

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Vasile CÂNDEA *

Rezumat. *Lucrarea abordează o temă de interes contemporan – relația dintre știință și religie. Această relație este astăzi abordată din diverse perspective, cele mai interesante specificând întotdeauna complementaritatea dintre o relație a competiției și conflictului și una a toleranței reciproce și a dialogului.*

Abstract. *The paper approaches a theme of great interest in contemporaneity – the relationship between science and religion. This relationship is investigated nowadays from several diverse perspectives, the most interesting among these capturing always the complementarity between a relationship of competition and conflict and one of mutual tolerance and dialogue.*

Keywords: science, religion, dialogue, tolerance, conflict

I have chosen, as a general theme of this session, a theme widely debated: science and religion.

Some people may ask themselves questions regarding the reason why we are debating this strategic theme about which an extraordinary amount of literature already exists, now at the beginning of a new millennium and of a new century. Indeed, hundreds of thousands and millions of books and scientific studies have been written about the relationship between science and religion. Some were burnt in public squares; however, most of them are carefully preserved on book shelves in libraries and made available to everyone who takes an interest in them.

Now, the interest in such topics has invaded the virtual media at a speed that is in full accordance with our times, so fast in all respects. Thus, an interested website searcher was able to find no less than 833,000 sites on this topic, mid April this year. These sites provided information on books and reviews, articles, lectures, master degrees or Ph.D.s, conferences, seminars, news or comments. On the other hand, on the topic of the relationship between religion and civilization, the reader was able to get no less than 40,800,000 data. So, there is a wide and vivid interest on the issue of the existing relationship between religion and science, and this justifies our interest in this topic. Others, may as well, have doubts on our choice regarding the theme of this session.

Given some delicate aspects regarding the circumstances where the relationships between science and religion were not always governed by

* Gen.(r), Professor, M.D., Ph.D., Dr. H.C., Founding, full member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists, President of the Academy of Romanian Scientists.

reciprocal tolerance and dialogue but by a spirit of competition and conflicts there is always the danger of such doubts being spread around. There are manifestations of competition and conflict, and a history of the links between religion and science including this kind of relationships can be and it is recommended to be the topic of a scientific event, like the one we are attending here.

I am also eager to share such doubts with you, in spite of some manifestations of exorcisms, possible at any time one can state that science and religion can be characterized by this increasingly sui generis co-existence. The key towards dialogue, a million years' history, revealed that the fields of science and religion are complementary, in their integrity, as far as human needs are concerned. Human beings, including those who live now-a - days have every right to appreciate the endeavors of science and its instrumental values with their extensions in techniques, goods, norms and institutions. At the same time, the same human beings live on them, and are torn apart by questions of science, which regardless its high performance, can never provide answers only by itself. That is why, the rigor and logic of science, the constraints of the material world, but also reflection, dedication, meditation, and revelation, leading the spirit beyond the sensible given, fact give shape and act human lives and destiny.

Indeed, why would the laws governing mechanics, biology, and chemistry and the Decalogue be confronted against? Can be a man accomplished if he ignores the laws of nature or, equally, if he ignores or brakes the precepts and advice of religious consciousness?

A truly fundamental fact is the one that, scientists have set themselves free from the obsession of carrying out their research, formulate and endorse their conclusion in relation with religion, long time ago. Even when they are non religious scientists and men of culture, do not express their convictions in an ostentatious, anti religious manner.

In this way, they express a profound, intimate experience, according to which, the miracle of life, of the surrounding world, contains something indefinable, that beyond the proves and assertions given by science there is something that escapes the capacity of scientific knowledge, but can be reached by the sensitiveness created by belief. In this respect, I find Michelangelo Antognoni's statement relevant. Towards the end of his life when he was asked whether he believed in God or not, he gave the following answer: *“If we take into account that there is a moral instance beyond us, then, yes! I believe!”*

Concerning Michelangelo Antognoni's statements, I would like to mention Greg Braden's research, published in a volume translated into Romanian, called “God's Code”. According to this book, the biologic construction of the human being is based on the genetic code, common to all human species and even to all

living beings on earth. It seems that this genetic code offers us the proof of the existence of a superior intelligence named “God”, who supports the idea that the existence of human species represents an act of God's will.

According to Greg Braden, the discovery of our DNA is of paramount importance. Our DNA is a code of universal language, offering us a unique system of connecting people. In the presence of such a message, we have to find our relationship with our superior form in all social, technological and/or scientific relationships we make for our present and future life.

In this respect, this discovery makes the connection between the biblical, Hebrew, Arab alphabets and modern Chemistry and reveals us a lost code which has always existed in us. This code, named God's Code, consists of well known chemical elements like, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen and carbon. They can be replaced by letters of old Hebrew and Arab. The translated message tells us that the letters of God's ancient name are encrypted in the form of genetic information in every cell of every form of life. The significance is that God lies in us and that the humankind is one family united by a common ascension/will. In Greg Braden's opinion this is a result of an intended act of creation. Although there is the chance that other intelligent civilizations exist, so far, it seems that we are the only ones in this vast Universe. The hypothesis I submitted to your attention is widely discussed and debated in the world of scientists. In the same respect, some people's optional system, as their expression of freedom of consciousness, can not necessarily be self defined as being anti-religious or misanthropic.

It is common knowledge now that any mass promotion of atheism was not counterproductive, but had contrary effects, especially amongst the young generation. On the other hand, all the great religions in this world recognize the compatibility between religious knowledge and science and the modernization process based on science and materialized on civilization facts. Definitely, I am not referring here to the fundamentalist orientations or trends, however it can be pointed out that this is not what the religious mission is all. There is sign of time in all these; scientific knowledge and a religious consciousness are facing the extraordinary existential challenges of human beings and the entire humanity. In this respect, let us consider the moral nihilism that is spreading everywhere like cancer, of the declining manifestation of the traditional values of the families, of parents' care for their children, the respect of the latter towards those who have given them life.

Let us think of the disasters made by exacerbated individualism and denial of community values, of the plague of paedophilia, traffic of human beings, spreading of drugs, of excessive consume that threatens the capacity of earth of sustaining life.

Let us think of luxury exhibitionism of a limited number of people while billions of others live in extreme poverty, of the starving children dying of endemic diseases, under the circumstances where one dollar only, as the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Anan pointed out would be enough to save a human being who is just opening the eyes to this world.

Let us think of the declining of morals making the Romanian Bishop state full of anger and bitterness, during a memorable mass that we are becoming a nation of thick – skinned savages!

Why science and religion would not unite their efforts in counteracting this kind of threats for the humankind?

The church regards these manifestations as the work of the Devil. Science and common sense, regard these as a presence of the EVIL! This is the basis for a dialogue and cooperation between science and religion. And there is something else: recent researches, some of them carried out in 2007, show the positive effects religion has on human behaviour. In this way, it has been demonstrated that people who are spiritually engaged, i.e. believe in God, are standing a better chance to be happy than those who do not believe.

No less than 200 social work reports made in Western countries reveal that those who are religiously active are less prone to nervous breakdowns, drug consumption and suicidal attempts. Other nearly 500 other studies reveal a positive correlation between religious commitment and high level self control and unlikely the existence of a lower number of cases with high blood pressure, depressions and delinquency. Being religiously active and self control, healthy blood pressure, and rare depressions or drug consume. Other studies reveal the connection between religion and altruism and mental health. It is important to say that these researches have not been carried out by churches or by religious organizations, but by prestigious academies or universities. It would be difficult to underestimate the significance of these scientific findings in the light of the relationship between religion and science.

These are the reasons for having chosen this general topic for our session here.

Besides, ARS has materialized this fruitful collaboration between science and belief. I would like to mention that one of our departments reunites psychology, philosophy, theology and journalism. We believe that this is a good choice and we are looking forward to seeing the positive results of this collaboration.