



God's Nature in Mary Astell (1666–1731)

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Mary Astell, in addition to writing on the education of women and the hazards and dangers of marriage, also wrote letters and short essays that touched on metaphysical subjects, developed almost entirely from a Christian point of view, and in line with Anglican beliefs at the time. She thus saw God as portrayed in Church belief, an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Creator who had manifested Himself in our lives with his divine Son. The relationship of our belief to the established Church was also an important topic for Astell, and given traditional notion of the Christian triune God, she saw British devotion to Church and Crown as commingled. Unlike some other seventeenth-century women philosophers such as Anne Conway, Astell did not theorize in an independent fashion about the nature of the deity or the deity's attributes, preferring to rely largely on traditional authority. As Astell remarks, education informs us of the "Instability of all earthly Things."

Primary Sources:

Astell, Mary 1986. Some Reflections Upon Marriage, in Hill, Bridget (ed.): *Mary Astell: The First English Feminist*. Aldershot: Gower Publications.

Secondary Sources:

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