



## Editorial

John Passmore's short book *Hume's Intentions*<sup>1</sup> was first published in 1952 with successive editions appearing over the next thirty years. In the course of a general enquiry, Passmore set out the main themes of David Hume's philosophy, considering Hume, for example, as a proponent of experimental reasoning in the moral sciences, as methodologist, positivist, or sceptic. While Passmore's own intention was to engage in a critical examination of the inconsistencies of Hume's thought, at the same time he drew attention to Hume as 'a philosopher who opens up new lines of thought'<sup>2</sup> and pointed to the diversity of Hume's philosophical achievement. Whatever the relative merits or continuing relevance of Passmore's argument, the papers in this issue of *Theology in Scotland* demonstrate the diversity of Hume's philosophical explorations, the nature of Thomas Reid's philosophical response and the wider implications for Christian apologetics. Each of the papers in this issue was given as a lecture at a conference on 'Athens and Jerusalem' held by the Scottish Church Theology Society at Crieff Hydro in January 2012.

Lord Stewart Sutherland provides a lucid introduction to factors in the cultural legacy which Hume and Reid inherited. These factors included Calvinism and the characteristic Scottish practice of reasoning from first principles. Lord Sutherland then goes on to unfold the continuing relevance of Hume's ideas to contemporary debate concerning the family, education and civil society.

In his article, Professor Alexander Broadie introduces us to Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, sets Hume in his context, and explains how subtle Hume's arguments actually are. Professor Broadie shows us how Hume's genius is shown in the subtle but wider questions he raises. His conclusion is that in the *Dialogues* Hume is operating in sceptical mode, a further illustration of the diversity of his philosophical approach.

Professor Joe Houston unfolds the subtlety of some of the fundamental aspects of Thomas Reid's response to Hume's scepticism and religious agnosticism. He begins by discussing Hume's awareness of the tension between scepticism and daily life and outlines Hume's

foundationalist notions of rational belief as generated by introspection and intuition. In addition, he examines the problem Hume faced concerning the relation of the two modes of belief (introspection and intuition) to the independently existing physical world, past events and causation. Reid's counter-argument, however, was that as humans we are constituted with belief-forming dispositions, which we should accept as given. There are, Reid insists, no non-circular justifications available for each of the modes of belief-formation, only the principles of common sense. Professor Houston then relates Reid's thought to the work of Alston, Wolterstorff and Plantinga and, more broadly, to elements in the Judaeo-Christian tradition concerning our epistemic situation.

In his paper, lastly, Donald Bruce introduces us to the subject of apologetics. He does so by giving an account of his own involvement in apologetics, offering us an understanding of the kind of background typical of a Christian apologist in the twenty-first century. He introduces us to the work of Os Guinness, raises some of the commonly posed issues relating to the frontier between faith and science and concludes, appropriately, with Christ and His gospel.

*Ian Maxwell*  
*Editor*

<sup>1</sup> John Passmore, *Hume's Intentions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952; subsequent editions London: Duckworth, 1968 and 1980).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.