

## Paul and the Law

*"For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15)*

What a motto!

After liberals and most evangelicals dismiss Paul's restrictive admonitions to women as "cultural baggage of his time," Paul becomes their hero. It is Paul to whom they turn at once when they want to escape "legalism." For this reason, any series on the Ten Commandments, the basis of the Law, must take a closer look at Paul and what he says.

Paul was a man of visions. From his conversion experience to his anticipated trip to Rome to defend himself before the emperor and meet the Roman church, and then go on to Spain, he thought on a big scale and preached these visions. After the preliminaries, most of his epistles begin with a vision and these are the inspirational part of his preaching. Some examples: Chief among these visions is his own experience of God's great mercy and love through Christ. In Thessalonians, he is expecting Christ to return soon and gather up the believers. He has a lot to say about how this will happen, but eventually he has to face the fact that persecution will last a while longer and he turns to offering sympathy. He envisions a church in unity and harmony, but finds dissension. He believes that the experience of God's grace will be sufficient to write the divine law on the heart, but he discovers that the converts sometimes behave as badly as the heathen.

Emotional vision without legal detail is the problem for charismatics: a religion of emotion lacks guidelines and sign posts for ethical decisions. In Goethe's *Faust*, the protagonist manages to pass Gretchen's piety test by feeding her a mystical line about the magnificence of nature and concludes, "Feeling is everything." As her defenses crumble she replies, "That's about what the preacher says." With that she is on the way to becoming a murderer.

Whenever one of Paul's visions confronts life and discovers trouble, Paul tries to straighten things out and establish the guidelines. When he does so, where does he turn but to the Decalogue. Not as such; he never mentions the Ten Command-

ments by name, but at one time or another he touches virtually every one. He speaks of idolatry in several forms and links covetousness to it. He admonishes children and parents. He addresses sexual behavior repeatedly. Violence, stealing and truthfulness are not overlooked. Like Jesus, the teacher in the sermon on the mount, Paul often carries the teaching well beyond the minimum of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Children are not only to *honor* their parents but *obey* them. Paul supports no tyranny, though; parents are not to lord it over their children. This would be idolatry. And similar reciprocal relationships are advocated between slaves and masters, wives and husbands. Paul never tries to insure justice by restructuring the social order. His world is hierarchical but never puffed up or arrogant. As Jesus extends the violence commandment far beyond "murder" and speaks of going a second mile for the Roman soldier, Paul teaches that love returns good for evil.

When we sing the praises of love with Paul, we must recognize that this love is not a foamy emotion, but is undergirded by the Commandments and is profoundly moral.

Ruth M. Pitman  
grew up among Orthodox Friends in Philadelphia.  
She now lives in a suburb of Cleveland.

## The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting Held in London, 1816

*To the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings of Friends in Great Britain, Ireland, and Elsewhere*

**W**e esteem it a favour which calls for our grateful acknowledgment, that we have been afresh made sensible, on this occasion, of our Heavenly Father's love, and have felt that it reaches to all our dear friends, wherever they are situated. Our minds have been humbled in gratitude to Him, who by his Divine power raised us up to be a people, who has gone from one generation to another, blessed our religious society, and who is still to be felt at times in great mercy to preside amongst us. *(please see page 3)*

## Worship Groups

These groups practice waiting worship in the manner of Conservative Friends. It is best to make contact before making plans, as their schedules need to be adjusted to accommodate their regular participants. For worship at OYM monthly meetings see [www.ohioyearlymeeting.org](http://www.ohioyearlymeeting.org)

Meeting	Location	Contact Person	Contact Information
Friends of Jesus Fellowship	Washington, DC	Micah Bales	316-210-6224 <a href="mailto:micahbales@gmail.com">micahbales@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://capitolhillfriends.wordpress.com">capitolhillfriends.wordpress.com</a>
Friends Gathering in Jesus Christ	Evanston, Illinois (near Chicago)	Kevin McMurtrey	<a href="mailto:kevinmcmurtrey@gmail.com">kevinmcmurtrey@gmail.com</a>
Friends in Christ	Harrisville, Michigan	Kimberly Anne Makela	<a href="mailto:plainquakers@gmail.com">plainquakers@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.plainquakers.org">www.plainquakers.org</a>
Goshen Meeting	Scone, Scotland	Paul Thompson	UK # 01738 620688; Bookseeker <a href="mailto:@blueyonder.co.uk">@blueyonder.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.plainquakers.org">www.plainquakers.org</a>
Lavenham Worship Group	Suffolk, England	Ben Gosling	<a href="mailto:ben.gosling1944@btinternet.com">ben.gosling1944@btinternet.com</a> 53D High St, Lavenham, Suffolk CO10 9PY
Lubbock Friends Meeting	Grace Presbyterian Church Building, Lubbock, Texas	Sara Scribner	<a href="mailto:sarascribner@aol.com">sarascribner@aol.com</a> meeting is at 4820 W. 19th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407
One in Christ	15 <sup>th</sup> St. Meeting House, NYC	Brian Doherty	212-279-6200 <a href="mailto:brianj.doherty@verizon.net">brianj.doherty@verizon.net</a>
Ripley Quaker Meeting	Ripley, Derbyshire, UK	Allistair Lomax	UK # 01773-850021 <a href="mailto:ripleychristianquakers@hotmail.co.uk">ripleychristianquakers@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Uxbridge Worship Group	Corner of Routes 98 and 146A, Uxbridge MA	Connie Bair-Thompson	First Days, 9:00 AM
Whittier Worship Group	Whittier, California	Kim Palmer	<a href="mailto:kimpalmer11@yahoo.com">kimpalmer11@yahoo.com</a>

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## Sharing Jesus's Gospel

As the apostle John enunciates, our precious Lord enlightens all people, men and women, in addition to their children who enter the earth. Jesus, in other words, is communicating with all of us when we need to hear from him.

In the beginning, God created men and women as equal beings capable of listening to the Lord. And as long as we humans were willing to listen to the Almighty, God provided the inspiration, His light overcame our darkness. And therefore we were able to live in community.

Unfortunately Satan entered our souls and induced us to rely on our own wisdom rather than the Lord's. This situation encouraged us to form different groups, societies that were victimized with conflicts which encouraged outward wars resulting in terrible violence such as the two world wars.

But God loves His people, all nationalities, all races. Small wonder He sent His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, to speak to us, to bring outward peace as well as inward tranquility. He provides the penetrating light that overcomes our darkness. Small wonder that when we are willing to hear Jesus speak to us in His penetrating silence, we receive the love that is capable of bringing unity. Yes, we must submit to His all empowering love, then we have the good fortune of living in God's Kingdom.

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle declares "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world, He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power." (Hebrews 1, RSV)

Small wonder George Fox and other early Quakers recognized that God affords Him the power to become our Prophet who engenders wisdom, our Shepherd who provides love to overcome dissent in addition to the heavenly rock of our dependence.

That is why Quaker ministers encouraged the young people to wait on the Lord for the love and wisdom which was so essential to their ability to be followers of our gracious Lord. In those days

older Friends were often arrested for merely waiting on the Lord for guidance. But because parents were willing to teach their children the essence of the gospel, the young people were able to listen to our Lord directly. They were even able to open themselves to God's biblical words.

These young people, because they heard and listened to the Lord, visited the older Friends who were imprisoned and often brought food and other gifts to their imprisoned parents. Equally important, the young people were encouraged to hold meetings for worship when their parents were imprisoned.

God provides the same love to the young people today if and when they are willing to wait on the Lord, either among themselves or with older devoted Christians.

God affords us the opportunities to hear His wisdom whenever we wait on the Lord together or pray to Him individually for His everlasting peace. God aspires us to be His servants. Are we willing to serve?

Arthur Berk  
is an affiliate member of  
Rockingham Monthly Meeting

### 1816 London Epistle, *continued from page 1*

We have earnestly desired that these impressions may by an additional motive for us to consider, how far we are seeking to be established on Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages, "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." (Hebrews XIII.8) To this foundation of our predecessors, we desire to direct your most serious attention. Let it, dear friends, be our daily concern to seek for his Divine guidance and support. Great will be the advantages which we shall thence derive. The bitterness of our conflicts will be sweetened by the remembrance, that He unto whom we are seeking, and who is "not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," (Hebrews IV.15) is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Hebrews VII.25) A sense of victory over our evil affections, through his power and mediation, will be a sufficient consolation. It will, if the watch be maintained, strengthen us to proceed in the way of allotted duty; and though new trials and *(please see page 5)*

## The Landscape of Ministry

### Part 3. Thy Use of Words Outside of Ministry

*This part considers some issues surrounding discernment of speech outside of ministry.*

Most of us have heard that we should not give rebuttals to what someone has said in ministry. I have mixed feelings about this, because I have seen times (admittedly few) when a Friend was anointed to offer a rebuttal, which immediately got the meeting back on track. The greatest care should be used in these matters, so don't rush in without divine direction. Of course, the best option is for an Elder to approach someone who is off track in ministry and try to get them to yield. This usually is effective but should be reserved for the more serious cases. Let trivial cases pass because it is likely that no one will remember them anyway. I have seen several cases when ministry was offered to help draw Friends back to the Light of Christ Jesus, ignoring the offending message. Modeling the pattern of right discernment and delivery is preferable to an open dissection of the previous message.

If someone vocally opposes thy words during worship, it is not thy role to defend what thee said, so don't even try. Vocal opposition during worship may come from a variety of spiritual states, but always weigh it carefully. The person may be right (or not). About five years ago in Ohio, an Elder stated briefly during worship that the words just given by a minister had missed the mark. The minister considered that remark and then stood to express her mind that the Elder was entirely correct, asking forgiveness of the meeting. Usually it is best to allow the worship to continue without a response. If thy words came from the Lord, He will use them according to His purposes - so consider whether thy leading was rightly discerned and, if it still seems to have been right, let it go.

On occasion, someone will approach thee after worship to discuss thy message. This is awkward. The most important thing to convey is a sense of thy discernment. Anointed messages don't need to be defended, and there is no defense for other messages anyway, so avoid that discussion. Whatever else thee does, make sure thee understands what the person feels a desire to tell thee, particularly if that person has a leading in the way of eldership. If that person had to listen to thee in

ministry, thee needs to listen to them when they are directed to approach thee afterwards. The person may have something of spiritual value or not, but at least try to find out if this might be a teaching moment.

One thing that is always difficult is discerning a response to quick statements like "thank thee for thy message." These statements are usually genuine. Generally, the best response is a simple recognition of the comment. William Bacon Evans would sometimes say "thank thee for thanking me." Some times I have responded with a statement that suggests that my discernment was faulty. This kind of modesty undermines the message in the long run and should be avoided. One could say something like "I seriously endeavored to be faithful," which is truthful (right?) and concise.

Friends who are naturally inclined to speak freely outside of worship and also speak with some frequency during worship often face the challenge of conveying a sense of discernment. Does this person just want to talk all the time? Joseph John Gurney liked to dominate conversations outside of worship, which pained Friends who were already bothered by the quality of his discernment during worship and in his writings. Chattiness is not necessarily bad, so if this is thy natural inclination, consider the following. Sometimes asking for a moment to seek for direction (and then actually using the time for that purpose) helps to keep thee on track as well as conveying to the hearer thy desire to find the Lord's words for the discussion. Depend on Him to provide savory and weighty words, not on opinions or rhetorical strategies. If thee learns to do this well, it will leaven thy chattiness and nurture those who are sent thy way.

Whether in private conversations or in ministry, thy use of words is very important. Rightly discerned words do not tear down another person, undermine that person's reputation, or promote divisions. The world has all the spouters of venom it needs - don't increase the statistic. Words are powerful. Learn to use them the right way, for God's purposes.

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## The Landscape of Ministry: Part 3. Thy Use of Words Outside of Ministry

*(Continued from page 4)*

If thy life experiences incline thee to be negative about life, seek divine direction to be healed of this tendency. Even if thee attempts to be as faithful as possible, it may be thy lot to endure incredibly difficult circumstances. This is not necessarily a divine judgment on thee. Don't be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good (does thee have faith that God will help thee do that?). Don't let thy words be overcome with evil, either, and don't let thy ministry be tarnished with venom. Verily, others are more versed at that than thee, so don't even enter into the competition.

One last thing that ministers have to bear in mind in discussions is the importance of expressing appreciation for other people. Do that. Let others know that their faithfulness may be even more

important than thy faithfulness in ministry. It is sometimes. Christ Jesus has things for thee to do and things for others to do. Those who are called to speak on His behalf need the modesty to commend others when they are coming forth in their various gifts. Laboring in the divine vineyard is a team effort as we all attempt to stay on the straight and narrow path that leads to life. Don't wait until an important person dies to mention how that person gave thee hope, direction, or assistance. Thy words of encouragement might be used by the Lord for an unknown but precious purpose. Bless everyone, including thyself, by blessing another.

Thy words say a lot about thee. Choose them wisely.

Seth Hinshaw  
is a member of Keystone Fellowship Monthly Meeting and Clerk of Ohio Yearly Meeting

## What Have We Seen Along the Way, and Where Do We Go From Here?

Since we do not have a separately designated priesthood, pastoral duties fall on *all* members. These duties are manifold in nature. Those relating to eldering range from nurturing individuals and the community to operating in the area of discernment and knowing what the Lord would have at this time and place. "Mothers and fathers in Israel" are encouraged not only to nurture vocal ministry, but also to draw forth the spiritual gifts imparted by Christ for teachers and trainers in holiness, godliness and a proper fear of the Lord. A sensitivity to the needs of others around us is an essential ingredient for those who engage in eldering.

We have seen that there are spiritual demands upon both elders and the one being eldered or counseled. Humility and submission to Christ are requisites for both parties. We are admonished to be faithful with each other, and accountable in a loving way. We have been reminded that we may have to give up our right to be right. This is one aspect of our surrender to the Lordship of Christ, which is so basic.

Morris Kirk

From the publication, "So That You Come Behind in No Gift," Ohio Yearly Meeting's Gathering on Elderling 6/20 – 22/1996.

## 1816 London Yearly Meeting Epistle, *Continued from page 3*

temptations may await us, and we may continue sensible of the dangers with which we are surrounded, the blessing of true Christian experience, the result of patient perseverance in well-doing, will be ours. Thus from what we have known and what we have felt, we shall be constrained to acknowledge that there is no joy like unto the joy of God's salvation.

We observed with pleasure the increasing desire manifested by friends to obtain a guarded and useful education for their children. The reports on the schools under the notice of this meeting indicate the religious care and good order pre-

vailing in them, and have yielded us great satisfaction. The improvement of the understanding in them, and the communication of that knowledge by which it may be more extensively prepared for the service of Him to whom we must all render our account, are duties not to be neglected. We desire however to impress upon all, whether parents, or those to whom they intrust their tender offspring, the *supreme* importance of inculcating the first of duties, the love and fear of God.

A watchful parent will at no time be more alive to the welfare *(please see page 6)*

## The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting held in London, 1816

*From page 5*

of his children, than when they are passing from the age to which we have just adverted, to the succeeding stage of life. The situations in which they are then placed, and the companions with whom they associate, may have a decided influence on their future character. We would therefore encourage both parents and masters not to relax at this critical period, either in care or counsel, or in proper restraint tempered with kindness. Here we would advert in the importance of good example, and to the great blessing which will attend the labours of those whom we are now addressing, as they seek to become preachers of righteousness, in life and conduct, to those around them. How inviting, how instructive, it is, to behold such as by the purity of their lives, by the meekness of their spirits, and by the benevolence of their characters are adorning their profession! This is a duty which is enjoined by the highest authority; and we earnestly press upon all to consider whether their moderation, their self-denial, their habits of life, are such as become the Christian religion. (Matthew V.16)

Our solicitude has at this time been awakened, for our young men employed as travelers in business. The exposure of these to the temptations to which they are often unavoidably subjected, has tended to draw aside some from that simplicity, that purity of heart and thought, that strict morality, which our Christian principles require. We would submit to the serious consideration of their parents and employers, the extreme danger of sending forth into such service any young persons whose religious principles are not fixed, nor their habits formed; and we would encourage friends in different places, where those in this line of employment may travel, to continue and to extend the kind and hospitable notice which has been already manifested. The situation of some of our young friends in other occupations, may deprive them of the advantage of virtuous and instructive associates; these also we hope will not be overlooked by those to whom they are known.

We lament that reproach should have been brought on our society by the failure of any of our members in discharging their just debts. We consider it to be the duty of all, but especially of every person under pecuniary difficulties, to inspect narrowly into the state of their affairs; and this we

conceive might often prevent such an issue. Let all friends be careful to live within their income, retrenching if necessary their expences; and we desire that it may be their uniform endeavor to conduct their business in such a way as may subject them to the least risk of danger. For those who, possessing integrity, yet from the pressure of the times, are, with honest and upright intentions, struggling from under many difficulties, we feel near sympathy. Let these be encouraged: they will not fail, we trust, if they seek it, to obtain the kind advice of their friends. Let it be their earnest concern, under these trials, to hold fast their confidence in our all-wise and gracious Helper; as likewise their love to their brethren. This love we believe is peculiarly endangered, whenever the mind is disturbed by the perplexing cares arising from embarrassed circumstances.

The amount of sufferings reported this year, occasioned by claims for tythes, and other demands of an ecclesiastical nature, with a few for military purposes, is upwards of Fifteen thousand pounds. Our brethren of all the Yearly Meetings on the American continent have again given proofs of their love by written communications. The interesting work of Indian civilization still occupies their attention. In some of the tribes, the improvements which, notwithstanding the late commotions, have been gradually going forward, are truly encouraging. In others, those who are concerned in this good work, have probably already renewed their exertions, where the ravages of war had desolated many of the settlements. The persevering labours of friends in Virginia and some other parts, to procure the freedom of many Negroes illegally as well as unjustly held in slavery, have in several instances been crowned with success; and it is very gratifying to observe that the rights of this injured people are still dear to our American brethren. We hope that in this country, friends will continue to feel a deep interest in the welfare of the African race, and not dismiss the subject from their thoughts, until such wise and prudent measures may be adopted, as shall promote and finally secure universal emancipation.

So excellent is Christian love in its nature and effects, that it is deeply painful when we hear of any differences existing amongst us. How can those who are at variance one with another, unite acceptably in the performance of worship to Him

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**1816 London Yearly Meeting Epistle**, *continued from page 6*

Who is emphatically styled Love? It is an awful consideration that that disposition which separates man from man, does at the time estrange him, and will, if it continue, eventually separate him from his Creator. We therefore earnestly recommend to friends, to watch the first appearance of discord; patiently and kindly to endeavor to assist those who may be thus affected, or who are in danger of becoming hardened towards their brethren. Christian charity, and tenderness for the infirmities of our friends, are bonds in religious society. These do not preclude that kind and tender admonition, that exercise of our discipline in the spirit of the Gospel, which we have from time to time been engaged to recommend. Although we are not a numerous society, yet if we are preserved in love, and dwell under the government of Christ, we may hope to fulfill the designs of Divine Providence in having gathered and established us as a separate religious body: we may show forth the excellence of the Christian religion by the spirituality of our worship, and by the purity of our lives.

Dear friends, we desire, in conclusion, reverently to acknowledge that this Yearly Meeting has been a time of the renewal of our strength, and

of the increase of our confidence in the goodness of Israel's shepherd. We cordially bid you farewell. May "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." (2 Thessalonians III.5)

Signed in and on behalf of the Meeting, by  
William Dilworth Crewdson  
Clerk of Yearly Meeting

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**REJOICE - We are in His Hands**

A young Quaker farm boy enjoying a trip with his father on the mail truck, which his father drove on occasion to earn a little extra income, was given the opportunity to purchase a small treat to take on their trip. He entered the store with no thought on his mind of taking something that did not belong to him, but that old serpent focused his eyes upon a bag of candy he couldn't afford, telling him to tear a hole in the bag and stuff it in his pocket.

As he was attempting to do so a hand was laid on his shoulder and looking up he saw a very tall man looking down at him with big kind eyes telling him he needed to take that up front and pay for it. Without enough money to pay for the bag of candy the man pointed out what he could afford, which the boy paid for and left the store to continue on the trip on the mail truck. "Oh what love the Father hath bestowed upon the children of men."

It has been fifty some years since this took place, the Lord opening the eyes of the blind, al-

lowing him to understand what took place that day. That old serpent was defeated that day! God had a plan. The man in the store was servant to the almighty God that day helping to keep a blot off of a young man's life and keeping his father's good name from sorrow and grief.

How many times have we been kept "by the power of God" as this young boy was and yet, not until many years later, allowed to see how God works in marvelous ways to keep us from harm's way, to fulfill his purpose.

*"And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."* Matthew 28:20

Yes, I was that small boy who had no thought of what God was working in his life and others. It has been fifty some years, but was just this past week brought to light, with the feeling I should write it down, with the hope someone will be led to benefit from this. ***All in God's good time.***

Burton Doudna is a member and  
Clerk of Chestnut Ridge Monthly Meeting

## Friendly Thoughts

Though our worship in the meetinghouse is unlike the rest,  
for those who share the hour, its aspects are surely the best.  
Gathering together silently in our renovated 1839 meetinghouse,  
our worshipers have on occasion included lady bugs and a mouse.  
The benches are ancient, some older glass appears quite wavy,  
boards may squeak, and pesky wasps seem never to go away.  
“All Welcome” reads the enduring tin sign on the outside wall;  
usually few birthright but some convinced are present in this old hall.  
You’d not mark us on sidewalk, in vehicle, or beside you on a plane,  
except our preference tends to lean towards the simple and the plain.  
We settle deep into the silence, each worshiper in an individual way:  
some read the Bible or inspirational literature to center; others pray.  
We commune with our God, find solace, surcease from our pain;  
many gain insight and apt leadings which put us right once again.  
On occasion Meetings for Worship include baptism by the Spirit,  
with most ministry uttered seriously, on occasion with some wit,  
about struggles, a moment of reassurance, some concern perchance,  
all sorts of matters may be resolved for worshipers in the silence.  
Sometimes it happens: a gathered meeting occurs without plan,  
as the Spirit inspires or leads to speak lucidly—a woman or man -  
to needs of one of the waiting meeting members or outside folks  
we may encounter during the next week, perhaps one without hope.  
Then almost tangibly one experiences the Presence in our midst,  
and one feels awe within when during our worship comes this twist.  
Our Lord gives us guidance, teaching each one, nudging His sheep,  
encouraging us to love our neighbors, the commandments keep.  
We are called to witness our faith and behave in the Christian way  
while we are completing our tasks—odious or pleasant—each day.  
Hired ministers there are none, hymns seldom in our worship heard,  
but on occasion some reading or discussion about Christ the Word.  
Though we Friends may falter and on occasion stray from our way,  
most of us strive always “to reconnect with God” as people may say.  
’Tis true our hearts are filled with gladness when on each First Day  
we gather together in the meetinghouse, perhaps to feel Spirit’s sway.  
Gathering in silence to enable Christ our Lord to continue to teach;  
for some baptism and communion occur; seldom does anyone preach.  
The Holy Spirit moves among those in the meeting, and often one finds  
the blessings of our God abundant, filling the waiting hearts and minds.

- Jim Creighton  
Clerk of Chesterfield Monthly Meeting, Chesterhill OH  
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