

embodiment of eighteenth-century culture and ideas about language, an astounding achievement" (p. 305) seems inarguable. On the other hand, the core question for the history of ideas of Johnson's relationship to neoclassicism in the *Dictionary* and in his literary criticism is left unexplored. Similarly, Martin does not enter the long-standing controversy as to whether Johnson should be considered among the greatest literary critics in English despite his inability to reconcile his belief that literature should be an imitation of life with his equally strong conviction that a literary work should point a clear moral. "Johnson's achievement in the *Lives of the Poets* was uneven" (p. 487) according to Martin, but he offers no examples of either literary insight or misunderstanding. Martin quotes Johnson's description of Milton as "an acrimonious and surly Republican" (p. 488), but does not mention his famous discussions of *Lycidas* and *Paradise Lost*. A reader would not learn from Martin's discussion that Johnson opens his *Preface to Shakespeare* by making a still persuasive argument on behalf of the now controversial thesis that literary works recognized as great for centuries probably merit such recognition. Martin's praise for Johnson's *Rambler* essays reflect his overall view of Johnson's greatness, which for Martin derives most of all from Johnson's respect for "the uncompromising demands of common sense" and his "reassuring, if sometimes painful, moral clarity" (p. 275).—James Seaton, *Michigan State University*.

MOSER, Paul K. *The Elusive God: Reorienting Religious Epistemology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xii + 292. Cloth, \$90.00—In this remarkable, noteworthy volume, Loyola University's philosophy chair, Paul Moser, has made a comprehensive case for a "Copernican revolution" in religious epistemology. He presents a necessary corrective to a history of philosophical and theological armchair argumentation and speculation, detached from human volition. Moser carefully follows the Jewish-Christian scriptures' epistemological approach, including a rejection of fideism, which itself repudiates all evidential considerations. He writes: "The heart of the book's account is that we should expect evidence of divine reality to be *purposefully available* to humans, that is, available in a manner, and only in a manner, suitable to divine purposes in self-revelation" (p. x).

God, Moser contends, may purposefully hide himself (perhaps because of prideful human demands insisting on displays of divine pyrotechnics). Frequently, the evidence for God considered by philosophers is personally detached, ignoring whether our human wills are properly oriented to receive God's self-revelation on *God's* terms—not our own. This means willing conformity to God's ends for us: entering into a loving, filial relationship with God (who is not merely content with our having justified true belief that he exists) and undergoing God's life-

giving transformation from selfishness to selfless love. A truly authoritative, wholly good, worship-worthy God would desire personal, engaged relationship, not the mere accumulation of theological facts. Indeed, one may have ample propositional evidence for God's existence yet hate God all the more.

This book contains a lengthy introduction, five chapters, and an appendix ("Skepticism Undone," which undermines the major argument—the circularity objection—supporting skepticism). In chapter 1, "Doubting Skeptics," Moser repudiates "spectator evidence" (as opposed to "authoritative evidence"), challenging the reader to be willing to be known by God—a factor almost wholly ignored when evidence for God is presented. Attempts to dislodge evidence of a loving God indicate cognitive bias against God's reality, not genuine truth-seeking (p. 75).

Chapter 2, "Knowing as Attunement," appropriates the metaphor of a radio dial: humans must be properly attuned to God's purposefully available evidence. Here Moser even gives his own argument for God's existence in which an individual's willing, unselfish reception of the divine transformative gift evidences a worship-worthy God (p. 135). A biblical epistemological stance calls for wholehearted seeking—not merely passive, casual observation. In setting the "dials" *our* way, we will create barriers to truly knowing God as he desires to be known.

Chapter 3, "Dying to Know," speaks of the value of personal knowledge (something reminiscent of Michael Polanyi) as veridical evidence for God, the second-best kind of such evidence being firsthand acquaintance with persons transformed by God's Spirit. Moser here contrasts the wisdoms of Athens (tied to propositionalism, intellectualist enlightenment, postmortem soul-disembodiment as ideal) and Jerusalem (involving personal knowledge, forgiveness/reconciliation with God, eventual bodily resurrection).

Chapter 4, "Philosophy Revamped," calls for reorienting philosophy around what is ultimate—namely, the commands to love God and others. This means that rather than being an ivory-tower, abstract, relationally-irrelevant, and often idolatrous discipline, philosophy should be *kerygmatic*—namely, concerned about the interests of God's redemptive purposes and up-building of the transformed community of God's people. Philosophy (the love of wisdom) should pay more attention to Jesus, the wisdom of God.

Chapter 5, "Aftermath," speaks of the importance of evidence (contra Plantinga's Reformed epistemology)—but without coercion. In light of inevitable death and the hopelessness of materialism, we must recognize our need for outside help; the gift of fellowship with God, our greatest good, involves willingly entrusting ourselves to him rather than living lives morally independent of him.

Some natural theologians will dispute the spectator-evidence versus divinely-authoritative-purposeful-evidence demarcation: (a) significant "spectator evidence" for God's existence, though secondary and not

ultimately authoritative, is abundant in Scripture (for example, many miracles fitting into the “divine pyrotechnics” category); (b) such evidence can be, and has been, used by God in combination with—and here Moser’s emphasis is critical—a willing, seeking heart open to relationship with God. Moser’s observation, however, that natural theologians “often leave their inquirers without an authoritative volitional challenge” (p. 161) is spot-on.

Truly, Moser has done philosophy—and natural theology in particular—an immense service by pointing us in a new, exciting direction. Indeed, his book is a must-read for *every* philosopher and theologian!—Paul Copan, *Palm Beach Atlantic University*.

PETERSON, John. *Aquinas: A New Introduction*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2008. xvi + 243 pp. Paper, \$35.95—In six chapters and a brief introduction, Peterson aims to give a wide-ranging yet detailed introduction to the philosophical thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. An oddity of the book is its lack of any attempt to put Aquinas in historical context. Among other things, this means that there are no dates given anywhere in the book (aside from the title page). In fact, that approach makes some sense, for this is a *defense* of Aquinas’s views, rather than a mere presentation of his thought.

The introduction gives a rough, negative, overview of the thought of St. Thomas. By this I mean that Peterson here explains St. Thomas by contrasting his views to a wide array of competing philosophical views: the introduction tells us what St. Thomas did *not* believe. The work of characterizing St. Thomas more positively begins in chapter 1, where Peterson presents St. Thomas’ views on “Change and its Causes.” After distinguishing between flux, succession, and change, Peterson explains the Aristotelian account of change, by means of a nice discussion of the Parmenidean dilemma. He then turns to an account of the four causes. His discussion involves a fairly lengthy and helpful defense of final causality.

Chapter 2, on “Being,” beings with an account of the subject matter of metaphysics and an explanation of what it means to say metaphysics is a science. Peterson then discusses the various senses of being, and the divisions of being. He introduces the essence/existence distinction and provides a couple of lines of argument to show why the distinction is needed. These points lead eventually to a discussion of St. Thomas’ argument for God’s existence. Peterson does not engage in a detailed study of the 5 Ways. Rather, he gives his interpretation of St. Thomas’ argument from contingency, which he presents with numbered premises, and careful defenses of each premise. Eventually, the chapter turns to Divine Simplicity and the Divine Ideas, and concludes with an account of the relation of being to the good and the true.



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