to make us complete in his love.

The Pastoral Constitution *The Church in the Modern World* of the Second Vatican Council grasps the mindset of the real existing atheism in its different phenomena, and excesses, in the following sense. To the belief in God as ultimate origin and goal of man, and world atheism proposes man to be for himself origin and goal. Thus man would have the necessity and ability to create himself and redeem himself, and in consequence would have to liberate himself of all creational contingency, or at least like a demiurge he could condition himself mentally and psychologically and model himself physically and socially. Religion intended as relation to God, in whatever historical form, is considered by atheism as an expression of estrangement of man to himself, or as a means to keep him dependent and ignorant. Religion is the opium of the people. Counterposed to redemption by God's glorious grace is the self-created paradise on earth that humanity has known unto now only as hell on earth.

Demanding atheism opposes a phantom, while ignoring that divine grace creates human freedom, boosts and perfects it, because the essence of God is not restricted to mere power but love that shares itself.

His omnipotence expresses itself, and is experienced, as the gift of being by which we may participate in his life, and in knowing God. Thus He does

¹⁰ *Warum ich kein Christ bin*, 36.

not really gain anything or loose anything, as he calls us into being when he kindles the desire in our hearts to be united with him, because God is love.

It is very possible that the profound confusion about the division of Western Christianity and the tremendous religious wars in England, France, and Germany and elsewhere have profoundly damaged the faith of modern man in the God of love. But besides a slighting by the erroneous opinion of grace hindering or obstructing freedom, and self determination, the tendency towards imposing atheism seems to be based on the “will to power,” and this will is connected with the empowerment to declare oneself the law of being and the law of good. Since the French Revolution unto now, atheistic political ideologies continue to fascinate the masses as they want to be absolute power above nature, above history and society, invading to the inner core of thoughts, and of conscience, of every single person (i.e. the mania of absolute control of secret services, on telephones, SMS, Twitter and Facebook).

The Church does not combat inhuman atheism, in its power, by the same means as presently used in government, academics and media. Since God loves those people as well who remain not knowing him or denying him-according to our conviction-we have to look for the appropriate means to open up to the people the access to the mystery of being and of love that has communicated itself to us in God the creator, the redeemer and in the one who perfects.....This intends, as the Council said, “a proper presentation of the Church’s teaching as well as in the integral life of the Church and her members.”¹¹

Against the prejudices and erroneous perceptions of modern atheism, Vatican II states: “The Church holds that the recognition of God is in no way hostile to man’s dignity, since this dignity is rooted and perfected in God. For man was made an intelligent and free member of society by God Who created him, but even more important, he is called as a son to commune with God and share in His happiness. She further teaches that a hope related to the end of time does not diminish the importance of intervening duties but rather undergirds the acquittal of them with fresh incentives. By contrast, when a divine instruction and the hope of life eternal are wanting, man’s dignity is most grievously lacerated, as current events often attest; the enigma of life and death, of guilt and of grief go unsolved with the frequent result that men succumb to despair. Meanwhile every man remains to himself an unsolved puzzle, however obscurely he may perceive it. For on certain occa-

¹¹ *Gaudium et spes*, 21.

sions no one can entirely escape the kind of self-questioning mentioned earlier, especially when life's major events take place. To this questioning only God fully and most certainly provides an answer as He summons man to higher knowledge and humbler probing."¹²

Only thus one can escape the *Dialectic of Illuminism-Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1944)¹³ and a reversal into despotism and totalitarian ideologies, and the tragedy of "atheistic humanism (1950)."¹⁴

Only someone disregarding the dramatic situation of the modern world would refuse this insight. Pope Francis very often repeats we are already in World War III. Saying this he is referring to the "Globalization of Irresponsibility."¹⁵ In a global context one may just think about civil wars, genocides, denigration of children, women and men as work and sex slaves, mass exodus, migration of millions, hunger and poverty for half of humanity, the innumerable number of children and youth without human care and education without hope for a professional future, orphans of divorce, rampant capitalism, and everything that subjects man to the dictatorship of economic profit, the globally agitating terrorism and criminal gangs and governments and organized crime, the conscious destabilization of legal order and the subjection and subordination of common good in favor of group interests, even in established democracies.

In our technically efficient civilization the crisis of modernity and post-modernity becomes apparent to everyone who can see.¹⁶

Because of a lacking link to transcendence, post-modernity basically seems to be based on a deficient image of man leading to the fatal consequence of loss of solidarity and disintegration of social bonds. When man is reduced to a product of self-entertaining matter, or to a construct of society, or to a mere participant in social networks, or to a payer into the pension funds, then he is deprived of his being subject, of his being a person, because he would be reduced to a means of industrial productivity, of political power, or to biological matter for research. Behind the shining facade of the beautiful new world is hidden the entire dimension of this misery: solitude and isolation, psychological and spiritual suffering, augmenting violence and

¹² *Gaudium et spes*, 21.

¹³ Max Horkheimer/Theodor W. Adorno (Frankfurt a.M., 1969).

¹⁴ Henri de LUBAC, *Über Gott hinaus* (Einsiedeln, 1984).

¹⁵ Apost.Exhort. *Evangelii gaudium* (2013), 52-75.

¹⁶ Cf. the profound study – Matthew FFORDE, *Entsozialisierung. Die Krise der Postmoderne* (Freiburg i.Br., 2016).

brutality, egocentrism, orientatation towards personal profit and ego driven self-realization, and the rejected primary communion within the family.

All designs, denying the irreducible property of man as person – intending the spiritual nature and the immortality of the soul as substantial form of human nature in body and spirit, and her unfolding in history and culture, -despite all contradictions among themselves- agree in relativism concerning the question of truth; thus they exclude the irreducible property of man as person, wanting to dissociate man from his essential relation to the transcendent God, subjecting him to the absolute dominion of man above human beings. The denial of objective truth does not lead to freedom, because the opposite of truth is lie. Hence truth is not the reason for intolerance as the demand for social justice does not provoke automatically inter-class warfare. Relativism is not the basis for tolerance and the free entering into relation of cognitive man with the truth of reality and of being but,– as has justly been stated – leads toward dictatorship of those who reclaim for themselves the absolute insight or hold themselves to be the only good people. Relativism contradicts itself in apodicticly reclaiming for itself absolute value and concomittantly denies the existence and recognizability of truth outside its own.

There certainly exists a number of interpretations of world, and of being, as the Second Vatican Council states in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: faced with the global political, moral, economic and religious crisis augments the number “of the people who raise the most basic questions or recognize them with a new sharpness: what is man? What is this sense of sorrow, of evil, of death, which continues to exist despite so much progress? What purpose have these victories purchased at so high a cost? What can man offer to society, what can he expect from it? What follows this earthly life?”¹⁷

The Church represents an anthropology that certainly recieves its basic contents from Jewish-Christian tradition; at the same time, in its positive and constructive orientation, it can find itself in common action with many people of good will and of different religious and ethical traditions.

Rationally it is possible for all insights, or results, of modern, natural, and historical sciences to enter into synthesis with the insights of Revelation, thus a contemporary Christian is not compelled to live in two different intellectual and spritual worlds. More than that, the Christian message is the gospel of love, and the truth of the truth is not power but love. Power without service,

¹⁷ *Gaudium et spes*, 10.

wealth without generosity, eros without agape are incapable of satisfying the human heart. Both self-acceptance and charity to one's neighbor are critical, as God has already unconditionally accepted and loved each one of us.

The experience of God as sense and goal of man signifies the end of a dialectic of negativity, and of all the insanity in the history of the world. Only faith in God is capable of an integral vision of the totality of reality; faith is participation in the unending mystery of God which at first reveals itself “indistinctly as in a mirror” (1 Cor 13:12). God’s mystery does not present itself as an impenetrable thicket, or a black abyss, or as nihilistic nothingness, he is luminous overabundance, and all goodness; we see the world in his light. Figuratively speaking, we are not capable of viewing the sun that directly, despite the fact that we perceive everything in the light of the sun.

In the letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul insists man in his “impiety and wickedness” and in his “oppressing the truth” has no excuse by way of his ignorance of the existence of God. Because, “since the beginning of the world his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made” (Rom 1:20).

Even the pagans who have not received the revelations of the law as the Jews on Sinai, do know the natural law accessible to reason because it is inscribed in their heart and they ponder it in their thoughts (Rom 2:14 f).

God remains the mystery beyond us. He is the subject of Revelation, of his glory, of the works of nature and history, by the prophets, and ultimately and unsurpassably he has *spoken to us* in his Son, person to person. We are able to speak to him in profession and prayer, and the Church is able to speak *about him* and to give witness to him in the dialogical proclamation of the Gospel.

Specifically, in professing God as Trinity, the *proprium* of Christianity is exposed. Trinitarian Faith thus distinguishes Christianity from Old Testament Jewish and Koranic, as well as speculative, monotheism.

Unitarian monotheism cannot deny logical sense to Trinitarian monotheism because its consistence is formed by the divine logic of love which enacts or realizes the essence of God in the co-relations of the three divine persons which in turn do not divide his essence, but eternally manifest the essence of God. This fact is beyond human cognition, at the same time, by God’s self-revelation, being called to participate in God’s self-cognition by analogy in his Eternal Word that became flesh, called to union in him in the love of the Holy Spirit.

Being children of God in Christ, and the friendship with God in the Holy Spirit, are the essential points of convergence for the Christian concept of man. The Church affirms that the magnitude of the mystery of man is able to be fully perceived only in the light of Christ, and only in him the enigma of suffering and death will not overwhelm us.

The question of God for contemporary man certainly is an intellectual challenge, but it is even more an existential one. In the face of death faith must sustain its last trial.

When Dietrich Bonhoeffer was about thirty-nine years old, a camp physician who accompanied him on his way to execution on April 9, 1945 in Flossenbürg Concentration Camp recalls: “Through the half open door of a room in the barracks I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before divesting his prison clothes, on his knees in intense prayer before his Lord and God. The profoundly devout and convinced manner of prayer of this extraordinarily sympathetic man has touched me to my core. Even at the place of execution itself he said another short prayer and then courageously mounted the steps to the gallow.”¹⁸

And his last words facing death were: “It’s the end- but for me it is the beginning of life.”¹⁹

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¹⁸ Eberhard BETHGE, Dietrich BONHOEFFER, *Theologe-Christ-Zeitgenosse* (München, 1983), 1038.

¹⁹ Ebd., 1037.

PROBLEM BOGA – DZISIAJ

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Nowy ateizm, jaki wyłonił się z oświeceniowej i religijnej krytyki XVIII i XIX wieku, różni się od dawnych form negowania istnienia Boga czy też jego skuteczności w świecie. Wychodzi on z założenia, że intelekt wyzwolił się od zaciemnienia poprzez metafizykę i teologię objawienia i znalazł swój naturalny stan w immanentyzmie i sekularyzmie. Tym samym nieistnienie Boga byłoby oczywiste, ponieważ byłby On istotą wymyśloną, której istnienia nie można udowodnić empirycznie-naukowo *a priori*.

Niektórzy prominentni myśliciele dowodzą intelektualnej niemożności pozytywizmu. Wychodząc od intelektualnych i egzystencjalnych pytań, których nie da się argumentacyjnie odzielić od duchowej natury człowieka, dochodzą do przekonania, że człowiek stawiając pytania jest ukierunkowany na transcendentne pochodzenie i cel istnienia świata. W świetle ukierunkowania na Boga, historyczne świadectwo historycznego samoobjawienia się Boga w Jezusie Chrystusie może być ponownie ocenione. Wiara w Boga, który jest obecny w świecie, daje nadzieję także w obliczu śmierci, jak zeznał Dietrich Bonhoeffer na krótko przed swoją egzekucją przez bezbożnych nazistów.

Słowa kluczowe: Bóg; istnienie; wiara; objawienie; krytyka religii.