Editorial preface

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The issues that interest philosophers of religion do not have expiration dates. Against the progressivism that characterizes science, philosophy in general, and certainly good philosophy of religion, refuses to think of its predecessors as having nothing further to teach us. While some philosophical problems of the past are no longer of interest, the fact remains that the ancients, the medievalists, and the recent moderns continue to provide philosophy with a wealth of concepts and perspectives that can shed light on contemporary thought.

In this issue we reach back to Kant and Hegel and proceed right on up to arguments for and against God's existence that are based on contemporary scientific findings that show that the emergence of life necessarily required a set of finely tuned conditions.

In our first article, Christopher Insole, the author of *Kant and the Creation of Freedom: A theological Problem* (Oxford, 2013) responds to some of the objections that Terry Godlove's review of this book has raised. In recounting the argument of his book, Insole brings to our attention an important issue for philosophy of religion, namely, the relationship between divine and human freedom. Kant's denial of what Insole calls the concurrence theory of human and divine actions reminds us again of how returning to the texts of our philosophical predecessors can continually open new doors to contemporary philosophical reflection. This return to the texts of our predecessors (like Kant) in order to allow them to speak for themselves can surprise and bewilder us and often dislodge familiar and widely accepted interpretations of them.

Next, Paolo Diego Bubbio argues that attention to Hegel's analysis of the Christian concept of the Trinity can shed light on Hegel's (and by implication our) conception of the self, or better, the "I" that each of us is. Hegel wants to avoid subjective accounts

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of the self as well as accounts found in naïve realism. The subjective account makes the “I” into nothing but a thinking (Cartesian) thing. This in turn leads to theological subjectivism according to which God is a mere product of the human mind. But naïve realism in traditional theology is no better since it turns God into a super natural object. The way to avoid either theological pole here is to think about God in the same way Hegel thinks of the trinity, namely, as essentially a unified relational community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And by analogy, the “I” can avoid subjective or objective reduction if it is conceived in a similar way, that is, as a kind of plurality of individual selves. This analogy allows us to see that spirit (the self, God) is constituted in a unified relational concrete community of mutually recognizing individual subjects.

In the next article we enter the 20th century revisiting R.G. Collingwood, the British philosopher of history that had some important things to say that are of interest to philosophers of religion. Dale Jacquette focuses on his attempt to solve a dilemma he wrestled with, namely, the tension that is generated by the fact that God’s compassionate forgiveness of sinners might be read as God’s failure to be tough enough on sin: forgiveness seems to imply either that God is too lax and hence not just, or is too just and hence not compassionate. Collingwood tries to absolve God of being too lax or too tough on sinners by noting that the atonement of Christ (his suffering and crucifixion) shows that God was willing to pay a heavy price in order to be reconciled to sinners, to be again at one with them (at-one-ment). This is hardly a sign that God was soft on sin, indeed the opposite. At the same time, the self-sacrifice involved in Christ’s suffering and death shows the depth of God’s compassion for sinners, his willingness to forgive. Jacquette applauds Collingwood for raising the right questions, but claims that his effort to resolve the dilemma between what I might call God’s mercy and justice would be strengthened if he had paid closer attention to the fact that it was sin that initiated the need for atonement.

The last three articles in this issue bring us up to contemporary responses to perennial problems in the philosophy of religion: diversity, hiddenness and design.

Max Baker-Hyatt takes on the familiar argument according to which religious beliefs are condemned as unreliable because they are formed within and informed by contingent cultural settings. But does it undermine the rationality of religious beliefs to note that those who hold them do so only because they happen to have been raised in a certain setting rather than some other? Baker-Hyatt argues that if so, then the shadow cast by this argument against religious beliefs also threatens a much wider array of beliefs with the specter of skepticism.

Travis Dumsday challenges John Schellenberg’s contention that God, if indeed He/She wants to establish a fellowship with human beings, should not have remained so hidden from us. This is an especially urgent question given that that such fellowship with God is believed to produce the highest high imaginable. But if this is what fellowship with God involves, and it is readily available, or as we might say, so much out in the open and there for the taking, human beings might be tempted to get high on God rather than engage in a the difficult struggle to establish a relation of genuine fellowship. Who could resist? So even though fellowship with God is the highest (spiritual) pleasure, God remains hidden in order to make sure that those who find him/her do so out of a genuine motivation for fellowship (its pleasures included) rather than from a self-indulgent wish to obtain an immediate and easy high. Even

though God's strategy of remaining hidden risks resistance to the search for fellowship, God must have considered it a risk well worth the taking.

The final essay considers the very hot topic of fine-tuning—call this our latest version of an argument from design. In this article Mark Saward contends that a prominent version of the fine-tuning argument presented by Robin Collins is flawed. On the way, Saward gives us a technical, but very easy-to-follow presentation of Collins' argument. Saward contends that a serious flaw in Collins' argument is revealed when we see that a key assumption about the background knowledge of an alien observer (who is asked to judge the credence of the claim that a "Life Permitting Universe" exists) is entirely too narrow and localized. That assumption is that such an alien has cognitive faculties structurally like our own. There might be aliens that are more alien than Collins has imagined.