



## *Existence of God, Arguments for / Revelation* in Mary Astell (1666–1731)

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Mary Astell held a number of positions with respect to religious and ontological issues that were more consonant with the Cambridge Platonists of her day than with the empiricists. Despite her at least semi-empirical work on the status of women as a whole, she held that much with respect to metaphysics was known through faith and divine revelation, rather than through reasoning and the senses along the lines of the Lockians. Hence, like most High Church Anglicans, she felt that the existence of God was something we could intuit based on our sense of communion with something greater. Likewise, she held that revelation would proceed through our communion with spirit—in this she was perhaps more similar, for example, to someone like Anne Conway than is immediately obvious. Her Tory beliefs on these and other subjects put her at odds with individuals in her own time, and also make her nascent feminist work more difficult to access and understand than we might initially be tempted to think.

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