

Special Issue: Critical Essays on J. L. Schellenberg's Philosophy of Religion

Introduction

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In 1993, Cornell University Press published J. L. Schellenberg's *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason* in its series 'Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion', edited by the late William P. Alston. *Divine Hiddenness* set the agenda for the next two decades on the so-called 'problem of divine hiddenness', or 'the problem of inculpable non-belief' as it is called by some, and it continues to do so today, with hundreds of pages published in the journals and elsewhere in response to it. However, too few philosophers and theologians realize that Schellenberg's case for atheism contained in *Divine Hiddenness* and supplemented elsewhere is only the beginning of a fresh, comprehensive philosophy of religion – indeed, a new *religion* – found in his trilogy of the last decade: *Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Religion* (Cornell, 2005), *The Wisdom to Doubt: A Justification of Religious Skepticism* (Cornell, 2007), and *The Will to Imagine: A Justification of Skeptical Religion* (Cornell, 2009). The aim of this special issue is to stimulate conversation about both the big picture on offer in these books and their smaller themes and arguments as well.

Personally, I have found careful study of the trilogy to be at least as rewarding as study of nearly anything else in philosophy or theology. That's not to say I agree with its conclusions, big or small. Rather, I have found that wrestling with its themes and arguments has been a great source of intellectual stimulation and learning. My hope is that the readers of *Religious Studies* will be inspired by these critical essays, and Schellenberg's replies, to look more deeply into the philosophy and religion he has to offer. I also hope to learn from the conversation as it unfolds in the years to come.

31 October 2012