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EDITORIAL

This year's first edition of the Bulletin includes several papers presented at the 2016 SETS conference. The title of the conference was 'A Gospel for Sale? Is God a Commodity?' Market forces have ancient origins, but they develop over time and take on new forms. These papers analyse current trends and observe how the gospel influences attitudes towards possessions.

In the opening conference paper David Reimer draws attention to recent consumer trends and attitudes towards consumerism. The arguments of a contemporary sociologist provide a suitable foil and entry point for sound biblical teaching on a variety of consumer-related themes.

Angus Morrison's paper expounds and applies the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke's Gospel. The man in the parable enjoys a prosperous harvest but before the night is over his plans for a long and enjoyable retirement are brought to nothing. Morrison applies this to the modern day and exposes the cost of being money-centred rather than Christ-centred. Our relationship to God has highest significance.

The Finlayson Memorial Lecture was delivered by Antony Billington. This annual lecture is held during the evening of the conference and is also freely open for the public to attend. He observes methods employed in the marketplace to attract and influence consumers. When we are seduced by them there are regrettable outcomes. Yet the gospel provides a ready antidote. He identifies a number of Christian practices that nurture faith in daily life. These not only help to counter the influences of the age, but also assist us to grow in the Christian faith and in usefulness for Christ.

Randall Gruendyke provides an account of evangelical responses to consumerism in the 19th century. Charles Simeon is of chief interest in his paper, but he also records marvellous accomplishments of Simeon's contemporaries in the Clapham Sect. Here are inspirational examples of how Christians have influenced society for good by exercising faith and faithfully using resources available to them. Near the end of his paper Gruendyke gleans lessons from the Clapham Sect that may be learned and applied in our own time.

Jonathan Gemmell's paper studies the promises offered by consumerism. But satisfaction is only truly found in the gospel. After identifying some of the weaknesses of consumerism he draws from John's Gospel and finds a variety of applications in Christ that meet the deepest and perhaps most felt needs that many experience.

Together these papers identify shortcomings of a materialistic approach to the world. Longings of the heart do not find satisfaction in

material possessions. Much is promised by materialism but not delivered. An emptiness within is exposed, and direction is needed to escape. Each writer provides the direction that is needed to Christ, who alone satisfies and who came that we 'may have life and have it abundantly' (John 10:10).

Supplementing the SETS conference papers is an important contribution by Stephen Holmes to a recent debate that has taken place regarding the Trinitarian relationships. The controversy concerns whether or not the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father. Holmes provides a convincing argument on the matter. I also think there are principles set out in his paper that have wider application for disputes regarding theological terms borne out of many years of theological debate.

I am grateful to my predecessor in the editor's chair, David Reimer, for his oversight and friendship while I was book review editor and more recently also in my transition to general editor. Thanks also to Alison Carter for assisting this edition by proofreading the book reviews.

CONTRIBUTORS IN THIS NUMBER

The first five articles were originally presented as papers at the SETS Annual Conference, 4-5 April, 2016.

Dr Holmes's paper was originally delivered at The Evangelical Theology Society 2016 annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, USA, 16th November, 2016.

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