



The Problem of Divine Hiddenness

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Introduction

“The Problem of Divine Hiddenness” is an infelicitous phrase for two reasons. First, while it suggests that God both exists and hides, this phrase actually refers to a strategy of arguing that various forms of nonbelief in God constitute evidence for God’s nonexistence. Second, it suggests that there is only one problem for theistic belief here, while in fact this phrase refers to a family of arguments for atheism. This entry focuses on contemporary arguments from nonbelief to atheism. The most important of these is defended by J. L. Schellenberg. Schellenberg claims that a loving God would ensure that there is no reasonable or inculpable nonbelief in his existence, since this belief is required for human beings to enter into a relationship with God, and since (according to theism) having such a relationship with creatures is a great good, and indeed is one of God’s most important goals. But, Schellenberg argues, since such nonbelief occurs among those capable of belief in God, theism should be rejected. The citations collected under General Overviews all concern Schellenberg’s argument. Other authors have independently constructed different arguments from nonbelief to atheism, and these are surveyed under Other Arguments from Nonbelief. The final five sections of this bibliography survey responses to arguments from hiddenness to atheism. Most of this literature explicitly concerns Schellenberg’s argument, but many of these replies could also be directed against the other arguments surveyed here. There are important connections between the problem of divine hiddenness and the problem of evil, and the relevant literature is discussed in a preliminary section entitled Divine Hiddenness in the Context of the Problem of Evil.

General Overviews

The best entry point into the vast literature on divine hiddenness is Schellenberg 1993, a seminal monograph that contains his first statement of the argument and carefully examines a wide range of replies. Howard-Snyder and Moser 2002 contains eleven important papers on this topic. The editors’ introduction to this volume is a useful survey of possible replies to Schellenberg’s argument, many of which are discussed by the contributors to the volume. Although they are not listed in this section, Schellenberg 2005a (cited under God Hides for the Sake of a Later, Better Relationship) and Schellenberg 2005 (cited under God Hides in Order to Preserve Morally Significant Human Freedom) are worth mentioning, since they contain a clear presentation of the argument and careful replies to the criticisms discussed in Howard-Snyder and Moser 2002. Chapters 9 and 10 of Schellenberg 2007 also contain a careful presentation of the argument from divine hiddenness, along with a critical discussion of several replies. Schellenberg 2010 distinguishes five versions of the hiddenness argument, and contains a clear survey of some of the most important literature to date. Howard-Snyder 2006 identifies fourteen possible responses to Schellenberg’s argument, but does not explicitly trace these through the published literature. Murray and Taylor 2012, Rea 2012, and Schellenberg 2011 are all good choices for introducing this topic to undergraduates.

Howard-Snyder, Daniel. “Hiddenness of God.” In the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2d ed. Vol. 4. Edited by Donald M. Borchert, 352–357. Detroit: Macmillan, 2006.

After distinguishing the problem of hiddenness from the problem of evil, and setting out the argument in Schellenberg 1993, Howard-Snyder identifies fourteen possible responses.

Howard-Snyder, Daniel, and Paul K. Moser. “Introduction: The Hiddenness of God.” In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by

Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, 1–22. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

A clear introduction to this important anthology. Contains a helpful discussion of the relationship between the problem of evil and the problem of hiddenness, and then distinguishes several strategies of reply to the latter argument. Concludes with an opinionated summary of the eleven papers in the volume.

Murray, Michael J., and David E. Taylor. "Hiddenness." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. 2d ed. Edited by Chad Meister and Paul Copan, 368–377. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

After setting out the problem of hiddenness, Murray and Taylor identify three strategies of reply: (a) deny that there is inculpable nonbelief; (b) appeal to the possibility of *unknown* goods for the sake of which God hides; and (c) appeal to *known* goods for the sake of which God hides. The authors doubt whether (a) can succeed, but defend strategies (b) and (c).

Rea, Michael. "Divine Hiddenness, Divine Silence." In *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. 6th ed. Edited by Louis Pojman and Michael Rea, 266–275. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage, 2012.

A clear, undergraduate-level exposition and evaluation of the hiddenness argument. Closes with a brief statement of Rea's own response, which is developed further in Rea 2009 (cited under Other Responses to the Problem of Divine Hiddenness): divine silence may serve the greater good of appropriately expressing God's personality.

Schellenberg, J. L. *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Seminal presentation and detailed defense of the argument from reasonable nonbelief to atheism. (Paperback version, with a new preface, published in 2006.)

Schellenberg, J. L. *The Wisdom To Doubt: A Justification of Religious Skepticism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Chapter 9 develops the argument from *nonresistant nonbelief* to atheism, and then considers and replies to several objections. Chapter 10 distinguishes four specific categories of people who exhibit nonresistant nonbelief: former believers, lifelong seekers, converts to nontheistic religion, and isolated nontheists.

Schellenberg, J. L. "Divine Hiddenness." In *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. 2d ed. Edited by Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn, 509–518. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Distinguishes five versions of the problem of divine hiddenness. Argues that the problem of divine hiddenness is distinct from the problem of evil. Next, this chapter distinguishes four broad categories of reply, and comments on each.

Schellenberg, J. L. "Would a Loving God Hide from Anyone? Assembling and Assessing the Hiddenness Argument for Atheism." In *Introducing Philosophy for Canadians: A Text With Integrated Readings*. Edited by Robert C. Solomon and Douglas McDermid, 165–168. Don Mills, Canada: Oxford University Press, 2011.

A brief, clear, undergraduate-level exposition and evaluation of the hiddenness argument.

Divine Hiddenness in the Context of the Problem of Evil

There is considerable disagreement in the literature concerning the relationship between the problem of divine hiddenness and the problem of evil. This is partly due to the fact that, in both contexts, the word "problem" is shorthand for a variety of different arguments that take various logical forms, and so different authors may have different arguments in mind when they refer to these "problems."

Some authors (e.g., McKim 1990, cited under Arguments from Nonbelief Not Due to Schellenberg or Drange) take the problem of hiddenness to include the problem of evil. Others (e.g., Swinburne 1998 cited under God Hides So That Humans Can Come to Knowledge of God on Their Own; and Henry 2001 and Wainwright 2002, both cited under There Is No Reasonable or Inculpable or Nonresistant Nonbelief) take the problem of evil to include the problem of hiddenness. Still others (e.g., Howard-Snyder and Moser 2002, cited under General Overviews, and Schellenberg 2010) take them to be distinct. Whichever view is correct, it should be noted that one important discussion of divine hiddenness occurs within the literature on the problem of evil. Some authors (e.g., Alston 1991, Bergmann 2001) suggest that God might be justified in permitting certain instances of evil to occur for the sake of reasons that are unknown—and perhaps even unknowable—to humans. This response has come to be known as *skeptical theism*, and good overviews of recent work on this topic can be found in McBrayer 2010, cited under Appeal to Unknown Justifications for Divine Hiddenness, and Dougherty 2011. Rowe 1996 replies to this move by arguing that while it is possible that God's reasons are unknown or unknowable, this is unlikely. Rowe reasons as follows: if God's reasons for permitting evil really were beyond our ken, God would be consciously present to us while we suffer, would attempt to explain to us why we must suffer, and would assure us of his love and concern—but many of those who suffer experience no such divine comfort. In response, Alston 1991 and Bergmann 2001 argue that while this divine hiddenness may be considered an evil, it cannot be presumed that God is not justified in permitting this evil for the sake of a good that is *also* beyond our ken. Rowe 2001 regards this idea as wholly implausible. Kraay 2007 criticizes the argument in Rowe 2001, while Trakakis 2007 endorses it. Dougherty 2011 replies to Kraay 2007. Finally, it is worth noting that the general strategy of appealing to the possibility of unknown divine justifications, while it originated in the debate about evil, has more recently been used in response to arguments from nonbelief as well. The relevant literature on this topic is subsequently covered under the section entitled Appeal to Unknown Justifications for Divine Hiddenness.

Alston, William P. "The Inductive Argument from Evil and the Human Cognitive Condition." *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 29–67.

After suggesting that God may have unknown reasons for permitting evil, Alston considers, in note 22, the objection that a truly benevolent God would make his reasons known to us. Alston replies that this is just another instance of the problem of evil, and so reiterates his response: perhaps God's reasons for *not* making his reasons known are themselves unknown. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Bergmann, Michael. "Skeptical Theism and Rowe's New Argument from Evil." *Noûs* 35 (2001): 278–296.

Rejects the claim in Rowe 1996 if that God permits horrendous suffering for the sake of a good that is *beyond our ken*, God should be consciously present to us while we suffer, should attempt to explain to us why we must suffer, and should assure us of his love and concern. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Dougherty, Trent. "Recent Work on the Problem of Evil." *Analysis* 71 (2011): 560–573.

Criticizes the response in Kraay 2007 to the suggestion in Rowe 2001 that it is inherently implausible to think that the idea that divine silence in the face of suffering is justified. Suggests, contra Kraay, that Rowe can properly hold his view to be a "basic seeming," in no need of further justification. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Kraay, Klaas J. "Absence of Evidence and Evidence of Absence." *Faith and Philosophy* 24 (2007): 203–228.

Criticizes Rowe's 2001 claim that the notion that divine silence is justified is inherently implausible, by arguing that this is an illicit "conversation stopper" in the debate about evil. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Rowe, William. "The Evidential Argument from Evil: A Second Look." In *The Evidential Argument from Evil*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder, 262–285. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.

Argues that even if God permits horrendous suffering for the sake of a good that is *beyond our ken*, God should be consciously present to us while we suffer, should attempt to explain to us why we must suffer, and should assure us of his love and concern.

Rowe, William. "Skeptical Theism: A Response to Bergmann." *Noûs* 35 (2001): 297–303.

Reply to Bergmann 2001. Rejects Bergmann's claim that the argument in Rowe 1996 concerning divine silence depends upon a prior rejection of *skeptical theism*. Rowe claims that the notion that divine silence is justified is inherently implausible. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. "The Hiddenness Problem and the Problem of Evil." *Faith and Philosophy* 27 (2010): 45–60.

A careful and important discussion of nine theses concerning the relationship between the problem of hiddenness and the problem of evil. Argues that they are distinct problems, but that an even stronger argument for atheism can emerge from reflection on individuals who experience both hiddenness and evil. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Trakakis, Nick. "The Problem of Divine Hiddenness." In *The God beyond Belief: In Defence of William Rowe's Evidential Argument from Evil*. By Nick Trakakis, 189–225. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2007.

Endorses the claim in Rowe 2001 that it is inherently implausible to think that divine silence in the face of horrendous suffering is justified.

Other Arguments from Nonbelief

The most important argument from nonbelief to atheism is first advanced in Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews) and is refined and defended by Schellenberg in many subsequent publications. Another important argument from divine hiddenness to atheism is advanced at length in Drange 1998a, cited under Theodore Drange's Argument from Nonbelief, and the following subsection, in which the literature concerning Drange's argument is discussed. Apart from Drange and Schellenberg, other authors have independently offered arguments for atheism that appeal to nonbelief. These, and their critics, are discussed Arguments from Nonbelief Not Due to Schellenberg or Drange.

THEODORE DRANGE'S ARGUMENT FROM NONBELIEF

Theodore Drange's argument from nonbelief to atheism is distinct from Schellenberg's in two ways. First, its primary target is the God of Evangelical Christianity, whereas Schellenberg's target is the more general belief in a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good, and perfectly loving. Second, while Schellenberg argues that any single instance of reasonable (or inculpable or nonresistant) nonbelief disconfirms theism, Drange concentrates instead on the *amount* of such nonbelief. Drange first presents his argument in his brief Drange 1993, clarifies it in Drange 1998b, and develops it into a full-scale monograph in Drange 1998a. Drange's argument has generated less discussion than Schellenberg's. Cosculluela 1996 defends Drange 1993 against the claim that God might have a desire that conflicts with his desire to eliminate nonbelief. McHugh 2002 criticizes Drange 1998a, citing Scripture to argue that a religiously ambiguous world is precisely what one would expect given the truth of Evangelical Christianity. Drange 2002 replies. Davis 2005 criticizes Drange 1998a by appeal to freedom (a move discussed in the context of Schellenberg's argument in God Hides in Order to Preserve Morally Significant Human Freedom). Drange 2005 offers ten distinct objections to Davis 2005.

Cosculluela, Victor. "Bolstering the Argument from Non-Belief." *Religious Studies* 32 (1996): 507–512.

Defends Drange 1993 against the following objection: God might have desires that conflict with his desire to eliminate nonbelief. Cosculluela argues that God cannot have conflicting desires. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Davis, Stephen T. "Is Nonbelief a Proof of Atheism?" *Philo* 8 (2005): 151–159.

Criticizes Drange 1998a. Given that God desires that as many people as possible *freely* and *rationaly* come to worship and obey God, God requires a religiously ambiguous world. Accordingly, the existence of many nonbelievers confirms the existence of God. Available online by subscription.

Drange, Theodore M. "The Argument from Non-Belief." *Religious Studies* 29 (1993): 417–432.

Defends an argument against the God of Evangelical Christianity. Given this version of theism, (almost) all humans who have lived since Jesus' time should believe the central claims of Christianity. But since it is false that (almost) all humans who have lived since Jesus' time believe the central claims of Christianity, God does not exist. Considers and replies to several objections. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Drange, Theodore M. *Nonbelief and Evil: Two Arguments for the Nonexistence of God*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1998a.

A sustained defense of the argument from nonbelief first presented in Drange 1993 against the God of Evangelical Christianity. Urges that this argument is stronger than the argument from evil against Evangelical Christianity. Examines and rejects several replies. Offers variants of this argument against other theisms, including Orthodox Judaism and Liberal Christianity.

Drange, Theodore. "Nonbelief vs. Lack of Evidence: Two Atheological Arguments." *Philo* 1 (1998b): 105–114.

Distinguishes two forms of hiddenness arguments: the "lack of evidence argument" and the "argument from nonbelief." Argues that the former is more controversial and less persuasive than the latter. The latter is irrelevant against the bare claim that there exists an omnipotent and eternal creator of the universe, but establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that there is no such being who is also perfectly loving. Available online by subscription.

Drange, Theodore M. "McHugh's Expectations Dashed." *Philo* 5 (2002): 242–248.

Faults McHugh 2002 for conflating the God of the Bible with the God of Evangelical Christianity. Not only do certain Biblical passages suggest that God wants to eliminate nonbelief, but this is also a profound commitment of Evangelical Christianity, and so the phenomenon of widespread nonbelief counts against this version of theism. Available online by subscription.

Drange, Theodore. "Reply to Critics." *Philo* 8 (2005): 169–182.

Offers ten objections to Davis 2005. Available online by subscription.

McHugh, Christopher. "A Refutation of Drange's Arguments from Evil and Nonbelief." *Philo* 5 (2002): 94–102.

Offers an "expectation defense" against Drange's 1998a argument from nonbelief: given the truth of Evangelical Christianity, considerable nonbelief is to be expected. Available online by subscription.

ARGUMENTS FROM NONBELIEF NOT DUE TO SCHELLENBERG OR DRANGE

Apart from Schellenberg and Drange, other authors have independently offered arguments for atheism that involve considerations about divine hiddenness, and some replies have been published. McKim 1990 considers an argument from divine hiddenness, thus predating both Schellenberg and Drange, and critically evaluates several replies. This paper is widely cited in the literature. Keller 1995 urges that the responses canvassed in McKim 1990 fail to defeat this argument from hiddenness, and suggests instead that it might not be within God's power to eliminate all divine hiddenness. Keller 2007 discusses a special form of the problem of divine

hiddenness: human unclarity about God's will. In a similar vein, Trisel 2012 suggests that it is unlikely that God has a purpose in creating humanity, since if God had such a purpose, it is very likely that God would make it known to us. Maitzen 2006 defends an argument for atheism based on the uneven distribution of theistic belief in the world. Marsh 2008 and Mawson 2012 reply to Maitzen 2006, and Maitzen 2008 responds to Marsh 2008.

Keller, James A. "The Hiddenness of God and the Problem of Evil." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 37 (1995): 13–24.

Argues that all the responses canvassed by McKim 1990 fail to defeat the argument from hiddenness that McKim considers. Briefly endorses the claim that it is not within God's power to eliminate divine hiddenness. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Keller, James. "Another Problem of Evil: Divine Hiddenness." In *Problems of Evil and the Power of God*. By James Keller, 31–53. Aldershot, UK; and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007.

Criticizes a wide range of theistic responses to the argument from divine hiddenness. Suggests that there is a special problem of divine hiddenness: human unclarity about God's will. Defends the view, first articulated in Keller 1995, that it is not within God's power to eliminate divine hiddenness.

Maitzen, Stephen. "Divine Hiddenness and the Demographics of Theism." *Religious Studies* 42 (2006): 177–191.

Defends an argument for atheism based on the uneven distribution of theistic belief in the world. Claims that this argument is invulnerable to the usual responses to arguments from hiddenness, that it casts doubt on theistic claims that all human beings are endowed with an innate sense of God, and that this argument is significantly more powerful than arguments from evil. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Maitzen, Stephen. "Does Molinism Explain the Demographics of Theism?" *Religious Studies* 44 (2008): 473–477.

Offers five criticisms of the reply in Marsh 2008 reply to the argument in Maitzen 2006 for atheism. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Marsh, Jason. "Do the Demographics of Theistic Belief Disconfirm Theism? A Reply to Maitzen." *Religious Studies* 44 (2008): 465–471.

Offers a Molinist reply to the argument defended in Maitzen 2006. On this view, all actual nontheists are such that, had they been born in theistic cultures, they would not have entered into a relationship with God. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Mawson, T. J. "The Rationality of Classical Theism and Its Demographics." In *Scientific Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion*. Edited by Yujin Nagasawa, 184–202. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Criticizes Calvinist and Molinist accounts of the demographics of theism. Argues that Evangelical Christianity should give up the claim that *ante mortem* belief that God exists is essential to salvation. Scripture, together with reflection on God's attributes, support *universalism*—the thesis that all are saved—and this thesis does not require the view that *ante mortem* belief is necessary for salvation.

McKim, Robert. "The Hiddenness of God." *Religious Studies* 26 (1990): 141–161.

Offers an independent formulation of the argument from divine hiddenness to atheism, and distinguishes two broad categories of reply: those which emphasize *divine transcendence* and those which emphasize *human defectiveness*. Critically evaluates two of the

former and one of the latter. Closes by speculating that perhaps belief in God is less important than theists have assumed, and that perhaps God does not require certainty in theistic belief. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Trisel, Brooke Alan. "God's Silence as an Epistemological Concern." *Philosophical Forum* 43 (2012): 383–393.

If humans have been created to serve a divine purpose, it is reasonable to expect God to make that purpose, and our role in carrying it out, clear to us. Since there is divine silence, it is not reasonable to believe that humans were created to serve some divine purpose. Criticizes Michael Rea's claims (Rea 2009, under Other Responses to the Problem of Divine Hiddenness, and Rea 2012, cited under General Overviews) that divine silence may simply be God's preferred mode expressing the divine personality. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Responses to Arguments from Nonbelief

This section surveys responses to arguments from nonbelief. As mentioned in the introduction, most of these responses are explicitly directed at Schellenberg's argument, but many of these could also be leveled against other arguments from nonbelief to atheism. The first response holds that there is no reasonable or inculpable or nonresistant nonbelief, in which case arguments for atheism based on such nonbelief cannot succeed. The second response denies that one must believe that God exists in order to be in a relationship with God. The third response offers reasons that God might be justified in hiding. Four distinct versions of this response are considered under this subsection. Since Paul Moser is one of Schellenberg's most prolific interlocutors, the literature concerning his responses is set out under a fourth subsection, Paul Moser's Theistic Epistemology, even though some of his criticisms could equally well be grouped under other subsection. Under the fifth and final subsection, other responses are collected that do not fit nicely into any of the preceding four categories.

THERE IS NO REASONABLE OR INCULPABLE OR NONRESISTANT NONBELIEF

An important premise in the argument for atheism in Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews) is the claim that there is reasonable or nonresistant or inculpable nonbelief. (Schellenberg 2007a, cited under One Can Be in a Relationship with God without Believing that God Exists, introduces a new term: *nonresistant* nonbelief.) Several authors have denied this claim in various ways, including Talbot 1989, Henry 2001, Wainwright 2002, Lehe 2004, and Henry 2008. Schellenberg 2004 responds to Talbot 1989, and Schellenberg 2005 responds to Henry 2001 and Lehe 2004. The claim that there is no reasonable or inculpable or nonresistant nonbelief is also an important theme in the relevant work of Paul Moser, culminating in Moser 2008. For details, see the section entitled Paul Moser's Theistic Epistemology.

Henry, Douglas V. "Does Reasonable Nonbelief Exist?" *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001): 75–92.

Raises doubts about whether there could be reflective nonbelievers who are evenhanded and fair in considering evidence. The author notes that most people are not sufficiently reflective about their beliefs, and that it is very difficult to be sure that someone has performed all his or her epistemic duties. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Henry, Douglas V. "Reasonable Doubts about Reasonable Nonbelief." *Faith and Philosophy* 25 (2008): 276–289.

Responds to the three criticisms of Henry 2001 that are leveled in Schellenberg 2005. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Lehe, Robert. "A Response to the Argument from the Reasonableness of Nonbelief." *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (2004): 159–174.

Argues that it is very difficult to know that one's own nonbelief is inculpable, particularly given the possibility of self-deception. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. "“Breaking Down the Walls That Divide”: Virtue and Warrant, Belief and Nonbelief.” *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (2004): 195–213.

Argues that moral virtues such as loyalty, courage, honesty, and humility can be displayed, in the epistemic context relevant to belief in God, by both theists and nontheists. Argues, contra Talbot 1989, that it is implausible to suppose that all nonbelief is due to sin. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. "On Reasonable Nonbelief and Perfect Love: Replies to Henry and Lehe.” *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (2005): 330–342.

Offers three replies to Henry 2001 and Lehe 2004: both authors (1) mistakenly equate reasonable nonbelief with reasonable doubt; (2) fail to realize that Schellenberg’s project is driven not by internalist epistemology, but rather by reflection on divine love; and (3) misconstrue self-deception. Schellenberg then offers specific replies against Henry and Lehe in turn. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Talbot, Mark. "Is It Natural to Believe in God?” *Faith and Philosophy* 6 (1989): 155–171.

Defends the Calvinist position that all human beings have a natural tendency to believe that God exists, but that this is overlaid or suppressed by sin. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Wainwright, William J. "Jonathan Edwards and the Hiddenness of God.” In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, 98–119. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Invoking the thought of Jonathan Edwards, Wainwright argues that an agent may be culpable for being in epistemically unfavourable circumstances. Argues that explicit theistic belief may not be needed for salvation, in which case God may not harm those from whom he withholds the good of such belief.

ONE CAN BE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WITHOUT BELIEVING THAT GOD EXISTS

Schellenberg’s argument from divine hiddenness to atheism, as first expressed in Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews) and refined and defended in many subsequent publications, argues that in order for *S* to be in a relationship with God, *S* must believe that God exists. According to Schellenberg, a loving God will ensure that all nonresistant individuals believe that God exists precisely in order to make such a relationship possible. In response, some authors have denied that to be in a relationship with God requires believing that God exists. Jordan 2006 and Aijaz and Weidler 2007 claim that a weaker epistemic state, such as *hoping* or *accepting* that God exists, might be enough. Poston and Dougherty 2007 denies that full, *de dicto* belief that God exists is needed to be in a relationship with God: one can still be in a relationship with God while only giving half credence to the proposition that God exists, or while only possessing the *de re* belief that God exists. Cullison 2010 goes further: the author rejects not only the claim that belief in God is necessary for being in a relationship with God, but also claim that some weaker epistemic state such as *hope* or *acceptance* is needed. Schellenberg 2008 replies to Aijaz and Weidler 2007; Schellenberg 2007a replies to Poston and Dougherty 2007; and Schellenberg 2007b replies to Jordan 2006. Cordry 2009 accepts the claim in Poston and Dougherty 2007 that full *de dicto* belief in God is not required to be in a relationship with God, but claims that this is insufficient to defeat the hiddenness argument, since it is impossible to show that all human beings in fact possess either the *de dicto* or the *de re* belief that God exists.

Aijaz, Imran, and Weidler, Markus. "Some Critical Reflections on the Hiddenness Argument.” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 61 (2007): 1–23.

Drawing on themes from Richard Swinburne, Louis Pojman, and William Alston, the authors argue that a subject need not believe that God exists in order to be in an explicit and positively meaningful relationship with God: something other cognitive state, such as *hope* or *acceptance*, may be sufficient.

Cordry, Benjamin S. "Divine Hiddenness and Belief *de Re*." *Religious Studies* 45 (2009): 1–19.

Argues that while Poston and Dougherty 2007 may be correct that someone can lack the *de dicto* belief that God exists while possessing the *de re* belief that God exists, this is insufficient to defeat the hiddenness argument. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Cullison, Andrew. "Two Solutions to the Problem of Divine Hiddenness." *American Philosophical Quarterly* 47 (2010): 119–134.

Rejects the claim that explicit belief in God's existence is required for being in a relationship with God. Considers and replies to two objections: (1) even if explicit belief is not necessary for the relationship, it nevertheless makes such a relationship more likely; and (2) relationships involving explicit belief in the other's existence are better than those which do not involve this. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Jordan, Jeff. "Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God." In *Pascal's Wager: Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God*. By Jeff Jordan, 199–211. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Criticizes Schellenberg's assumption that one must believe that God exists in order to have a relationship with God. One might *accept* that God exists without *believing* it, and still be in a relationship with God. Accepting is *assenting to a proposition's truth and employing it in deliberations*, while *believing* is *being disposed to feel that it is probably true*. The former is voluntary; the latter is not.

Poston, Ted, and Trent Dougherty. "Divine Hiddenness and the Nature of Belief." *Religious Studies* 43 (2007): 183–198.

Denies that a subject must have all of the following in order to be in a relationship with God (a) "full" belief that God exists; (b) *de dicto* belief that God exists; and (c) explicit awareness that God exists at all times. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. "On not Unnecessarily Darkening the Glass: A Reply to Poston and Dougherty." *Religious Studies* 43 (2007a): 199–204.

Argues, contra Poston and Dougherty 2007, that a loving God would ensure that all inculpable people, at all times, possess a full, *de dicto* belief that God exists. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. "The Sounds of Silence Stilled: A Reply to Jordan on Hiddenness." In *God or Blind Nature? Philosophers Debate the Evidence (2007–2008)*. Edited by Paul Draper. 2007b.

This is the third item in a six-part debate between John Schellenberg and Jeff Jordan that is included in an e-book edited by Paul Draper. In this part, Schellenberg rejects Jordan's view that a loving God would be content with mere "acceptance," rather than belief in his existence.

Schellenberg, J. L. "Reply to Aijaz and Weidler on Hiddenness." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 64 (2008): 135–140.

Contra Aijaz and Weidler 2007, Schellenberg argues a perfectly loving God would not be content with anything less than a full relationship with all creatures, and that for such relationships to be possible, all nonresistant creatures must believe that God exists. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

JUSTIFICATIONS FOR DIVINE HIDING

Various authors have claimed that God might be justified in hiding, at least from certain individuals at certain times. This section

surveys four distinct versions of this response.

God Hides in Order to Preserve Morally Significant Human Freedom

Several authors defend the following reason that God might refrain from making his existence obvious to all creatures at all times: if God were to do so, human moral freedom would be compromised, since the constant awareness of God's existence would be morally coercive. The most important presentations of this objection are found in McKim 2001, Murray 2002, Swinburne 2004, and Jordan 2006. This objection is also discussed in the online debate between Jeff Jordan and J. L. Schellenberg. Schellenberg 1993 anticipates this objection, and critically discusses the version of it presented by Swinburne 2004. Lovering 2004 criticizes Murray 2002. Schellenberg 2005 replies to Swinburne 2004, McKim 2001, and Murray 2002, while Trakakis 2007 criticizes Swinburne 2004 and McKim 2001.

Jordan, Jeff. "Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God." In *Pascal's Wager: Pragmatic Arguments and Belief in God*. By Jeff Jordan, 199–211. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

It is logically possible that God arranges creation to be religiously ambiguous in order to safeguard our freedom to inculcate belief in God and to align ourselves with God.

Lovering, Robert P. "Divine Hiddenness and Inculpable Ignorance." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 56 (2004): 89–107.

Criticizes Murray 2002. Argues that divine hiddenness can cause inculpable moral nihilism, which can prevent one from developing a morally significant character. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

McKim, Robert. *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Defends the argument in Swinburne 2004 argument (first published in 1979) against criticisms leveled in Schellenberg 1993.

Murray, Michael J. "Deus Absconditus." In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul Moser, 62–82. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

This widely cited article urges that God hides in order to preserve genuine moral freedom.

Schellenberg, J. L. *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Chapter 5 argues against the claim, made by Swinburne (Swinburne 2004) and others, that moral freedom would be significantly undermined if all people at all times were to believe that God exists. (Paperback version, with a new preface, published in 2006.)

Schellenberg, J. L. "The Hiddenness Argument Revisited (II)." *Religious Studies* 41 (2005): 287–303.

Replies to arguments by Swinburne 2004, McKim 2001, and Murray 2002 for the conclusion that God hides in order to safeguard significant human freedom. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Existence of God*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

If there were no reasonable nonbelief, the important good of significant moral freedom would be lost, since our awareness of God's existence would be morally coercive. This is the second edition of a book first published in 1979. See pp. 267–272.

Trakakis, Nick. "The Problem of Divine Hiddenness." In *The God beyond Belief: In Defence of William Rowe's Evidential Argument from Evil*. By Nick Trakakis, 189–225. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2007.

Criticizes Swinburne's 2004 argument and McKim's 2001 argument for the conclusion that God hides in order to preserve significant moral freedom.

God Hides So that Humans Can Come to Knowledge of God on Their Own

Several authors argue that there are important goods involved in human intellectual inquiry concerning God's existence, and that these would be foregone or seriously undermined if God were to make his existence obvious to all creatures at all times. This idea is first developed in Swinburne 2004 (which was first published in 1979), and is extended in Swinburne 1998. These goods include individual and cooperative intellectual inquiry concerning God's existence and nature, and there being morally significant choices for theists to make about whether or not to participate in this inquiry. Garcia 2002 adds that it is good for human beings to place trust in others concerning God's existence and nature, and that it is good that there be humans whose testimony brings others to knowledge of God. Lehe 2004 notes that the Church has benefitted from divine hiddenness, by being forced to clarify and defend the faith. Schellenberg 2005 and Schellenberg 2007 contain replies to Swinburne that invoke the "accommodation strategy": the goods of individual and cooperative investigation into God's nature and plans are not entirely precluded by God's ensuring that everyone believe that God exists. Dumsday 2010 responds to Schellenberg's criticisms of Swinburne.

Dumsday, Travis. "Divine Hiddenness and the Responsibility Argument: Assessing Schellenberg's Argument against Theism." *Philosophia Christi* 12 (2010): 357–371.

Criticizes the response in Schellenberg 2007 to the objections in Swinburne 1998 objections to Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews). Dumsday argues that God permits some temporary nonbelief in order to make possible the great good of cooperating in friendship with God in order to bring people to a knowledge of God's existence and nature.

Garcia, Laura L. "St. John of the Cross and the Necessity of Divine Hiddenness." In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, 83–97. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Suggests that God might hide in order to make possible the great goods of (a) there being people who come to knowledge of God by placing trust in other humans, or (b) there being humans whose testimony brings others to knowledge of God.

Lehe, Robert T. "A Response to the Argument from the Reasonableness of Nonbelief." *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (2004): 159–174.

One justification for divine hiddenness concerns the Church, which has benefitted from hiddenness by having to clarify and defend the faith. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. "The Hiddenness Argument Revisited (II)." *Religious Studies* 41 (2005): 287–303.

Criticizes the arguments found in Swinburne 1998 and Garcia 2002. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. *The Wisdom To Doubt: A Justification of Religious Skepticism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Criticizes Swinburne's 1998 argument for the claim that if there were no reasonable nonbelief, two important goods would be lost: (1) the good of an individual's coming to learn on his or her own that God exists; and (2) the good of working cooperatively with others to find out whether God exists. See pp. 211–213.

Swinburne, Richard. *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

If there were no reasonable nonbelief, two important goods would be lost: (1) the good of an individual's coming to learn on his or her own that God exists; and (2) the good of working cooperatively with others to find out whether God exists. See pp. 199–222 and 256–257.

Swinburne, Richard. *The Existence of God*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 267–272.

The existence of reasonable nonbelievers presents the theist with the awesome choice of whether or not to help those individuals come to believe that God exists. Some nonbelief may indeed be due to morally culpable failures on the part of believers to engage in this project. This is the second edition of a book first published in 1979.

God Hides for the Sake of a Later, Better Relationship

Schellenberg's argument from nonbelief to atheism claims that God will ensure that there is no reasonable, inculpable, or nonresistant nonbelief among those who have the requisite cognitive powers. An important response involves the claim that, given divine omniscience, God might know certain facts about certain people that would justify him in not making his existence known to those individuals at certain times. The basic idea is that God might know that some people are not ready—for one reason or another—for an appropriate relationship with God. The first and most detailed presentation of this claim is Howard-Snyder 1996, to which Schellenberg 1996 responds. Variants of this claim are also found in McKim 2001, Garcia 2002, and Lehe 2004. Schellenberg responds to these authors in Schellenberg 2005a and Schellenberg 2005b. Dumsday 2012 offers a new variant of this objection.

Dumsday, Travis. "Divine Hiddenness and Creaturely Resentment." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 72 (2012): 41–51.

Defends a partial account of divine hiddenness: perhaps God hides from some individuals at some times because God knows that they would likely feel jealous and resentful of God if he were to make his existence more apparent. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Garcia, Laura L. "St. John of the Cross and the Necessity of Divine Hiddenness." In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, 83–97. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Suggests that there would be drawbacks to a faith in God that is made possible by God ensuring that the subject believes that God exists at all times. Drawing on the thought of St. John of the Cross, Garcia suggests that the following may be necessary to become united with God: a *dark night of the senses*, a *dark night of the soul*, and the *passive purification of the soul by God's actions within it*.

Howard-Snyder, Daniel. "The Argument from Divine Hiddenness." *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 26 (1996): 433–453.

Nonbelievers who come to believe that God exists may be disposed to (a) reject a relationship with God; (b) be indifferent to a relationship with God; or (c) reciprocate God's offer of a relationship. Howard-Snyder argues that in all three cases, God might have reason to hide at least for some period of time. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Lehe, Robert. "A Response to the Argument from the Reasonableness of Nonbelief." *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (2004): 159–174.

A suitor may reasonably hide until the beloved is ready for a relationship. Similarly, God may hide until we are sufficiently mature in morality and spirituality so as to be capable of a genuine relationship with God. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

McKim, Robert. *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Offers several reasons for thinking that God might be justified in hiding from human subjects at times when they are not yet ready for a relationship with God. See pp. 100–103.

Schellenberg, J. L. “Response to Howard-Snyder.” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 26 (1996): 455–462.

A detailed reply to Howard-Snyder 1996. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. “The Hiddenness Argument Revisited (I).” *Religious Studies* 41 (2005a): 201–215.

Criticizes the suggestions made in Howard-Snyder 1996, McKim 2001, Garcia 2002, and Lehe 2004 to the effect that God would be justified in hiding from a subject if he knew that the subject would react poorly to knowledge of his existence. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Schellenberg, J. L. “On Reasonable Nonbelief and Perfect Love: Replies to Henry and Lehe.” *Faith and Philosophy* 22 (2005b): 330–342.

Criticizes Lehe 2004 in two ways. First, surely there are actual theists who take themselves to be in a genuine relationship with God, even though they are morally and spiritually immature. Second, the goods that Lehe posits are made possible by God’s refraining from making his existence known can be equally obtained within the context of a relationship. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

The Appeal to Unknown Justifications for Divine Hiddenness

An important response to arguments from evil to atheism involves the claim that God might have justifications for permitting evil that are unknown to us, and perhaps even unknowable. This position has come to be called *skeptical theism*. Alston 1991 (cited under Divine Hiddenness in the Context of the Problem of Evil) and Bergmann 2009 are important presentations of this view, and for a clear survey of recent arguments for and against this view, see McBrayer 2010 and Dougherty 2011 (also cited under Divine Hiddenness in the Context of the Problem of Evil). This move has also been deployed against Schellenberg’s argument from divine hiddenness to atheism. It is mentioned fairly briefly in Howard-Snyder 2006 and Murray and Taylor 2012. McKim 2001 develops this view further, and Bergmann 2009 contains an important response to the common objection that holds that skeptical theism is an untenable position, since it ineluctably ramifies into forms of skepticism that the theist should reject. Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews) anticipates the appeal to unknown or unknowable justifications for divine hiddenness, and argues that it is very unlikely that there would be such goods. Schellenberg 2005 directly criticizes McKim 2001, claiming that his argument is begging the question. McBrayer and Swenson 2012 defends the skeptical theism response to the argument from hiddenness against several objections.

Bergmann, Michael. “Skeptical Theism and the Problem of Evil.” In *The Oxford Handbook to Philosophical Theology*. Edited by Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, 374–399. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Contains a clear account of “skeptical theism,” the view that holds that God’s reasons for permitting evil or nonbelief may well be beyond our ken. Argues that this view defeats the argument in Schellenberg 1993 from reasonable nonbelief. Defends skeptical theism against the charge that it leads to other forms of skepticism that the theist should reject.

Howard-Snyder, Daniel. “Hiddenness of God.” In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2d. ed. Vol. 4. Edited by Donald Borchert, 352–357. Detroit: Macmillan, 2005.

Contains a brief defense of the appeal to unknown justifications for divine hiddenness.

McBrayer, Justin P. "Skeptical Theism." *Philosophy Compass* 5.7 (2010): 611–623.

Contains a very clear and well-organized survey of the main arguments for and against skeptical theism, along with many useful citations. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

McBrayer, Justin P., and Philip Swenson. "Scepticism about the Argument from Divine Hiddenness." *Religious Studies* 48 (2012): 129–150.

Criticizes five responses to the argument from divine hiddenness, and then defends the claim that we should withhold judgment about whether or not God would create a world featuring reasonable nonbelief. Defends this strategy against several objections, including the claim that this skepticism leads to other forms of the skepticism that the theist should resist, and the claim that this skepticism conflicts with commonsense epistemology. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

McKim, Robert. *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Defends the appeal to the possibility of "unknown goods of mystery" in responding to the argument from hiddenness. See pp. 87–91.

Murray, Michael J., and David E. Taylor. "Hiddenness." In *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. 2d ed. Edited by Chad Meister and Paul Copan, 368–377. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Defends the appeal to unknown justifications against criticisms found in Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews) and Schellenberg 2005.

Schellenberg, John. *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Argues that if divine hiddenness occurs for the sake of one or more greater goods, these must be greater goods for human beings, and that as a result, it is very unlikely that they would be impossible for us to grasp. Also argues that any goods that could be secured through divine hiddenness could also be secured within the context of a relationship with God. (Paperback version, with a new preface, published in 2006.)

Schellenberg, J. L. "The Hiddenness Argument Revisited (II)." *Religious Studies* 41 (2005): 287–303.

Argues that the appeal to unknown justifications for divine hiddenness, as developed by McKim 2001, is begging the question. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

PAUL MOSER'S THEISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY

One of Schellenberg's most prolific interlocutors is Paul Moser, and so his responses to Schellenberg's argument warrant their own subsection in this survey of responses, even though Moser's thought involves themes also mentioned in other subsections. Moser offers what he calls the "Divine Purposes Reply," which includes several interrelated suggestions for why God might not make his existence known to all people at all times. Moser stresses that God's goal is not merely that all humans have *propositional* knowledge that God exists, but instead that all humans come to *filial* knowledge of God in a relationship of obedience and trust. Given this claim, Moser urges that the demand for the former knowledge alone can amount to what he calls *cognitive idolatry*. God accordingly might hide in order, for example, (a) to teach humans to value personal relationship with God; (b) to strengthen their trust in God; (c) to remove human complacency; (d) to shatter their prideful self-reliance; (e) to issue a moral challenge; and (f) to prevent them from profaning what is holy and sacred. These ideas are first developed in Moser 2000 and Moser 2002, and culminate in thorough treatment in Moser 2008. Moser 2001a offers a brief account of the author's views, to which Davis 2001 and DeWeese 2001 reply, followed by Moser's own response in Moser 2001b. Apart from book reviews, Coffman and Cervantez 2011 is the first

published response to Moser 2008, and contains a careful analysis and several trenchant criticisms of Moser's arguments.

Coffman, E. J., and Jeff Cervantez. "Hiddenness, Evidence, and Idolatry." In *Evidence and Religious Belief*. Edited by Kelly James Clark and Raymond VanArragon, 95–113. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Identifies and criticizes four interrelated objections in Moser 2008 to the divine hiddenness argument: (a) the *spirit of God argument*; (b) the *transformative gift argument*; (c) the *purposively available evidence argument*; and (d) the *cognitive idolatry argument*.

Davis, Stephen T. "A Reply to Paul K. Moser's 'Divine Hiding.'" *Philosophia Christi* 3 (2001): 109–111.

Criticizes Moser 2001a. While Moser's argument is a flawless exercise in *theological phenomenology*, it fails to be an adequate response to the argument from divine hiddenness. Moser must, implausibly, deny that there can be sincere nonbelievers who do not suffer from cognitive idolatry.

DeWeese, Garrett. "Toward a Robust Natural Theology: A Reply to Paul K. Moser's 'Divine Hiding.'" *Philosophia Christi* 3 (2001): 113–117.

Sketches an account of a *robust natural theology*, which would offer far greater evidence for God's existence than is currently to be found, including affective, aesthetic, imaginational, and propositional forms of evidence. Such a natural theology, however, would not guarantee a proper response to God on the part of human beings.

Moser, Paul K. *Why Isn't God More Obvious? Finding the God Who Hides and Seeks*. Norcross, GA: Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2000.

The first statement of many claims developed in Moser's subsequent writing on hiddenness. These include the following: God sometimes hides for his own inscrutable purposes; God may hide to highlight the value of God's presence, or as an appropriate response to human deficiency, such as *cognitive idolatry*; and God does not wish for us to have mere propositional knowledge of God, but rather *filial knowledge*, which involves being properly obedient to God.

Moser, Paul K. "Divine Hiding." *Philosophia Christi* 3 (2001a): 91–107.

Criticizes the claim that God hides in order to safeguard human freedom, and the claim that God hides in order to discourage a human response to God based on improper motives. Develops many of the themes found in Moser 2000, particularly the emphasis on *cognitive idolatry* and *filial knowledge*.

Moser, Paul. "A God Who Hides and Seeks: A Response to Davis and DeWeese." *Philosophia Christi* 3 (2001b): 119–125.

Davis and DeWeese seem to agree that natural theology should aim to convincing nonbelievers of theism, but the tradition of natural theology includes many poor arguments, and in fact fails to convince many nonbelievers. God has persuasive resources that are unknown and unavailable to natural theology. Belief that God exists cannot entirely be supplied by the arguments of natural theology, but instead by the gracious gift of God.

Moser, Paul K. "Cognitive Idolatry and Divine Hiding." In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, 120–148. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Defends the Divine Purposes Reply to the argument from hiddenness, which holds that God can have many purposes in hiding, including (a) to teach humans to value personal relationship with God; (b) to strengthen their trust in God; (c) to remove human complacency; (d) to shatter their prideful self-reliance; (e) to issue a moral challenge; and (f) to prevent them from profaning what is

holy and sacred.

Moser, Paul K. *The Elusive God: Reorienting Religious Epistemology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

A book-length defense of the themes developed in Moser's earlier writings (Moser 2000, Moser 2001a, Moser 2001b, and Moser 2002). This is a very important work that has been widely reviewed. It is likely that many authors will engage with it in print in the coming years.

OTHER RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEM OF DIVINE HIDDENNESS

Several other independent lines of response have been offered to Schellenberg's argument from divine hiddenness to atheism. Some authors have alleged that Schellenberg's demand that God make his existence known to human beings is impossible for God to satisfy. Ferreira 2002 claims that God cannot do this since he is *wholly other*, and Oakes 2008 suggests that God should not do this, since human beings could not survive gaining this knowledge. (Schellenberg 2005 rejects the objection in Ferreira 2002 as irrelevant to the argument in that it targets a *personal* God, not a God who is *wholly other*.) Jordan 2012 urges that Schellenberg 1993 conceptual analysis of divine love—cited under General Overviews—is mistaken, since it is impossible for God to love every human being equally. Thune 2006 defends the logical possibility that all of those who lack belief in God's existence are such that they would have rejected a relationship with God even if it were offered. McBrayer 2006 replies to Thune 2006. Rea 2009 argues that divine silence may simply be God's preferred mode of expressing his supreme divine personality. Most recently, Dumsday 2012 has argued that God hides out of *mercy*. Dumsday argues that moral wrongdoing is *worse* when it occurs in the context of belief in God, and that since God knows that humans are very likely to behave immorally whether or not they believe that God exists, God may hide in order to mercifully limit our moral culpability.

Dumsday, Travis. "Divine Hiddenness as Divine Mercy." *Religious Studies* 48 (2012): 183–198.

If God were not hidden, it is very likely that human beings would still act immorally. But such behaviour would be morally worse than it would be if God were hidden. One reason God may hide, therefore, is out of mercy: to limit our moral culpability for wrongdoing. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Ferreira, M. Jamie. "A Kierkegaardian View of Divine Hiddenness." In *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*. Edited by Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser, 164–180. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Following Kierkegaard's *Johannes Climacus*, Ferreira argues that reasonable nonbelief is an ineluctable consequence of God's absolute otherness.

Jordan, Jeff. "The Topography of Divine Love." *Faith and Philosophy* 29 (2012): 53–69.

Denies, contra Schellenberg 1993 (cited under General Overviews), that *loving every human equally* would make God great on the grounds that it is impossible for God to do this. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

McBrayer, J. P. "On 'A Molinist-Style Response to Schellenberg' by Michael Thune." *Southwest Philosophy Review* 22 (2006): 71–76.

Responds to Thune 2006. Available online by subscription.

Oakes, Robert. "Life, Death, and the Hiddenness of God." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 64 (2008): 155–160.

It is plausible to suppose that God hides in order to ensure our very survival, since there is no good reason to think that creatures like

ourselves could survive God's making his existence unmistakably evident to us. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Rea, Michael C. "Narrative, Liturgy, and the Hiddenness of God." In *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honour of Eleonore Stump*. Edited by Kevin Timpe, 76–96. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Suggests that divine silence may simply be the appropriate expression of the perfectly good and beautiful divine personality. Argues that God has provided mediated experiences of God's character through participation in liturgy.

Schellenberg, J. L. "The Hiddenness Argument Revisited (I)." *Religious Studies* 41 (2005): 201–215.

Argues that Ferreira's 2002 claim that God is wholly other, and therefore unknowable, is irrelevant to the hiddenness argument, since that argument targets the *personal* God of theism, who is deemed to be knowable. Available online for purchase or by subscription.

Thune, Michael. "A Molinist-Style Response to Schellenberg." *Southwest Philosophy Review* 22 (2006): 33–41.

Defends the logical possibility that all of those who lack belief in God's existence are such that they would have rejected a relationship with God even if it were offered. Available online by subscription.

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BACK TO TOP