

Seek Ye First...

"...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

A Quarterly Journal of Biblical Studies

Spring 2002

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 AND "WHATEVER"

J. D. Sweeten

The English language is incredibly dynamic; word meanings change all the time. For instance, the word "whatever" is a common expression today among young people, and is usually dripping with disrespect. In other words, "whatever" means, "I don't think much of ... whatever." However, not everyone concedes to Satan the privilege of defining our terms. A young Bible teacher, who realized that "whatever" usually conveys negativity, used it to edify young Christians by pressing the New King James translation of this term into service. Philippians 4:8 took on new life in the form of a challenge, not just to think about things, but to think about good things. "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8, NKJV).

Too much in today's society invites evil thinking. Our media hoses us with a deluge of impurity, from TV and movies to radio and magazines. Advertising flaunts filth and immodesty, filling our minds with discontentment. Sit-com humor features foul language while dramatic programming whitewashes worldliness and immorality. And, technology has deceived us with the pretence of privacy, affording us anonymity while consuming these mind damaging, soul damning programs in the secrecy of our own home via cable, satellite, and modem. Lewdness we would not dare be associated with in the public forum is now available in our boudoir 24-hours a day, and *nobody knows*.

And therein lies the problem with evil thinking: it's private. Thought is free. There are no social or legal stigmas to misconduct of the mind, and as free moral agents, our only real contemplation cop is self-restraint (a virtue not cultivated nearly enough in this day and age!). However, N. D. Hillis rightly observed, "that which is imagined, afterwards becomes." Even the fictional Walter Mitty, who frequently wandered about the silent halls of thought, often found to his embarrassment that his mind had gone public. One cannot think evilly with impunity.

Your "inner self" is not really all that invisible. Marcus Aurelius, writing from a rowdy military camp, observed, "As

are thy habitual thoughts, so will be the character of thy mind, for the soul is dyed the colour of its thought." What we think about in the secluded recesses of our mind shows up in our conduct and speech. Proverbs 23:7 tells us, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Jesus, while condemning the hypocrisy of a religion for show, stated, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man..." (Matthew 15:18-20). Sin starts with our thoughts.

So, how do we fix a thought problem? First, bring them into captivity! This warfare in the flesh is fought deep behind enemy lines, and as one child quipped, "We have met the enemy, and it is us!" "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ... Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3, 5). Don't treat your mind like a garbage disposal. Allowing every form of filth to pass through it reminds me of an old computer principle: "Garbage in; garbage out." If the reservoir of the mind is continually being filled with garbage, eventually, that is what will surface! Even temptations originate in thoughts. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (James 1:14). In our society, we must fight to keep a clean mind!

Second, God never tells us "thou shalt not" without encouraging us with "thou shalt," so avoiding evil thoughts is only half the battle. We must also fill our minds with whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report.

Our happiness and our salvation depend upon how we think. If we focus on godly thoughts and fight shy of evil thoughts (1 Peter 3:11), our Christian lives will be more productive in service to our King. So, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, in this issue of *Seek Ye First...*, we invite you to think on these things.

500 North Pearl St.
Comanche, TX

Seek Ye First...

Publication Offices

EDITORIAL STAFF :

Michael Light, Business
Bangs Church of Christ
P. O. Box 41
Bangs, TX 76823
(915) 752-6464
E-mail: mclight@bwoodtx.com

Tom Moore, Marketing
North Main Church of Christ
823 North Main Street
Malvern, AR 72104
(501) 332-2273
E-mail: preacher@hsnp.com

J. D. Sweeten, Correspondence
Pearl Street Church of Christ
500 North Pearl Street
Comanche, TX 76442
(915) 356-3411
E-mail: jdsweeten@itexas.net

Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Timothy 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE AND HONEST

Michael Light

Just a few weeks ago I had a good talk with a denominational friend of mine who has fallen into a deadly trap. Millions, in and out of religion have adopted an agnostic approach to life. This view basically says that truth is unknowable. Almost all religious people will adopt this mentality when confronted with a biblical doctrine that they disagree with. These people often say things like, "well we all have our own interpretations," or "I believe..." or "I think..." and the ever popular, "I just know in my heart..." Others make statements like, "There are many ways that lead to heaven," and "We're all going to heaven just taking different roads."

The passage we are highlighting this quarter is Philippians 4:8. Notice the passage, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." We are primarily interested in the concept of truth and honesty in this article.

As was earlier stated there is an obvious existence among most religious people today, a mentality or philosophy that denies that truth can actually be found. This is the reason you find so few people willing to stand up and strongly condemn any action as sinful. Tolerance has become the motto of many. But the Bible still teaches that truth can be, and must be, known if we are going to be saved. Those who love the Bible and Jesus the Christ must once again stand up for what the Bible does indeed teach concerning the doctrine of knowledge. If we cannot actually know the truth, then we cannot with much conviction oppose anything as being morally reprehensible.

Notice a few statements by our Lord on the subject. In John 17:3 he said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Look again at John 7:17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." And of course, John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Each of these passages certainly teaches the fact that truth can be known. In fact John 8:32 ties knowledge to salvation. If you do not learn the truth you can not be saved. Yet we still have people arguing against the scriptures by saying in essence that the Bible is too complex to be comprehended.

There are many other passages that also teach the fact that truth can be known. Here are a few: John 6:69; Luke 1:3,4; 2 Corinthians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; 2 Timothy 1:12; John 4:42; 1 John 2:13-14; 1 John 2:3; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 5:13-20. In fact the short book of First John uses terms for knowledge and knowing the truth twenty-four times. The Bible also implies, in every verse, that we can know the truth. It is obvious that each book contains material that is to be grasped and followed. Without the possibility of acquiring truth from the Bible we would have no reason whatsoever of studying or modeling our lives after it.

Those who act like (or teach that) truth is beyond us or that the Bible is too complicated to be understood, make God to be unjust. Think about it. If God requires us to live according to the Bible, and He does (John 12:48), and yet we cannot really grasp its meanings, then God is not being fair. He would be condemning men for something that was in essence His fault. Friends the truth is that God created us (Genesis 1,2) and gave us our minds. It is also true that God wrote us a book (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is false to assert that God made a mistake with either. Does it not make sense that God was capable of communicating His ideas to His people? Those who try to "play dumb" (make all kinds of excuses as to why they aren't following what the text teaches) will not be held guiltless in the last day (John 14:6). Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 says, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power..."

This passage does not teach that God will accept excuses. In fact, it affirms without qualification that we must know of God and obey the gospel. People may sooth their consciences by refusing to admit the truth about the authoritative nature of the Bible, but the word of God still teaches that we are accountable to God and responsible for choosing to accept or reject His way.

Far too many people excuse themselves by assuming that truth cannot be grasped, therefore their ignorance is alright with the Almighty. This is an illogical and irrational approach to the truth. Why would one even pick up the Bible and begin to read it if they didn't really think they could understand it?

I know that many people will deny that they don't believe that truth can be known. However, when social issues and ethical conduct are examined they quickly run from clear biblical teaching on the subjects. Notice a few examples. When the discussion of homosexuality, unscriptural marriages, abortion, etc. are discussed often there is great confusion among various people as to where they stand on these subjects. The Bible does not quibble over or leave any of these topics open ended. The truth is when you see churches or individuals vacillating on "their positions" you either are seeing ignorance or disbelief. In most of the cases I'm referring to people who are unwilling to affirm what the Bible affirms, because they are not confident in the truthfulness of the Bible position.

The Apostle Paul most certainly taught in our passage (Philippians 4:8) that there are some virtues that we as Christians must possess. Since this is true then it follows that we can read what He wrote, we can comprehend it, and we can do it. To teach otherwise is to be guilty of denying what the Bible clearly affirms. I will close by once again quoting Jesus and asking you to decide whether He told the truth or lied through His teeth. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

P. O. Box 158
Bangs, TX

Theme This Issue:

"Think On These Things"

Table Of Contents

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 AND "WHATEVER"	1
J. D. Sweeten	
WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE AND HONEST	2
Michael Light	
WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST	4
Tom Moore	
<i>Guest Article...</i>	
WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE	5
Royce Williamson	
WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY	6
Tom Moore	
WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT	7
J. D. Sweeten	
FRIENDS OF SYF	8

Seek Ye First...

Volume 6

Number 2

This work is published quarterly in a joint effort among the editors and those which generously help to support it financially.

If you would like to make a donation to *Seek Ye First*, contact Michael Light.

For information or a presentation concerning *Seek Ye First* or comments concerning our web page, contact Tom Moore.

For changes of address or subscriptions, contact J. D. Sweeten.

All donations towards this work are greatly appreciated. Please note that every contribution, great or small, is beneficial to the paper.

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST

Tom Moore

In our day, more than any in the past, we need men and women who will be “just.” We are living in a time when “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19). There is evil on every hand and we need a world that is “righteous [just] before God” (Luke 1:6).

The actual Greek word for “just” (δικαιοῦν) in Philippians 4:8, is found eighty-one time in the Greek New Testament, and is translated as “just” (thirty-three times), “meet” (two times), “right” (five times) and “righteousness” (forty-one times). Strong’s Greek Concordance defines *dikaioo* (δικαιοῦν) as “equitable in character or act—and by implication, innocent, holy, just, meet, righteous.” Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament says *dikaioo* means “observing divine and human laws,” and “one is such as he ought to be.” Kittel’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that *dikaioo* is derived from *dikaios* (δικαιος) and means “to make righteous,” “to establish as right,” and “to validate.”

William Barclay says just (δικαιοῦν), “is the word of duty faced and duty done. There are those who set their minds and thoughts on pleasure, comfort, easy things and easy ways. The Christian’s thoughts are on duty to man and duty to God.”

Albert Barnes states, to be just is to be “right between man and man. A Christian should be just in all his dealings. His religion does not exempt him from the strict laws which bind men to the exercise of this virtue ... It is to be remembered, that the men of the world, in estimating a man’s character, affix much more importance to the virtues of justice and honesty than they do to regularity in observing the ordinances of religion; and therefore, if a Christian would make an impression on his fellow-men favorable to religion, it is indispensable that he manifest uncorrupted integrity in his dealings.”

Adam Clarke says that to be “just” has reference to “all that ye owe to God, to your neighbor, and to yourselves.”

J. W. Shepherd wrote that being just “goes to the bottom of things. One may easily test the question whether he loves and reveres justice because it is justice or looks upon it simply as an instrumentality with which to further the ends of selfishness (1 Samuel 12:3). Justice maintains right relations between man and man, holds the balance fairly between conflicting interests, and coordinates the rights of each withal. Love of justice is the moral part of piety, as the love of truth is the intellectual part of it. Justice is particular in its respect, that there is not degree of it, as

there are degrees of goodness or generosity; for a man less than just is unjust.”

Space prevents us from looking at each verse in the New Testament that uses *dikaioo* (δικαιοῦν), but we will consider a few to help us understand the need and importance of being just or righteous.

In Matthew 13:47-50, Jesus is teaching the parable of the net, and make the application by saying, “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just [δικαιοῦν], and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:49-50). Clearly, we cannot go to heaven if we are not just or righteous.

As Jesus was declaring the parable of the sheep and the goats, He draws His conclusion by saying, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous [δικαιοῦν] into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46). Only the just or righteous will have eternal life. Notice also that our prayer life is affected by righteousness, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous [δικαιοῦν] man availeth much” (James 5:16).

How can we develop a righteous life? Righteousness comes through our adherence to the word of God. The psalmist declared, “My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness” (Psalm 119:172). John taught, “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 John 3:7). Thus, it is very apparent that we are just or righteous only as we obey the words of God. That is why Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

Paul shows how the word of God is involved in leading a just life. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just [δικαιοῦν] shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16-17). Is your life just before God?

823 North Main St.
Malvern, AR

Guest Article...

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE

Royce Williamson

The Philippian letter is one of the most beautiful letters of exhortation ever penned. It is a letter to faithful Christians exhorting them to earnestly defend the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a letter that portrays the Christ as a humble and obedient Son who endured the cross so that man might be saved eternally. The Philippian letter exhorts us to recognize the value of living the Christian life. Paul exhorts us to “press on toward the mark for prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It is a book that emphasizes the need for the Christian to rejoice and live a joy filled life. In fact, Paul uses words like joy, rejoice, rejoiced, and rejoicing 17 times. Truly, many other things could be mentioned about this marvelous letter to a faithful congregation of the Lord’s people.

Our focus, however, is turned to Philippians 4:8 in which the apostle Paul exhorts the Christian reader to “think on” that which is virtuous and praiseworthy. The word “think” denotes serious contemplation and meditation on something with the idea of following through with or fulfilling a requirement. Therefore, Paul is not instructing the Christian to casually think about these things. Rather, he is instructing the Christian to think on these things with the idea of putting them into practice, and implementing them in our lives.

Of particular importance to us here, is that Paul encourages us to think on things that are “pure.” The word “pure” means to be morally upright, undefiled, chaste, and free from contaminants and impurities or from anything that taints or adulterates. Simply stated, Paul exhorts the child of God to think on things that are wholesome.

We live in a world that is filled with every sort of vile perversion. Profanity is rampant in our television programming. Many otherwise good movies are filled with vulgar language that does not add one iota to the value of the story. In fact, it only detracts from the quality of the production and the credibility of the actors. Add to this the fact that the vast majority of movies include sexual innuendoes, and in many cases outright scenes of nudity. The movie industry as well as the television industry is pushing the acceptance of the homosexual “lifestyle.” And this assault on our senses is not restricted to television programming alone. The commercials are as much about the selling of sensuality, as they are about the selling of the product. Why? Because advertisers know that “sex sells.” And the proliferation of the so called “gentlemen’s” night clubs has forced most cities to establish special zoning

requirements to keep these sleazy establishments confined to certain parts of town. The list could go on almost ad infinitum. But suffice it to say we live in a world that makes it difficult at best to think on things that are pure.

Yet, all is not lost. We do have the help that is needed to aid us in seriously thinking on the things that are pure, and then putting them into action in our lives. When we are seemingly overwhelmed by sin, we can and must turn to the Scriptures for help. In Psalm 12:6 David wrote, “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” David made use of the number seven in his description of the purity of God’s word. In the times of the ancients the number seven symbolized completeness. David’s point was simple, and yet profound. The purity of God’s word is absolute. God’s word being absolutely pure, we can understand why the servant of Psalm 119:140 loved it as he did. He wrote, “Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.” In Proverbs 30:5-6 we are given the sum of the matter – “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” In this short passage we learn of the purity of God’s word; of His holy, untainted, and righteous laws. We learn that God’s word is pure, shielding those who put their faith in Him. Therefore, we must not add too, nor take away from God’s pure word that shields us in times of temptation (Cf. Matthew 4:4-10). With the help of this godly guide, we can escape being defiled since “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Figuratively speaking, we must immerse ourselves in the purity, holiness, and righteousness of God’s word if we are going to be a people who think on things that are pure. Because God and His infinite word are pure, it is only when we search the Scriptures diligently with a mind toward keeping His word that we will be able to think on things pure. May God bless us in our search to be a pure people before Him, keeping our hearts clean and free from the dross of this world. May God help us to think on things that are pure and wholesome.

433 Grape St.
Abilene, TX

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY

Tom Moore

In a era when anger, rudeness, and unkind dispositions seem to be the “byword” of the day - the term “lovely” should be sweet music to the Christian’s ear.

The actual Greek word *προσφιλητος* (“lovely”) in Philippians 4:8, is found only once in the Greek New Testament. *Prophiles* (*προσφιλητος*) is a compound word consisting of *pros* (*προσ*) and *phileo* (*φιλεω*). *Pros* (*προσ*) is a preposition of direction, meaning forward or toward. *Phileo* (*φιλεω*) means to be a friend to, to be fond of, or to have affection for. Thus, the meaning of the word “lovely” (*προσφιλητος*) is friendly towards.

Concerning the word “lovely,” Albert Barnes states, “The word here used means, properly, what is dear to any one; then what is pleasing. Here it means what is amiable—such a temper of mind that one can love it; or such as to be agreeable to others. A Christian should not be sour, crabbed, and irritable in his temper for nothing almost tends so much to injure the cause of religion as a temper always chafed; a brow morose and stern; an eye that is severe and unkind, and a disposition to find fault with everything. And yet it is to be regretted that there are many persons, who make no pretensions to piety, who far surpass many professors of religion in the virtue here commended. A sour and crabbed temper in a professor of religion will undo all the good that he attempts to do.”

J. W. Shepherd says that “lovely” suggests “the kindly graces of character. There is such a things as being dignified and venerable, but not lovely. A Christian should not be morose, unkind, or faultfinding. Nothing tends to injure the cause of Christ more than an unlovely temper, an eye severe and unkind, a brow hard and stern.”

With regard to “lovely,” William Barclay writes, “Winsome is the best translations of all ... and it might be paraphrased as that which calls forth love. There are those whose minds are so set on vengeance and punishment that they call forth bitterness and fear in others. There are those minds are so set on criticism and rebuke that they call forth resentment in others. The mind of a Christian is set on the lovely things—kindness, sympathy, forbearance, love—so that the Christian is a winsome person, whom to see is to love.”

James M. Tolle says that “lovely” signifies “that which is adapted to excite love, and to endear him who does such

things. Walter Pater speaks of it as ‘the grace of graciousness.’ One could translate it by the words ‘winsome, pleasing, amiable.’ Christians are to be so lovely in life and personality that they will tend to draw out love in those whom they come in contact.”

R. C. H. Lenski states that whatsoever things are true, honest, just, and pure “are ‘lovely’ so that the heart should incline toward them (*προσ*) in affection (*φιλεω*) and embrace them. The opposite is what one should despise, hate, and thrust away. Those who divide the items think of lovable personal bearing toward others, our manners should be pleasing. But more is implied. We ourselves are to love and to embrace these things.”

Adam Clarke discusses the word “lovely” saying, “Whatsoever is amiable on its own account and on account of its usefulness to others, whether in your conduct or conversation.”

There is a tendency to find that which is “lovely” only in “feminine virtues” such as gentleness, patience, compassion and kindness—and to regard the more “masculine characters” such as courage, firmness, and resolution in another area. But this is to forget that God has made everything “lovely” in its proper time and place. Winters are “lovely” as well as the spring. There is a loveliness in all of God’s creation. Can we find that which is “lovely” only in virtues such as honesty and purity, or can we not see that hard battles fought and won for Christ are also “lovely?” We recognize the loveliness of the simple trust and absolute devotion of Mary Magdalene in Gethsemane—but there is also loveliness in the lofty heroism of Peter and John declaring they would serve God rather than men. Barnabas seems to gather up in himself the things that are “lovely,” but do we not see that which is “lovely” in the lion-like courage of Paul?

In conclusion, it is important to realize that a Christian’s thoughts are not to be thoughts of unkindness and meanness, grumbling and murmuring, criticism and reaction. Christian’s thoughts are to be focused upon things that are lovely—that build people up, not tear them down. Whenever we keep the commands of God and stand for the truth—it is “lovely.” Are you thinking on and abiding by things that are “lovely”?

823 North Main St.
Malvern, AR

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT

J. D. Sweeten

Rounding out the list of characteristics consistent with the Christian's constitution are things of "good report." Since who we are originates in influences that impact the heart (Proverbs 14:33), and who we are is eventually unveiled in our words and deeds (Matthew 15:18-20), our musings are of the utmost importance. The attributes listed in Philippians 4:8 are all stellar dispositions essential to every faithful Christian; "good report" is in good company.

The adjective, *euphemos*, because it is only used once in the Bible, is a bit difficult to define. To illustrate, note the confusion and inconsistency in translating this term from some of our current English versions of the Bible. The Revised Standard Version has "gracious," while the New American Standard Bible uses "good repute." Freer translations, less concerned with translational accuracy, try to capture the meaning using synonyms. For instance, the New International Version uses the term "admirable," and James Moffatt's feeble attempt assigns an incoherent meaning to the term in the form of "high-toned" (I think he just muddies the water here). The literal meaning of the term is "primarily, uttering words or sounds of good omen, then avoiding ill-omened words, and hence fair-sounding" (Vines). So, the Berkeley Version does an admirable job translating the term with "kindly spoken." Things of "good report" are those things that are attractive or appealing from the Christian perspective, sweetly spoken in kindly fashion, even implying, perhaps, thoughts of an elevated or principled nature.

This challenge to think properly demands that we address our current culture's obsession with vulgarity. From humor to drama, with double entendre and innuendo, the fashion of the day is to raise eyebrows with risqué insinuations, if not with outright obscenity. A Christian's language and actions, issuing directly from the heart, must reflect purity and modesty. This cannot occur unless we can bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

When fleshing out something practical for the Christian to apply, one might understand this quality to be the silence of the mind concerning evil. William Barclay goes out on a limb by attaching to this term the sense of holy silence. In other words, the idea behind thinking on things of "good report" is to keep in one's mind only on those things fit for God to hear. The ugliness of today language assaults our hearts in every medium, both public and private, in the form of offensive, filthy, and foul expressions, many of which have become so common place that Chris-

tians use them mindlessly and habitually. "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man" (Matthew 15:18). If the heart is clean, pure, and untainted by indecency, if the introspective conversations we have in the recesses of our mind maintains a "fair sounding" quality, the words we utter vocally will certainly reflect this virtue.

Another facet of thinking on things of "good report" may even spill over into influence. What we say impacts those around us to such a degree that even civil law imposes some limits. It is illegal to yell "Fire!" in a movie theater because of the ensuing injuries that might occur as "vidiots" rush for the exit doors like a herd of elephants. Likewise, slander is punishable by law. Not only is it unchristian, it is downright illegal to assault someone's character with baseless accusations to the detriment of their reputation. On the other side of the coin, saying things that encourage, enliven, and uplift tend toward the welfare of humanity. A good word is much more appreciated than the terminally blue-news bulletin. "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25). Thinking on fair sounding, pleasant and appealing words can become the strength of a sympathizer, or mean comfort to a mourner, and even taste of the sweetness of honey to a friend. Solomon wooed his Shulamite wife by saying, "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely" (Song of Solomon 4:3), and even relegated wisdom's expression and influence to a prudent heart: "The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning" (Proverbs 16:21).

Finally, one of the Christian's greatest strengths may be in the ability to view life from a saved perspective, and such a positive outlook on life is, by its very nature, contagious. Concentrating on divine principles keeps our "affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). If our mental gymnastics consist of lofty, godly principles, the strength and endurance we develop will help keep us out of Satan's headlock (Hebrews 5:12-14). Only with "an honest and good heart" will we be able to "bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15), and "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). Therefore, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23), and "think on these things."

500 North Pearl St.
Comanche, TX

Friends of SYF

Church Contributions

- Bangs Church of Christ
Bangs, TX
- Cold Springs Church of Christ
Lancaster, TX
- Eisenhower Church of Christ
Odessa, TX
- Goldthwaite Church of Christ
Goldthwaite, TX
- Hillcrest Church of Christ
Coleman, TX
- Hillcrest Church of Christ
Stephenville, TX
- McCloud Church of Christ
McCloud, OK
- Port Lavaca Church of Christ
Port Lavaca, TX
- Rising Star Church of Christ
Rising Star, TX
- Zephyr Church of Christ
Zephyr, TX

Individual Contributions

Mr./Mrs. Ronald Allen—Lake City, FL

Seek Ye First...

500 North Pearl Street
Comanche, TX 76442-3624

Address Correction Requested

- Ed Armstrong—Pecos, TX
- Charlotte Banks—Eagle Pass, TX
- Norman & Loma Barnes—McCloud, OK
- James & Jean Berry—Montgomery, AL
- Jessie and Mayne Crow—Burnet, TX
- Manuel/Chelo Guajardo-New Braunfels, TX
- Lloyd/Elsie Haggerty—New Braunfels, TX
- Pauline Hopkins—Bangs, TX
- Michael & Carrie Light—Bangs, TX
- Ruth Locke—Austin, TX
- Morey & Judy Mast—Waxahachie, TX
- Cynthia McIntyre—Magnolia, AR
- Mr./Mrs. James Meredith—Dixon, MO
- Tom & Carole Moore—Malvern, AR
- Walter Nelson, Sr.—Oroville, CA
- Eddie & Oleta Pafford—Bangs, TX
- Ruth Price—Temple, TX
- Kenneth & Anna Reed—Bangs, TX
- Brandon & Amanda Renfroe—Birmingham, AL
- Michael Riley—El Paso, TX
- Roelf & Janice Ruffner—Chillicothe, TX
- Charles & Julienne Sweeten—Camp Wood, TX
- Jeff & Kelly Sweeten—Comanche, TX

In Memory Of

- Freddie Harrell
- Reba Hartman
- Ed Moore

Memorials Given By:

- Bangs Church of Christ
- Michael & Carrie Light—Bangs, TX

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
 PERMIT #150
 COMANCHE, TX 76442-2436