

Editorial preface

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I continue the practice of organizing articles in each issue, to the extent that this is possible, along thematic lines. I say I do this “to the extent that it is possible” to let you know that I do not solicit articles for this purpose. I simply allow our list of accepted articles to suggest themes. Of course this will not always work out. It so happens however that our current list of accepted submissions includes several articles on the work of Thomas Aquinas. This issue collates them.

I will make my introductory preface a bit shorter than usual to make way for a slight detour before we get to the articles themselves. As you probably know, the philosophy of religion has recently lost one of its giants, John Hick. Since, he was such a large part of the Society for Philosophy of Religion, the sponsor of this journal, it is appropriate that we acknowledge his contributions. Immediately following this preface you will find a tribute to Hick offered by our former editor Gene Long. I find it especially fitting to include this tribute in an issue devoted to the work of Aquinas since both of these philosophers have marked the field of the philosophy of religion with exemplary distinction.

The issues that are of interest to philosophers of religion are perennial. Even though our personal interests regarding such issues might vary, we are fairly settled on some basics, like Kant’s big three, God, freedom, and immortality. And remarkably enough, our attempts to gain understanding of these matters does not always proceed forward in the way that we imagine that science does. We are convinced that the treasures of insight in the ancients, and the scholastics, and in particular Thomas, continue to reward our investigation. We are convinced that we can often go forward by going back—call this our eternal return to the great thinkers to be reminded of what they have told us, and to listen for new insights we have missed. This also applies to the

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great thinkers in our modern era: we are rewarded by our continued return to their work. I am sure this will be true of the work of our own John Hick.

In this issue, our articles, in their own updated way, return to Aquinas to draw new insights regarding God, freedom and immortality. Patrick Toner addresses the issue of immortality, Leigh Vicens deals with freedom and Jonathan Hill and Anders John take on logical and metaphysical issues regarding the nature of the divine reality.

Best wishes to you all.