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### October 23, 2015: Heidegger and the Last God

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Title: Heidegger and the Last God

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10/23/2015—When I first encountered Martin Heidegger, I assumed that here finally was a philosopher of depth that atheists could embrace. This would be a way out of the crisis in secularism, a way out of the materialism and nihilism that have stunted secularism in America. Imagine my surprise in studying Contributions to Philosophy, to read constant references to god and the gods. In the last parts of the book, this theme is particularly pronounced. Others might point out that this is not surprising in a philosopher who, in a letter in the 1920's, called himself not a philosopher but a Christian theologian. So, is Heidegger then not the future of western thinking? No. Heidegger remains that future (if there is to be a future, as he might have added). What is needed is the realization that atheism as commonly understood is a rejection of metaphysical religion—a rejection of the supreme being. Heidegger specifically identifies the Christian God as a manifestation of metaphysical religion. Heidegger offers a way of thinking at the end of metaphysics. So he might be called an atheist himself, except of course for all this god language. What are we to make of this? We will just have to learn what Heidegger is seeing (or listening to) when he writes the word God. Maybe he is referring to that to which humans belong and which calls us in a demand. And maybe some will conclude that this is nonsensical. But this will have to be thought and shown. One thing I believe I can say. God here is not a metaphor. The word is a name for something real. The most real.