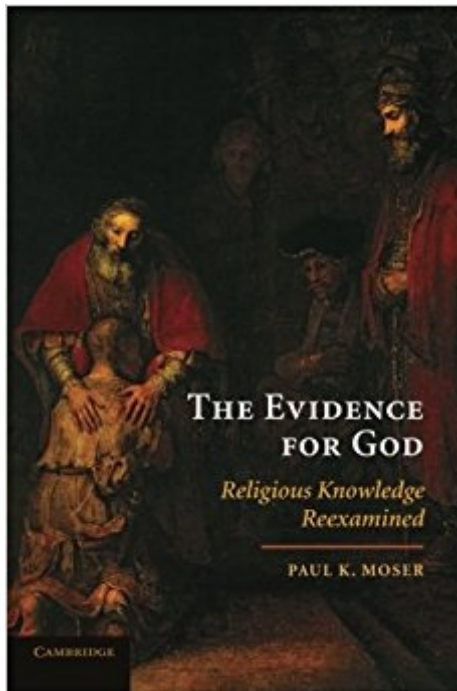




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The Evidence For God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined



Synopsis

If God exists, where can we find adequate evidence for God's existence? In this book, Paul Moser offers a new perspective on the evidence for God that centers on a morally robust version of theism that is cognitively resilient. The resulting evidence for God is not speculative, abstract, or casual. Rather, it is morally and existentially challenging to humans, as they themselves responsively and willingly become evidence of God's reality in receiving and reflecting God's moral character for others. Moser calls this "personifying evidence of God," because it requires the evidence to be personified in an intentional agent - such as a human - and thereby to be inherent evidence of an intentional agent. Contrasting this approach with skepticism, scientific naturalism, fideism, and natural theology, Moser also grapples with the potential problems of divine hiddenness, religious diversity, and vast evil.

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Customer Reviews

"There is much in this readable and pointed book that will interest and challenge both philosophers and theologians, and the epistemological reorientation Moser develops has the potential to significantly alter debates in current philosophy of religion, and for the better. --Review of Metaphysics" This is a powerful and highly thought-provoking book, always meticulously argued, but also written with the kind of overt emotional commitment that is rare in contemporary philosophy of religion, particularly that dealing with epistemological questions." --TLS

Paul Moser offers a new perspective on the evidence for God that centers on a morally robust

version of theism that is cognitively resilient. The resulting evidence for God is morally and existentially challenging to humans, as they themselves responsively and willingly become evidence of God's reality in receiving and reflecting God's moral character for others.

I received this book surprisingly fast and I was pleased with the condition of the book as well. The book itself is fairly technical but I would recommend this book to introductory students of philosophy. The arguments, in particular, don't expect the reader to be well-versed in logic, epistemology, or metaphysics. Of course, if familiar with the various disciplines will indubitably assist you in your comprehension of the book. Overall, this book adequately develops the concept of religious epistemology when attaining knowledge of God's exists. Enlightening and well-written I would propose as well. Good treatment of the debate.-RD

I ordered this book on a whim and am surprised that no one has reviewed it yet. I will do a more detailed review later, but have some review points for an interested reader: 1. The main point of the book, that God does reveal himself to the world, but not on our terms, is salient. Sounds God-worthy. God exhibits His existence in a life submitted to him. We, morally committed to Christ's purposes, are the evidence to the world (and to ourselves) of God's existence. He builds on this point and gives the core idea a lot of substance. Well worth reading. 2. Why four stars and not five? Frankly, Moser is an academician and writes like one. His sentence structures are too long and complex. I sometimes find myself re-reading a sentence many times to figure out what he's saying. The only reason I am working thru this book (about 2/3rds done) is because the content is rewarding and may in the final analysis be correct! 3. This book creates a path that seems viable. The naturalists want the Christian world to confront them on their terms. When Christians debate atheists to provide objective truth for God's existence, they always get smeared. It's embarrassing to watch the gyrations that Christians go through to prove God from a worldly aspect. This book provides an alternative viewpoint that respects God, respects our responsibility toward God, and works out faith in a realistic fashion. I'd like to hear the take of others on Moser's work. I find it a relief from the worn out apologetics found in popular Christian books. Ken

Paul K. Moser (Professor & Chairperson Dept. of Philosophy: Loyola University, Chicago) relates epistemic issues to the evidence for the existence of God with masterly skill in "The Evidence for God: Religious Knowledge Reexamined." Moser, author of "The Elusive God," paints a far more textured picture of epistemology's crucial role in determining genuine evidence for the existence of

the Christian God than the majority of contemporary apologists. Along the way Professor Moser attempts to deflate various arguments for theism that play down the ontic majesty of the true and living God. Additionally he cogently refutes naturalism with precision and care (pp. 46-84). His persuasive and inextinguishable contestations refuting sundry schools of naturalism alone make this volume worth purchasing. Professor Moser also convincingly discredits fideism as he provides the reader with a thoughtful case against blind faith. The book "develops volitional theism against the background that includes critical assessment of prominent competing positions" (Naturalism, Fideism, Traditional Proofs, Plantinga's epistemology - p. 45). The book's claims are launched with an erudite quote from H.H. Farmer: "Many questions are answered wrongly, not because the evidence is contradictory or inadequate, but because the mind through its fundamental dispositions and presuppositions is out of focus with the only kind of evidence which is really available" (p. 1). Moser controverts numerous forms of Naturalism including:- Quine's (p. 68-70)- Ontological Naturalism. Eliminative ontological naturalism. Noneliminative reductive ontological naturalism. Noneliminative nonreductive ontological naturalism- Methodological naturalism in three dominant forms. All this within the context of a refutation of Scientism (pp. 76-87) while he opposes the empirical attempt to prove the existence of God (p. 87). The author rejects classical proofs (pp. 142-182) along with historical and evidential methods as systems that prove too little (finite data V. an infinite ontology: the God of Christian Theism), yet he admits to their possible psychological or aesthetic apologetic value (p. 160). The author also denies that Behe's irreducible complexity and ID science are epistemically satisfying approaches (p. 166-167). The often astute professor alogically and unbiblically rejects God's sovereignty in the salvation of souls and the enlightening of minds (pp. 131-142 and misc.). He builds a neurasthenic case for the divine call that results in "nonargument evidence of God's reality" not as "volitionally static" forasmuch as we need to "avoid ... a bias against evidence of the divine reality that comes from the volitional pressure of a transcendent call and the resulting transformation of a willing human recipient who thereby becomes a personifying evidence of God's reality" (p. 150). Nonetheless Moser's previous arguments against traditional proofs (finite, mutable, perishing material things lack the epistemic ability and ontic necessities to prove an infinite, immutable, imperishable God) cuts off the branch he's resting his arguments on: Christians become the "evidence of God's reality in receiving and reflecting God's moral character to others" (p. ix); inasmuch as Christians are also mutable and finite, thus under Moser's epistemic scrutiny, they fail to offer proof for the awesome infinite and immutable God revealed in scripture. The professor's argument provides the grounds that confute his own position. The author claims that the evidence that has epistemically virtuous rights streams from the

personal, perfectly loving God who alone deserves our worship and obedience. He maintains that this is the only justifiable evidence because God is elusive and all that is within the cosmos is epistemically diminutive. The seeker should open his heart and find salient evidence for the reality of God in the lives of believers who exhibit the love that they have received from the Lord. I personally haven't met a fellow Christian who lived a life that is morally adequate enough to be proof for the existence of God; furthermore I have not observed the love of a believer that was so impressive as to compel one to believe in God. The only moral source of love that compels saving faith is found in Christ Jesus. Moser offers a formidable case against fideism and mysticism (p. 88-125), but his central allegation against classical & evidential proofs implies that he's one who rejects propositional and evidential proof, so he seems to slide into a type of moderate fideism himself, although he avouches "moderate evidentialism" (p. 135). He advocates the amorphous view that "God's reality is increasingly available and salient to me as I, myself, am increasingly willing to become such evidence--that is evidence of God's reality." This contention is his chief argument for Christian theism (p. 172). One reason Moser contends that God's existence cannot be proved in propositional apologetic terms is: God is epistemically veiled so the lives of believers are the only sufficient evidence that is available, moreover we need to "let God be God" (p. 28). God is concealed since "the reality of the God is knowable firsthand by humans on the basis of salient and conclusive, if elusive, evidence." The author endeavors to rebut the Reformed view of soteriology in relation to apologetic pursuits as he asserts that some "people assume that God would have a magic cognitive bullet in divine self-revelation whereby God guarantees that the divinely offered evidence of God's existence will actually be willingly received by humans. Sometimes this dubious assumption is clothed in talk of 'divine sovereignty,' but this approach, in any case, involves a serious mistake" (pp. 33-34). However Romans chapter one informs the world that all men know that God exists but they suppress the truth in unrighteousness; furthermore the totality of holy writ discloses the idea that God is the agent who opens the human heart and calls men to Himself by grace alone. The professor states: "Conclusive firsthand evidence for divine reality is, I'll contend, purposively available to humans, that is, available in a way, and only in a way, that accommodates the distinctive purposes of a perfectly loving God. The latter purposes, we'll see, would aim non-coercively but authoritatively to transform human purposes to agree with divine purposes, despite human resistance." Moser's work may not have compelling positive and direct proof for theism but he does present an extremely effective refutation of naturalism and fideism along with a moderate challenge to the traditional arguments for God's existence. Even though I affirm a dissimilar apologetic method and epistemic approach, I enjoyed this volume immensely and gained

additional insight in ways to defend the faith. My method advocates a certain argument for the existence of God. Additionally in contrast to Moser I argue that God alone furnishes all the a priori essentials for the necessary epistemic equipment utilized in all science and research. God has the ontic attributes of omniscience, immutability, and omnipotence (universal reach) to be the ground for the immaterial universal and immutable rational and ethical necessities. Any position that rejects Christian theism cannot be true (see my book: "A Letter to An Atheist Nation" by Mike A Robinson); thus whatever evidence one discovers, one must discern and process that evidence with the rational tools noted above.

Truth, Knowledge and the Reason for God: The Defense of the Rational Assurance of Christianity

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