Editorial preface

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The first article is by Aaron Rizzieri, who argues that the problem of divine hiddenness that John Schellenberg has formulated, is worse for theists than it may first appear. He discusses three arguments against theism grounded in the problem of divine hiddenness. The first concerns the afterlife. God's refusal to reveal himself more fully will lead to greater damnation of non-believers who might have believed had God been more openly present in the world. Secondly, theists often argue that the belief that God exists is necessary if morality is to be properly grounded and widely adopted. However, because God's failure to make himself known undermines this core belief in his existence, God's hiddenness undermines morality itself. The third argument is that God's silence opens the door to charismatic demagogues who claim to fill the divine silence by speaking in God's name, even when what is spoken is evil.

Next, Casey Spinks does not try to settle the question of the nature of the absolute paradox, that is, the unsettling claim of Christianity, to wit, that God walked among us in Christ. Whether this paradox is simply a mystery beyond reasons or a blatant logical contradiction or simply a rhetorical strategy, we cannot avoid facing the ontological offense of the incarnation. This marks a contrast to Rowan Williams who interprets Kierkegaard as relaxing the competitive tension between the elements of the paradox of the God-man. Rather, Spinks argues that Kierkegaard presents a picture of the tension between God and the human as standing in a deep and constant passionate ontological competition that resists any Hegelian synthesis. Kierkegaard's non-Hegelian synthesis does not relax the offense, but heightens it, revealing the ontological structure of this world as fundamentally different from every objective, scientific, speculative, or otherwise exclusively immanent reflection. Spinks concludes: "How do we come to know the truth? —which, at its heart, is really the question of the truth of being, why is there anything and not rather nothing? The answer Climacus gives is the encounter with the absolute paradox of Christ, the God-made-man".

In the next article, Dean Da Vee, rejects the proposal (by Jeffery Brower) that the doctrine of divine simplicity can be plausibly defended by appealing to

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contemporary truthmaker theories. Brower argues that the essential intrinsic predications about any object are made true by that object alone, not by its having essential properties. Da Vee claims that this view is not credible since it ignores the role that the general principle of causal explanation plays in determining true predications of an object. These explanations account for how the essential properties of objects in general come to be and determine the truth of the essential predications of these objects. He considers the idea that God is an exception to this causal principle. According to the DDS, God's essential properties did not come into being but are eternal and identical to God and hence have no causal explanation. According to Da Vee, however, this metaphysical lack of a causal explanation of God's true essential intrinsic properties fails to show that essential intrinsic divine predications can be made true by God alone. For Da Vee, essential properties of God, not just God alone necessarily figure as the truthmakers of essential divine predications. Accordingly, Da Vee concludes that Brower's truthmaker-based defense of divine simplicity should be rejected, along with the truthmaker theory it assumes.

The final essay in this issue is co-authored by Jack Warden and David Efird. They support Pascal's proposal that the non-believer who is unsettled about belief in God but would like to believe can make progress by joining a religious community. In taking holy water and communion, the seeker is able to cultivate religious belief in herself even though she was not able to do so prior to this communal participation. The authors consider the epistemic status of the seeker's newly cultivated beliefs and explore the question of whether such beliefs can be epistemically rational. They do not deny that such beliefs are sometimes irrational but reject the stronger claim that they are always irrational.

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