

KANT AS AN *ADVERSARIUS* IN THE NATURAL THEOLOGY OR THEODICY OF ANTE BAUER

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UDK 211 Kant, I.
211 Bauer, A.

1.1. Already in the first chapter of his work *Theodicy or the Science of Reasonable Knowledge of God*¹, immediately after a reference to St. Thomas Aquinas, Ante BAUER² makes a reference to Kant, stating that ever since he “tried in his critique to shake those proofs that had long been employed in demonstration of the existence of God, the non-reliance upon those proofs has taken root even in the circles of those who believe in God. In order to retain their belief in God, they reasoned that the proofs of God’s existence should be replaced by a different guarantee. To that end, they reiterated the old systems and invented new ones.”³ In his book *Theodicy*, Bauer intended to show that it was possible for man to know and demonstrate by reason that “God is” and that such demonstration was necessary.⁴

After his attempt to do so by presenting the well-known Five Ways (*Quinque viae*) and adding the proofs of moral order and convictions of mankind, Bauer continues by presenting and challenging Kant’s “critique of proofs of the existence of God.”⁵ As we have already said, any demonstration or refutation of the possibility of the knowledge of God is based on one’s cognitive

1 Ante Bauer, *Theodicy or the Science of Reasonable Knowledge of God*, published by the Archdiocesan Printing Shop in Zagreb, Zagreb 1918. We have taken the second, somewhat expanded edition from 1918, instead of the first edition from 1892 titled *Natural Theology or How Much Can Man Know God by Pure Reason*. Both had the same task. First, to serve the needs of the students who attended Bauer’s lectures in Croatian on the philosophy of God or natural theology, and second, also to serve as “a textbook for the students at the Faculty of Theology.” In the second edition, the note of the editor reads as follows (page III): “Zato se je samo u 1. dijelu uzelo više obzira na suvremenu stručnu literaturu, da čitaocu otvori vidik i proširi one puteve, kojima je pokročio već Aristotel, a za njim Toma Akvinski. Na koncu ‘Teodiceje’ umetnut je ‘Dodatak’, kojemu je svrha, da čitaoca uvede u kritičku orijentaciju različitih nazora, koji se ističu u historijskom razvitku filozofijske spekulacije o Bogu.” The second edition was prepared by Stjepan Zimmermann.

2 Ante Bauer was a professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Theology in Zagreb, later to become the Archbishop of Zagreb. He died in 1937.

3 Bauer, p. 3

4 Bauer, *ibid.*

5 Bauer, pp. 46–55

— theoretical position, and Bauer, having realized that, briefly presents Kant's views: "According to Kant's theory of the knowledge of man, our knowledge of things is nothing but knowledge of phenomena; and the phenomena, moreover, we know only through purely subjective forms of thought. Only phenomena affect our senses, and we apply to them purely immanent laws of our understanding. That is all our knowledge."⁶ Since no phenomena about God are possible, nothing can be known about him on the theoretical level and we are left with only the "postulate of a practical reason from the moral law."

One could challenge Bauer's assertion: "That is why Kant rejects all arguments in proof of the existence of God, with the exception of the one of moral order."⁷ Namely, for Kant this is not a theoretical proof either, but a postulate that may be highly persuasive, without being a proof. Equally, he says that we may know God "only as a postulate of the practical reason from the moral law."⁸ If we want to be entirely precise, we, according to Kant, do not know God at all, but rather postulate him by practical reason; we intuitively form the knowledge of the postulate that God would have to exist, since morality already exists. Bauer, then, does not argue with Kant about this "evidence," just like he does not challenge him with respect to ontological proof either. Kant is his great *adversarius* in presentation of those theoretical argumentations, which start from certain fact in the world, searching for it on the basis of the metaphysical principle of causality, a sufficient reason for existence or a final justification.

We have already said that Bauer does not accept the ontological argument, and therefore does not even address Kant's critique of it, although he would have, he says, a few objections to raise in that quarter, too. Instead, he swiftly moves on to the critique of the critique of the cosmological argument (which may consist of more than one proof, although the central part starts from the knowledge of contingent beings), stating there, however, that both cosmological and physico-theological arguments have been reduced by Kant to the ontological argument. Thus for Bauer Kant becomes an explicit *adversarius* in the cosmological and teleological argument, much the same way he opposes rational theology in general.

1.2. *Bauer's critique of Kant's objections to cosmological argument*

1.2.1. Kant wanted to demonstrate "auf schulgerechte Art" that cosmological argument not only fails to prove anything, but, moreover, commits an error

6 Bauer, p. 46

7 Bauer, p. 46

8 Bauer, p. 46

ignoratio elenchi, passing itself for new evidence, whereas it is merely an invalid ontological evidence. Bauer does not agree. If ontological argument starts from a “mere conception, from a conceived infinite being,”⁹ inferring that such being exists, “in cosmological argument, however, the actual existence of an *ens realissimum* is in no way inferred from the conception of such a being. Instead, it is inferred from the effects, which really exist, that there must really exist a cause which in itself is a necessary cause.”¹⁰

The difference between the ontological and cosmological argument, according to Bauer, is such that they could not be, and ought not to be, reduced to one another. Namely, merely the following may be concluded from a conception: “... if the most perfect being really exists, it must be an absolutely necessary being. The cosmological argument first demonstrates that a necessary being must exist, and only then follows with an inference that such a being must possess all perfections.”¹¹ Equally, in cosmological argument we do not proceed from the assumption that the most perfect being is identical to a necessary being.¹² In other words, first we must demonstrate that a necessary being exists, and only then we can conclude that it must possess all perfections in order to be capable of being necessary. Thus, Kant’s conversion of the conceptions of “a necessary being” and an “*ens realissimum*” in no way affects Bauer’s understanding because the latter does not convert mere conceptions,¹³ particularly not the conceptions as Kant would understand them.

9 In order to better understand the nature of Bauer’s disagreement with Kant, we shall cite a text from Kant’s *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*: “Wenn der Satz richtig ist: ein jedes schlechthin notwendiges Wesen ist zugleich das allerrealste Wesen; (als welches der *nervus probandi* des kosmologischen Beweises ist;) so muß er sich, wie alle bejahenden Urteile, wenigstens per accidens umkehren lassen; also: einige allerrealste Wesen sind zugleich schlechthin notwendige Wesen. Nun ist aber ein *ens realissimum* von einem anderen in keinem Stücke unterschieden, und, was also von einigen unter diesem Begriffe enthaltenen gilt, das gilt auch von allen. Mithin werde ich’s (in diesem Falle) auch schlechthin umkehren können, d. i. ein jedes allerrealstes Wesen ist ein notwendiges Wesen. Weil nun dieser Satz bloß aus seinen Begriffen a priori bestimmt ist: so muß der bloße Begriff des realsten Wesens auch die absolute Notwendigkeit desselben bei sich führen; welches eben der ontologische Beweis behauptete, und der kosmologische nicht anerkennen wollte, gleichwohl aber seinen Schlüssen, obzwar versteckter Weise, unterlegte.” KrV B 636–637

10 Bauer, p. 47

11 Bauer, p. 47

12 Ibid.

13 Obviously, a debate should be introduced at this point about what a conception really is. Does a conception conceive anything in order to be a conception or are there some conceptions to which nothing and in no way corresponds in reality. If they are indeed not in any kind of relation with reality, can they be called conceptions at all? This does not mean that everything exists which we have a conception of; rather that in order to conceive it in the first place, we must somehow bring it into relation with reality. Until that debate is resolved, we shall continue in vain to debate, using the words the meaning of which has yet to be

What would be, perhaps, valid for Bauer in ontological argument, could be valid only under the condition of “if.” In other words, if *ens realissimum* exists, it exists necessarily. “In cosmological argument, however, the actual existence of *ens realissimum* is in no way derived from the conception of *ens realissimum*. Instead, it is inferred from the effects, which actually exist, that there must really exist a cause which in itself is a necessary cause.”¹⁴ On the contrary, in Bauer’s view the error of the ontological argument is not in its assertion that *ens realissimum* must possess all perfections, “but in the assertion that, because of its conception, such a being must really exist.”¹⁵ Again, a question could be posed to Bauer as to whether existence is or is not one of the perfections, whether it is a perfection at all, and if not, what the perfections are based upon.¹⁶

1.2.2. A nest of dialectical *voracity* (*Anmassungen* = presumptuousness)

In response to Kant’s claim that “cosmological argument hides a whole nest of dialectical presumptions, which transcendental criticism does not find difficult to expose and to dissipate,”¹⁷ Bauer accepts the challenge as a practised reader to “additionally question and repeal those deceitful principles”¹⁸ if possible, and if necessary.

agreed upon, and interpreting them differently, forever incapable of reaching an agreement. Everyone treats of being differently, although it is consoling that we cannot even argue except on the horizon of being. On the other hand, being is so rich that it provides stimulus for formation of most varied conceptions, which conceive something that is at least conceived as either possible or impossible. However, either as the former or the latter, every conception must be measured at its being. All of our conceptual play takes place on the same playground.

14 Bauer, p. 47

15 Bauer, p. 47

16 What they are or, as one student asked during his debate with an adversary in *Vjesnik*, a daily from Zagreb, *Where do Essences Reside?* Is Bauer here siding with Kant or with Hegel?

17 “Ich habe kurz vorher gesagt, daß in diesem kosmologischen Argumente sich ein ganzes Nest von dialektischen Anmaßungen verborgen halte, welches die transzendente Kritik leicht entdecken und zerstören kann.” KrV B 637

18 Those *deceitful principles* are: “Da befindet sich denn z. B. 1. der transzendente Grundsatz, vom Zufälligen auf eine Ursache zu schließen, welcher nur in der Sinnenwelt von Bedeutung ist, außerhalb derselben aber auch nicht einmal einen Sinn hat. Denn der bloß intellektuelle Begriff des Zufälligen kann gar keinen synthetischen Satz, wie den der Kausalität, hervorbringen, und der Grundsatz der letzteren hat gar keine Bedeutung und kein Merkmal seines Gebrauchs, als nur in der Sinnenwelt; hier aber sollte er gerade dazu dienen, um über die Sinnenwelt hinaus zu kommen. 2. Der Schluß, von der Unmöglichkeit einer unendlichen Reihe übereinander gegebener Ursachen in der Sinnenwelt auf eine erste Ursache

To the first principle, Bauer answers that all of Kant's objections to the cosmological argument are based on "his totally false theory of our reasonable knowledge."¹⁹ The basis for this false theory consists precisely of "synthetical a priori judgments, which our reason necessarily accepts, to find in itself as empty forms, the substance of which is provided only by experience. These synthetical judgments are but regulative principles for our reason and its operation: to our reason they are only for immanent application, not transcendent. They only regulate the substance given to the reason by senses and, outside of the reason, have no constituent value for objects themselves."²⁰ Since the principle of causality is also a synthetical aprioristic judgment and since our opinion is guided by it, and since we cannot know "but phenomena, we may apply this principle only to the cogitated phenomena, which is why it is valid only empirically."²¹ Presumptuousness of the cosmological argument, according to Kant, lies precisely in the fact that it assigns transcendent validity to the principle of causality. For Bauer, on the other hand, this principle is not a synthetical a priori judgment, but an "analytical judgment, which, therefore, has eminently objective, constitutive value. The principle of causality is certainly not restricted only to that meaning: for every effect we must conceive a cause; it also means: there can be no effect if there is no cause."²² Bauer knows from experience that there are effects, real, transient, unnecessary beings, which do not only bring about the thought of a necessary being, but: "... since effects really exist, the first cause must also exist; for there exist transient beings, a necessary being must exist, too."²³

Undoubtedly, there is a misunderstanding between Kant and Bauer with regard to the method of determining the fact that something exists, in other words, regarding the interpretation of knowledge. Bauer reproaches to Kant an inconsistent application of that regulative principle of the reason which

zu schließen, wozu uns die Prinzipien des Vernunftgebrauchs selbst in der Erfahrung nicht berechtigen, vielweniger diesen Grundsatz über dieselbe (wohin diese Kette gar nicht verlängert werden kann) ausdehnen können. 3. Die falsche Selbstbefriedigung der Vernunft, in Ansehung der Vollendung dieser Reihe, dadurch, dass man endlich alle Bedingungen, ohne welche doch kein Begriff einer Notwendigkeit stattfinden kann, wegschafft, und, da man alsdann nichts weiter begreifen kann, dieses für eine Vollendung seines Begriffs annimmt. 4. Die Verwechslung der logischen Möglichkeit eines Begriffs von aller vereinigten Realität (ohne inneren Widerspruch) mit der transzendentalen, welche ein Prinzipium der Tunlichkeit einer solchen Synthesis bedarf, das aber wiederum nur auf das Feld möglicher Erfahrungen gehen kann, usw." KrV B 637–638

19 Bauer, pp. 47–48

20 Bauer, p. 48

21 Bauer, p. 48

22 Bauer, p. 48

23 Bauer, p. 48

does not have a transcendent²⁴ value, i. e. the fact that he applies it also transcendently. In other words, contrary to his own argument. Namely, Kant knows that our “senses signal some truly external phenomena... Moreover, he does not teach only that we really know external phenomena, but also that there must be something behind those phenomena (Das Ding an sich). Otherwise, there would be nothing to affect our senses.”²⁵ Bauer continues: “This obviously recognises the transcendent value of the principle of causality, because there is Kant himself applying it to the objective relation between the phenomena and our senses, and between the phenomena and the objects, of which these phenomena are.”²⁶

Bauer also objects to the second objection of Kant “that from the impossibility of an infinite ascending series of causes in the sensible world a first cause is inferred, a conclusion which the principles of the employment of reason do not justify even in the sphere of experience (and still less when an attempt is made to pass the limits of this sphere).”²⁷ Actually, it is Kant’s main objection, mentioned by him on several occasions, particularly in the Fourth Antinomy of Pure Reason. There, with an equal strictness is derived the existence of a primordial being, as well as its non–existence.

According to Bauer, Kant is not drawing valid conclusion when he claims that we cannot attain by reason the original cause out of the world, due to two errors. Namely, if the argument sets out as cosmological, based on a series of phenomena and regresses in such series according to the empirical law of causality, then we must not make a leap to something that is not a member of this series.²⁸ If that leap is made, however, then it is the proverbial leap into another order. “For we must take something as a condition in the same sense, in which the relation between the conditioned and the condition is taken throughout the whole series, which ought to lead us in an uninterrupted flow all the way to the highest condition.”²⁹

Bauer’s interpretation of Kant’s objection reads as follows: “A has got a clock, which he borrowed from B; B borrowed it from C, he from D, E etc.

24 German: *transzendent*

25 Bauer, p. 48

26 Bauer, pp. 48–49

27 “Der Schluß, von der Unmöglichkeit einer unendlichen Reihe übereinander gegebener Ursachen in der Sinnenwelt auf eine erste Ursache zu schließen, wozu uns die Prinzipien des Vernunftgebrauchs selbst in der Erfahrung nicht berechtigen, vielweniger diesen Grundsatz über dieselbe (wohin diese Kette gar nicht verlängert werden kann) ausdehnen können.” I. Kant, KrV B 638.

28 See The Fourth Antinomy of Pure Reason in the Critique of Pure Reason

29 Cited according to Bauer, p. 49

Thus, the clock has never been made by a clockmaker; instead, it was obtained by each possessor through borrowing.”³⁰ If that were true, of course, clocks would never even be. If, however, we conclude that the clock was made by a clockmaker after all, it is not a leap into a different order. Therefore, “just as any borrower could obtain the clock only if originally it had been made in the first place, so the objects, which do not exist by themselves and necessarily, but have being and causality obtained from a being, which in itself is, and that is why the effect of this first cause must be different from the effect of all other causes.”³¹

The second error committed by Kant, in Bauer’s view, is in the Antithesis of the Fourth Antinomy, where he argued that the absolutely necessary cause out of the world, by providing the beginning of a series of changes in the world, began to operate, too.³² Its causality would therefore belong to time. From the argument challenged by Kant, in Bauer’s view, follows only “that the first cause cannot be empirical, but completely out of the phenomenal world; that it does not cause a beginning, but always acts without any change.”³³

To Kant’s third “presumption of the reason,” Bauer replies that, while it is not true “that we eliminate conditions, it is true that through absolutely necessary consequence we rise from the order of conditioned and dependent beings to the being which is absolutely necessary.”³⁴ Equally, Bauer does not think that he has fully perfected his conception by not conceiving further anything, but that he very clearly conceives that everything cannot be conditioned and dependent, and that in the beginning of all conditions there must be an unconditioned being. Naturally, the meaning of the first here is not in the sense of some chronological order, but existentially (i. e. ontologically).

Bauer has a reply even to Kant’s Fourth Dialectical Presumption of Reason. He begins by interpreting Kant. Namely, immanent laws of our reason force us to conceive a cause of every effect, “and because this law as a synthetic a priori judgment guides only our thought in relation to phenomena perceived by our senses, according to this principle we can always reach only the empirical cause, i. e. we can never rise to attain the knowledge of a being which would not be phenomenal, and as such conditioned and unnecessary,

30 Bauer, p. 49

31 Bauer, pp. 49–50

32 This is how Bauer translates the Fourth Antinomy of Pure Reason: “Uzmite, da imade neki bezuvjetno nužni uzrok izvan svijeta, to bi njegovim djelovanjem kao prvoga člana u nizu uzroka svih promjena u svijetu začelo bivstvovanje ovih promjena. Ali tad bi i ovaj uzrok morao začeti djelovati, i njegova bi uzročnost spadala u vrijeme, a upravo zato u broj samih promjena, dakle u svijet, dosljedno i sam uzrok ne bi bio izvan svijeta.” Bauer, p. 50

33 Bauer, p. 50

34 Bauer, p. 50

which is why we can never ascend to the end of the series of causes and effects, the absolutely necessary being.”³⁵ But that has an even graver consequence. Namely, to every conditioned being we must also conceive an unconditioned being, and it cannot be empirical, i. e. it must be only an ideal, as an immanent principle of our thought. Now comes the temptation we are unable to resist, to conceive this ideal by some transcendental subreption as a constitutive principle, as something real. Thus, according to Kant, that formal condition of thought transformed itself into a material, hypostatic condition of existence.

After that follows, and this is an understatement, great astonishment, if not Bauer’s strongest objection to Kant: “If reason forces us to conceive this, and if we are unable to resist, then it cannot be a case of subreption. For if that be the case, if reason has misled us necessarily, albeit only once, then we could no longer place our trust in it.”³⁶ This raises question about not only the transcendent and the immanent, or about the apriority of knowledge, but about reason itself. What is it? Can reason give account of itself and whom can it give it to? What is its purpose, if it has any role at all? Does it have confidence in itself at all, considering that its nature forces it to do one thing that, according to Kant, ought to be resisted by it? In other words, do reason and its apriority have anything to do with being? If not, should we pay any heed to reason at all? Obviously, in such a case it would be reasonable not to.

However, what can we adduce in the critique of reason if not reason itself, i. e. without going out of the reason, once again we adduce it as some kind of competence? But reason as competence will not be of much help to itself because recognizing that something is identical to itself does not expand our knowledge, if it needs being expanded. It most certainly does not if there exists only a reason which is identical to itself. However, at least two kinds of identicalness are possible: an identicalness in change and an identicalness in an utter and unchangeable sameness. The identicalness in change cannot be self-conscious, unless it compares itself with the unchangeable identity. The weakest identicalness is the so-called pure sameness, which has no knowledge of the existence of realissimum, and yet if fails to know something, the identity of which continuously changes, although, nevertheless, as something existing. Poor pure thoughts (I do not mean in moral sense) are somewhat like dry water.

If Heidegger called Christian philosophy *wooden iron*, then we can call pure reason (if it is entirely free of being) *dry water*. Namely, water is absolutely necessary for life on the Earth and where there is none, there is no life,

35 Bauer, p. 51

36 Bauer, p. 51

either. That is why pure reason is, if entirely free of being, actually nothing, and as nothing it does not attain anything, it does not impress anything, and it does not conceive anything. That is why the apriority of pure reason, if totally free of being, is a pure preconception without any justification. For it cannot serve as its own justification, because it can in no way establish itself as existent. It does not actually comprehend anything, and is therefore totally empty of content and blind, because it does not see anything that would render him capable of saying that it is.

Pure reason is seemingly positively determined, while in reality there was privation concealed in its predicate. It is not only entirely independent of any sensibility that could perhaps blur its understanding and self-presence, but it is also devoid of any being — pure of it. Is it at all necessary, then, to emphasise that something which is entirely free of being actually does not exist?

It was impossible even to talk about pure reason, without saying that it was not “dirtied,” i. e. as a faculty of cognition, determined by being, either the eternal and unchangeable (as an eternal challenge to reason) or by the sensible, contingent and perishable. Since being as being is not perishable, whereas certain beings are, reason should be measured precisely upon it, if at all it pretended to establish itself as competent. Therefore, its measure is the immeasurable, while the finite it recognises precisely because it is not infinite. It must be noted without delay, however, that the immeasurable and the undetermined are not at all the same. The immeasurable is determined by its most intense identity with itself. It is intense to the point of complete identification with itself, to the extent of all extents, to the undisputed genuineness, the measure and basis of every reality. Because of it every genuineness may be called that, only because it is a reflection of that immeasurable identity and eternal triumph, not primarily over something or over nothing; but rather as an eternal glory of existence, which in full freedom rejoices in the knowledge of its own placement (not establishment), which has never been threatened by groundlessness, nor will it ever be threatened by any danger, so that in full relaxedness it is as eternal self-finding without seeking, as an utter self-presence. Such reason does not know real aporia, nor theses or antitheses. Everything that is real is reported or, one could argue that it has never been withdrawn in the first place, except inasmuch as free finite beings, having entered into a quarrel with themselves, are deluding themselves with some absolute autonomy or, even better, with their own disharmony, which will torment them eternally, unless they fail to lean again toward approving that which is being and simply good.

If after Kant only scepticism remains, as Bauer claims, question should be asked about it too, about the condition for the faculty of awareness of scepticism, about the field in which it blossoms, sows its seeds, wilts and springs

up again. How will scepticism recognise itself as scepticism? In the name of what?

No lesser problem is the observer who observes his reason and himself, and in doing so, is not what he observes, but something else — an observed observer. The degrees of reflection cause great confusion and the majority of the so-called philosophical problems are rooted precisely in the carelessness, or in ignorance or non-acknowledgement of those degrees.

1.3. *Bauer and rational theology*

Bauer also found Kant's text, according to which what Bauer wrote about in his book cannot be, i. e. "in the last echo of the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant proves that there cannot exist the theology that we call natural theology, because our reason is not at all capable of forming the knowledge of God by means of speculative thinking."³⁷ For verification of this thesis of his, Bauer cites an excerpt from Chapter III, Section VII, titled "Critique of all Theology Based upon Speculative Principles of Reason."³⁸ Bauer has found two errors in the aforementioned text. The first error is that "division is not adequate or appropriate. Naturally, God's existence cannot be demonstrated by mere speculation of reason (a priori) or purely empirically, but in a third way, when on the basis of empirical datum (the existence of beings that are non-necessary, dependent, belonging to the order in the world) God's existence is inferred by application of a priori principles."³⁹ The second error Kant has committed by denying that we can conceive infinite perfect being from finite effects. Bauer, however, thinks that even "from the smallest effect we are cog-

37 Bauer, p. 52

38 "Ich behaupte nun, dass alle Versuche eines bloß spekulativen Gebrauchs der Vernunft in Ansehung der Theologie gänzlich fruchtlos und ihrer inneren Beschaffenheit nach null und nichtig sind; daß aber die Prinzipien ihres Naturgebrauchs ganz und gar auf keine Theologie führen, folglich, wenn man nicht moralische Gesetze zum Grunde legt, oder zum Leitfaden braucht, es überall keine Theologie der Vernunft geben könne. Denn alle synthetischen Grundsätze des Verstandes sind von immanentem Gebrauch; zu der Erkenntnis eines höchsten Wesens aber wird ein transzendentaler Gebrauch derselben erfordert, wozu unser Verstand gar nicht ausgerüstet ist. Soll das empirisch gültige Gesetz der Kausalität zu dem Urwesen führen, so müsste dieses in die Kette der Gegenstände der Erfahrung mitgehören; alsdann wäre es aber, wie alle Erscheinungen, selbst wiederum bedingt. Erlaubt man aber auch den Sprung über die Grenze der Erfahrung hinaus, vermittelt des dynamischen Gesetzes der Erziehung der Wirkungen auf ihre Ursachen; welchen Begriff kann uns dieses Verfahren verschaffen? Bei weitem keinen Begriff von einem höchsten Wesen, weil uns Erfahrung niemals die größte aller möglichen Wirkungen (als welche das Zeugnis von ihrer Ursache ablegen soll) darreicht." KrV B 664–665.

39 Bauer, p. 52

nizing empirically, we must finally attain by reasoning the cause, which in itself is, and which in turn has to be infinitely perfect.”⁴⁰

And finally, one of the strongest of Bauer’s objections to Kant is that Kant himself has admitted that man could not live as a moral being if he did not postulate God’s existence, since theoretically he cannot know anything about him. For Bauer this is the best argument in support of the claim that something is amiss with Kant’s Theory of Knowledge.

Conclusion

Our author is convinced in the faculty of objective (not objectivist) cognition of external world, as well as a rational cognition related to metaphysical realities, starting precisely from the experience of the sensible world. It concerns, actually, the fundamental approach to knowledge, its reach and value, as well as the understanding of oneself in the world, and of the world in the overall reality, and, naturally, of reality itself.

If we are self-present, are we present in reality or in some a priori forms that tell us nothing about real content? Perhaps our author’s fundamental objection to Kant is that he does not recognize the application of the principle of causality outside of the sphere of *possible experience*. If we truly cannot by speculative reason *break through the boundary of the sensible*, then the reality for us is not reducible to some common ground by which everything that exists would be identified. In that case, we should reject every claim to something generally valid, and reduce the faculties of our reason to awareness of the boundary. However, we know that it is precisely this boundary, that has been tormenting human mind ever since it exists. Totally separate from reason, religious faith cannot help in this instance, no matter how benevolently Kant has prepared her terrain by setting the limits of knowledge.

Our author is neither a rationalist, nor an agnostic. He is convinced that some valid, albeit analogue, knowledge of God is possible. That is why as a reasonable being he was unable to set off into an absolute irrationality of faith, which would no longer enlighten human natural faculties of cognition.

The argument with Kant does not concern the existence or non-existence of God, but the understanding of cognitive faculties. With such an understanding, our author is not alone among those who believe that man is capable of attaining a valid conception of God, albeit analogue, by application of his own natural faculties. We can state that Ante Bauer does not advocate inter-

40 Ibid.

ruption of cognition and a cross-over or a leap into the faith over openness of cognition toward the infinite and unconditioned mystery. Knowledge thereby does not cease to be knowledge. Instead, it shows itself precisely as one that already is, although still incomplete. At the same time, it is conscious of its state. The dynamic of knowledge actually lives off of success and of mystery.