

Evans's topics and the emphases she makes within them do, however, reflect accurately a set of distinctions, relations and priorities shared by many thinkers of the time. This may make her account a little less immediately appealing to some readers, but it increases its value as an historical introduction. Yet there is one important respect in which Evans's cast of mind differs greatly from that of most medieval thinkers. Medieval philosophers and theologians were highly trained in logic, and they engaged in rigorous and complex philosophical discussion. Their language, presuppositions and aims may have been very different, but the manner of their enquiries was close to that of modern philosophers. By contrast, despite the title of her book, Evans demonstrates almost no interest in philosophy as opposed to theology, if by 'philosophy' is meant (and can there be any other meaning?), not a list of questions or conclusions, but philosophical argument and debate. Her very decision to range over so wide a set of topics rules out the careful, precise presentation of the stages of an argument. And, on the one topic which she chooses to examine in more detail—the eucharist and real presence—Evans avoids the more philosophically complex discussions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, offering a conspectus of the various positions taken by the earlier controversialists but little in the way of analysis. On the most strictly philosophical area she discusses, cognition and universals, Evans is desperately muddled and inaccurate. For example, she writes (p. 41) that from the fact that there can be mental images of things which do not exist Abelard infers 'that there is no need to postulate real existence for universals either'—a patently ridiculous inference which has nothing in common with Abelard's genuine views.

In short, Evans's work is a lively and well-written, learned but quirky, astonishingly wide-ranging though occasionally unreliable introduction to medieval thought for those who have an interest in ideas, but little inclination towards philosophy.

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DIVINE HIDDENNESS AND HUMAN REASON, BY J.L. SCHELLENBERG. CORNELL STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, *Cornell University Press*, 1993. Pp x + 217. No price given.

The title of this book might attract those who feel that a decent philosophical study of divine ineffability would be welcome. But Schellenberg proposes something quite different. If God exists, he asks, why does He not make His existence more obvious? In fact, assuming that a loving God would initiate relationship with human beings, and that belief in such a God is a necessary condition for anyone to experience such a relationship, Schellenberg suggests that the very fact that God's

existence is not obvious should be an argument against theism.

The book comes as part of the series of Cornell Studies (which has produced significant volumes from Christopher Hughes and William Hasker, among others) and is based upon the author's Oxford doctoral thesis. He sets about framing the argument by inquiring into the 'epistemic implications of divine love', and by asking whether it is reasonable to suppose that God's existence could be 'beyond reasonable nonbelief'. He goes on to examine the force of his argument by discussing such diversely relevant writers as Pascal, Kierkegaard, Butler, and John Hick, and he concludes that none of them provides an adequate riposte to his basic argument. For example, he reads Hick as holding that God remains hidden so as not to threaten our moral freedom, and he questions why this need be so. Likewise with Butler's claim in the Analogy that the ambiguity of the evidence for theism provides us with an improving form of intellectual temptation to overcome; Schellenberg asks why such probation is incompatible with clearer evidence - we have all, at some time, deceived ourselves, wholly or partially, with respect to what is obvious.

The thesis is stimulating and, so far as I know, original. It is closely argued, but the tight style is rarely difficult or dull, and the variety of authors discussed helps to maintain interest. It must also be admitted that the argument is, to an extent, compelling in its attractive simplicity. When discussing other writers, Schellenberg is clear and careful, but doesn't always treat the questions as fully as he might. The problems with the book are ones of omission.

The author is at his best when exposing the inadequacies of other explanations of divine 'hiddenness', and he is right to do so. Unfortunately by this stage (ch.4) the book has taken a fatal turn. When Schellenberg uses the word 'God', I doubt whether by it he means the same thing as I do. I referred above to the notion of ineffability. Schellenberg briefly alludes to this notion at the beginning of his book, but how does it fit in with what he has to offer? Chapter one is entitled 'Some Epistemic Implications of Divine Love', and it sets out to show that a loving God would make Himself less hidden than theists claim. Schellenberg bases this idea wholly on the notion that God loves as we do: '... the one who seeks personal relations only from benevolence fails to achieve the fullness of love. And so God, if he exists and is perfectly loving, must also desire personal relationship with us for its own sake.' Schellenberg's God 'values' divine-human relationships in themselves, as well as for the creaturely good.

The author finds no difficulty with the idea of a God whose existence is clearly perceptible. What sort of God would this be? There are, clearly, those who think God's existence can be shown to be probable. Schellenberg creditably argues only for the possibility of much stronger

evidence of probability (something like a firm awareness in the believer's part). But he assumes that we are able to identify God, to draw numerous anthropomorphic conclusions about Him, to claim that His love has implications which are binding upon Him. While some move from worldly evidence to mystery, Schellenberg wants to be able to pin God down.

Is the book's argument really successful? Certainly belief in God's existence is a necessary condition of consciously experiencing relationship with him. Yet nowhere in this book do we find mention of the fact that very, very few theists have weighed up anything which might be called "philosophical evidence" before committing themselves to religion. Schellenberg sees assenting to God's existence as the first step on a path which leads to a divine-human relationship. Yet surely he, as well as the rest of us, knows dozens of people who claim to be theists without experiencing or even seeking such a relationship. Why should a 'strong epistemic situation' in relation to divine existence make the difference here assumed?

Theologians have traditionally approached this problem by distinguishing between faith and belief that God exists. Writers as far apart as Thomas Aquinas and Alvin Plantinga find God's existence to be well supported by rational argument, but fail to conclude that this has a bearing on the question of Christian faith (the truths of which St Thomas famously held to be demonstrably indemonstrable). This distinction cries out for attention when Schellenberg discusses Kierkegaard. Of course the latter's ideas present difficulties, and, when formalised, his arguments appear vulnerable to amendment and correction. But the very understanding of faith as the passion which involves the highest risk, as a state in which the finite, in its subjectivity, reaches out towards the infinite, depends upon what seems an uncontroversial claim: that divine-human relationships are not established simply through belief in God's existence. (What has happened to the oft-cited 'infinite qualitative difference'?) Schellenberg ought to address the underlying point before disagreeing with its consequents.

There are millions of believers who claim to enjoy a relationship with God. Thus they believe he exists, but very few do so in isolation from other things they claim to have had revealed to them. To be sure, we might ask why more people do not claim to have experienced any such revelation, but then we are asking a different question, one which is certainly not original. Schellenberg's book typifies much of what is good and bad in analytic philosophy of religion. It is interesting and provocative, but barely scratches the surface of the theological problems which it touches upon.

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