



## Editorial

In one of his collected essays<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas returns to the critical examination of the philosophy of ‘the same’ and discusses the ways in which the alterity of the other becomes a theme or an object in this approach in philosophy. ‘This wounding stone, this upward plunging pine, this roaring lion ...’ he writes, ‘is grasped and conceived’ and in that movement becomes a concept. Lévinas goes on, however, to show the conditions under which the other may ‘put into question’ this process or movement and, in successive pages, Lévinas underscores the relative importance of this ‘putting into question’.

The papers here contained could be arranged according to several different headings. Several articles in this issue, for example, reflect on the state and/or relations of power. In *Church and State in Scotland: The Articles Declaratory*, Marjory McLean asks searching questions of the discussion surrounding Article III of the Declaratory Articles of the Church of Scotland. In *Liberation, Not Independence*, Eric Stoddart has produced a profound reflection on the formal notion of independence, offering new lines of thought which lay emphasis on liberation. In *Prayer: When the ‘Whole Thing’ Becomes ‘the Whole Blessed Thing’*, James Gordon introduces us to the fascinating relation which obtains between George MacLeod’s prayers and his political and cultural thinking. Andrew Parker recasts a whole range of questions concerning the Bible and the marginalised in *Thirteen Findings on the Bible* and while we may not agree, as he says, with all of his conclusions, they are an invitation to thought, dialogue, and debate.

More broadly, the following papers introduce a range of themes. In *There Are Lies, Damned Lies, and Romanticism*, Douglas Templeton suggests, using a crafted literary style in which content and form are intimately related, that we re-think the concept of Romanticism. In *The Reality of Addressing God in Prayer*, W. Graham Monteith explores

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers* (trans. A. Lingis; Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 2006), 50.

prayer as something done – how and why prayer might be properly classed as a speech act. John McPake, in *The Joint Declaration on Justification: A Reformed Perspective*, offers a concise and very valuable guide to the Joint Declaration and places Reformed doctrine in relation to it. In *The Beuk o Amos* Duncan Sneddon offers a new translation of Amos which displays the characteristic strength of fluent Scots speech.

All of these papers, however, have this in common. They *put into question* the matters with which they engage, invite us to re-assess or even re-formulate our own habitual response of mind. Our accustomed routines of opinion and perspective are, in these papers, put into question by the alterity of the thought (or thinker) we encounter.

### **Farewell and Welcome**

Since taking over the task in 2002, Dr Peter McEnhill has continued to administer and organize the reviews section of *Theology in Scotland*. Back in 2002, when appointed, Peter was on the staff of Westminster College, Cambridge. Now minister at Kilmacolm Old Kirk and after seven years as reviews editor Peter, understandably, feels it is time to relinquish this role. Our warmest thanks to Peter for all the work he has done in making the reviews section such a valuable resource for readers. At the same time we welcome as our new reviews editor Rev Frances Henderson from New College, University of Edinburgh. We are grateful to Frances for agreeing to take on this task and hope that she will enjoy her involvement with the journal.

*Ian Maxwell*