

THESE LOVELY THINGS

David C F Wright DD

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... think of these things wrote Paul in Philippians 4 8.

He had previously said that we should keep our hearts and minds on the Lord Jesus.

I suppose this could be called positive thinking. The state of the world and the persecution of Christians, even in the civilised West, has become intolerable.

The word true is alethes which means unconcealed, manifest, actual, factually true, conforming to reality and genuine.

Semnos is the word for honest. It means venerable, honourable and notably serious.

The meaning of just is that which is right and morally good from which we get the word righteousness. The morality refers to God's morality and not man-made rules. Righteousness is the character and quality of God Himself and it also means that He is just and good in all His ways. Genesis 18.25 asks the rhetoric question, Shall not the judge of all the world do that which is right?

We may not understand God's ways and may become perplexed at times. As Christians we are called upon to do and say that which is right and profitable.

Hagnos is the word for pure. It means free from defilement and uncontaminated. It also means being cleansed, unalloyed and sincere.

The word for lovely is prosphiles meaning pleasing, agreeable and worthy of love and affection.

Good report has the meaning of proven worthiness and goodness and we are instructed not to allow our good works to be evil spoken about.

The need for truth is essential. We read of true doctrine and of false doctrine. We read that in the last days there will be false teachers (2 Timothy 4) and they will believe in fables. The Biblical word for fables is the opposite of alethes. It refers to fiction which is spoken and advocated. There are many preaching and teaching false doctrine and people listening to it and believing it.

The time will come when people will not believe sound doctrine. Indeed, that time is here.

If you believe what is false that makes you false.

There should be no schism among Christians and yet we have some many denomination and thousands of cults.

2 John 4 tells us that we are walk in the truth. 'Walk in' means to live. We are to live by the truth and in truth.

Shakespeare was right when he said, 'This above all ; to thine own self be true for then it follows as night the day thou canst not then be false to any man. '

The Roman Catholics believe in prayers to the Virgin Mary; that the bread and wine at Communion

actually becomes the physical body and blood of Christ; that the priest has the power to forgive sins and these notions are contrary to Biblical doctrine.

The Elim, Pentecostal and charismatic churches believe that the speaking in tongues is the evidence that you are saved; that it is the second blessing but this is contrary to Scripture.

Many Elim churches practise kissing each other, even those of the opposite sex which does lead to illicit affairs and break-ups of marriages.

(See article [The Holy Kiss](#))

We are called upon to be honest. To many people lies are always unacceptable; to other lies are part of their daily lives.

There may be times when to say nothing may be preferable.

1 Timothy 4.2 talks about the lies that constitute hypocrisy and one such example is the doctrine of devils. The word hypocrite comes from the word for a stage-actor. Sadly, there are Christians who are nothing more than actors and also play to the gallery and promote themselves.

The New Testament is clear. We are not to preach self: we are not to promote self; worship is not the expression of self and what we have done. We are to preach Christ and Him crucified and it is far far more important to know and be reminded of what He has done and continues to do. (1 Corinthians 1. 23, 2 Corinthians 4. 5) 1 Corinthians 9.16 states Woe if we do not preach the Gospel. Woe is a denunciation.

People may say that talking about self in a testimony is valid.

The Scriptures make it clear that when we become Christians we are to know no one after the flesh (2 Corinthians 5.16). David Clines points out that this self-interest or interest in others is forbidden.

Testimonies often speak of an awful past with drugs, alcohol, crime and such like and sometimes the speaker and the audience relish this. But the New Testament clearly teaches that what God has forgiven must not be brought up again. What God has forgiven must not be revived again.

Some people do twist the Scripture. They may advocate that fellowship is sharing all sorts of things which would include details about yourself and your past. Fellowship is confined to our relationship with God and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1. 3) and we share with each other Divine things not personal things, and we are all entitled to privacy.

We read on church notice boards about coffee mornings and of invitations after the service to have the fellowship of a cup of coffee and a chat so we can get to know you. Fellowship is nothing to do with coffee and a chat and certainly not a means to get to know another.

Paul's direction that women are to be silent in churches refers to chatter and nosiness in the main. I have even heard someone say, we must gossip the Gospel.

We cannot calculate the amount of trouble caused in churches by chatting and gossip. It causes schism and ill-feeling as well as people leaving. Satan must delight in all this so-called fellowship!

A very wise minister of the gospel used to say that Christians should mind their own business not anyone else's. We should take heed lest we fall not take heed lest someone else falls.

Often when someone comes to the church for the first time they get invited to lunch or tea almost immediately in order that they be quizzed. That is not fellowship but nosiness and interference. If people know about you they can have power over you. All that matters is whether they love the Lord not what they do for a living or what car they drive. Hereafter we know no one after the flesh!

It will be argued that Paul talked about his past and his persecution of Christians but that was for a valid reason and to show that his persecution of the church was indeed a thing of the past.

We are to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves... holy, harmless and undefiled.

(1154)

© COPYRIGHT David C F Wright DD 2008. No part of this article, however small, may be reproduced or stored in any system whatsoever. It must not be copied, altered or downloaded. Failure to comply is illegal being theft and contrary to International Copyright law and will render any offender liable to action at law.