

Editorial: Faith, Words and Deeds

We commence this issue and this new volume with papers on two practical issues. First Jeffery Gates (USA), provides justification for personal self-care within a Christian perspective while encouraging love for God and others, and discouraging self-indulgence. He argues that we should practise a type of self-care that imitates God's care for himself and people, and that results in honour to God and in benefits to ourselves and others.

We then turn to a short paper by Thomas K. Johnson (Czech Republic), on how we need to integrate two opposite trends – believing in human dignity by helping those in need, and doing so in such a way as not to treat them simply as objects of charity, which in fact destroys their dignity.

After these two theologically founded discussions we turn to three biblical studies. To start with, Michael Parsons (UK), helps us understand some passages on 'difficult' deaths by examining John Calvin's approach to them. In the cases of the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (NT) and Uzzah and Uriah (OT), we are introduced to the ways the reformer reads the texts to resolve their pastoral and moral problems. Then Mario Phillip (Trinidad), takes us to the difficult pastoral problem of those believers who persist in sin and a church with its leaders who are compliant in such sin. The text is 1 Corinthians 5:1-11, with a focus especially on verse 5, where the offender is to be 'given over to Satan'. We are shown how this instruction relates to the church and the individual, and how

it is aimed at restoration and the ongoing positive witness of the gospel. The final article in this trio by Michael Haller (Switzerland), takes up the important Christian theme of forgiveness, but contrasts it with Islamic teaching; Matthew 6 and Surah 3 are the foci of the study which includes literary analysis, theological reflection and practical outcomes, showing that formal similarities do not necessarily point to substantial similarities on this vital matter.

Our section of book reviews is expanded in this issue with two longer 'review articles', both relating, in different ways, to the early church. Thomas Schirmmacher (Germany), looks at some publications dealing with Constantine the Great, showing the need for accurate and sensitively handled analysis of historical events and personages for understanding modern developments. The second by Frederik Herzberg (Germany), focuses on the continued significance of the early formularies by examining a famous modern day criticism of them. He reviews a book on John Hick (famous for his *The Myth of God Incarnate*), in which the author, David S. Nah (USA), provides a 'powerful, yet irenic defence of two-natures Christology'. Both of these articles reinforce our need for careful understanding of historical developments in order to maintain and enhance our faith today – a faith that is to be nurtured and expressed in word and deed as much now as ever.

Thomas Schirmmacher, General Editor
David Parker, Executive Editor

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*Articles and book reviews reflecting
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