

THE CONSERVATIVE FRIEND

Number 53

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Twelfth Month 2018

A Christian Call from Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

The Ohio Yearly Meeting Ministry and Oversight report to Ohio Yearly Meeting included the following statement. Friends united with the proposed statement and adopted it as amended. The statement is titled "A Christian Call from Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative). Friends also appointed a committee to consider means and methods of accomplishing distribution and publication. In addition, the statement has been appended to our Epistles, and Monthly Meetings are encouraged to distribute the statement locally to ministerial associations and similar bodies.

We are Christian Friends (Quakers) from various walks of life, political persuasions, ages, and backgrounds. We share both a desire to obey the Lord and a growing concern that our nation bring itself to the path of righteousness and mercy that Jesus taught.

Again and again, Christ calls us to love. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Deuteronomy 6:5, Luke 10:27, Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30-31). When we are Christians, this is not optional. If our hearts are full of love, there is no room for fear, because "perfect love casts out fear." (I John 4:18) Being blessed with God's abundant love, we should be keeping families together, be welcoming to the strangers, and show compassion to those in need. We should see the best in each other regardless of political affiliation.

We know that "the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as your-

self.'" (Galatians 5:14) And who is our neighbor? Jesus' answer is the parable of the good Samaritan. Only the Samaritan shows mercy to the beaten man. Only the Samaritan is a true neighbor in the eyes of the Lord (Luke 10:35-37). Today, are we acting the part of the priest and the Levite, or of the Samaritan? Is each of us willing to be a good Samaritan only to those who are like us, or who like us, or whom we like?

We are to follow Him who is the Truth (John 14:6). In an era of confusion between falsehood and truth, we risk leaving Christ's side when we listen to only what pleases us. (2 Timothy 4:3-4) For the sake of Christ, it is worth investigating the truth, wherever it may lead. In the words of Isaac Penington (a 17th century Friend). "truth will not lose ground by being tried."

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Is that what we are showing the world? As Christians, we are called to live exemplary lives that glorify God (I Peter 2:13) Standing on the True Foundation, the Rock of Christ, let us return to His path, stand in the Light of Christ Jesus that reveals all things, and bears witness to our Lord above all – above party, above friends, above media, and above ourselves.

A Brief Introduction to Early Friends (Quakers) and Waiting Worship

You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you. — John 15: 14

The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, emerged during the religious warfare of Seventeenth Century England. Early Friends organized around their experience of Jesus Christ as the Light (*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. [1 John 1: 7]*) and Power of God (*but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those*

whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, [but we preach] Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. [1 Corinthians 1: 23, 24]

These early Friends emphasized that Jesus Christ is actively present within us and among us. (*To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [Colossians 1:27]*)

He leads and enables us to follow. (*He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. [Psalm 23: 3]*)

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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.ohiょyearlymeeting.org

Meeting	Location	Contact Person	Contact Information
Friends of Jesus Fellowship	Washington, DC	Micah Bales	316-210-6224 micahbales@gmail.com dcmetro.fojf.org
Friends Gathering in Jesus Christ	Evanston, Illinois (near Chicago)	Kevin McMurtrey	kevinmcmurtrey@gmail.com
Goshen Meeting	Scone, Scotland	Paul Thompson	UK # 01738 620688; Bookseeker @blueyonder.co.uk www.plainquakers.org
Lubbock Friends of Christ	Grace Presbyterian Church Building, Lubbock, Texas	Sara Scribner	sarabscribner@aol.com meeting is at 4820 W. 19th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79407
Midlands Quakers	Stonebroom, Derbyshire, UK	Allistair Lomax	UK # 01773-875962 ripleychristianquakers@hotmail.co.uk weekly online meeting, First Days, 10:30 AM
Richmond Christ-centered Unprogrammed Friends' Mid-week Worship Group	Richmond, Indiana	John Jeremiah Edminster	835 NW B Street, Richmond IN 47374; meets Third Day (Tuesday) evenings 6:15—7:15 PM; contact john.edminster@gmail.com / text (917) 825-0505 for more information.
Uxbridge Worship Group	Corner of Routes 98 and 146A, Uxbridge MA (Address for GPS only—no mail to this address: 479 Quaker Hwy., Uxbridge MA)	Constance Bair-Thompson	First Days, 9:00 AM (from first Sunday in April through October, we meet in the Uxbridge Friends Meetinghouse at above address; the rest of the year, we meet in private home—call 774-481-1212 for meeting location) Website: www.uxbridgefriends.org Please check website for when we are holding meeting for worship as we may not meet every week.
Whittier Worship Group	Whittier, California	Kim Palmer	kimpalmer11@yahoo.com

Financial Contributions Appreciated

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The editor welcomes articles for publication, those written recently as well as excerpts from earlier Friends' writings.

The Everlasting Gospel Preached by George Fox

A 15-minute sermon for a programmed worship at Earlham School of Religion on 8/9/2018. Matter in square brackets is not to be read aloud, but is for the benefit of the silent reader of this text.

When George Fox referred to the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ, he almost always referred to it as “the everlasting gospel.” Moreover, he typically referred to it as “the everlasting gospel, the power of God.” By framing it in this way, he seems to have intended to convey certain things that he considered to be of the highest importance: first, *everlasting!* God will not change it. Second, *it is the power of God.* It is not good news “about” the power of God. It *is* the power of God, or, to quote Romans 1:16 [KJV], “the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” This means that it is not merely correct doctrine, or a set of right notions, which people ought to believe – because as the apostle James wrote, “The devils also believe, and tremble!” [Jas 2:19 KJV.] *Right notions have no power to save souls. But this gospel does.*

This everlasting gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, is more like *a door* that we *walk through with our whole self*, not merely with the *mind* that we agree to right notions with. Once we’ve willingly and knowingly walked through this door, we’ve come under the power of God, and everything about our life changes. (Evidence for the change may come suddenly, for example with a divine voice speaking in our mind, or gradually, as we find ourselves growing more kind-hearted.) How did Fox know about this? By personal experience, as he records in his *Journal*. Moreover, the God whose power he was brought under commissioned him to preach it, so that others might be brought under the power of God in the same way. “We have received grace and apostleship,” he wrote. [Works, 5:94.] Reporting on the three-hour sermon he gave at Firbank Fell in 1652, Fox wrote, “the Lord had sent me with his everlasting gospel to preach . . . so that they might all come to know Christ their teacher, their counselor, their shepherd to feed them, and their bishop to oversee them and their prophet to open to them, and to know their bodies to be the temples of God and Christ for them to dwell in.” [Journal, Nickalls ed., 109.]

The fact of Fox’s commission to preach this gospel points to yet another reason why he

called it “everlasting:” – namely, the connection between “everlasting” and “universal” made in

Revelation 14:6, the only place in the Bible where an “everlasting gospel” is mentioned [KJV = εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον, with no definite article], where an angel flies through the midst of heaven during the Last Days, “having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” In other words, *God intends it to be revealed to, and received by, every human being, in the language of their own culture and their own heart:* therefore, if it’s a “religion,” it’s a religion which, as Lewis Benson put it, puts an end to all separate religions. Here I must pause and confess my deep intellectual and spiritual debt to the great George Fox scholar Lewis Benson (1906-1986), who more than anyone else, with the exception of the indwelling Christ, “opened” Fox’s writing for me.

But did you all catch those words Fox used to describe the Firbank Fell Sermon? He preached it “so that they might all come to know . . . their bodies to be the temples of God and Christ for them, [God and Christ,] to dwell in.” It’s like pregnancy: one moment you’re not aware of another life dwelling in you. Then you are. It’s not a fantasy, it’s not a metaphor, it’s a reality: Christ in you, and you in Christ. If your tradition is Judaism, or Hinduism, or Islam, Christ may help you understand what has happened in Jewish, or Hindu, or Muslim terms, but there you have it, the Divine Presence in your temple. What do you do with this . . . pregnancy?

George Fox put it this way to King Charles II: “The principle of the Quakers is the Spirit of Christ . . . He dwelleth in us by his Spirit, and by the Spirit of Christ we are led out of unrighteousness and ungodliness.” [Journal, in Works, 2:163.] No matter if we’re in bondage to evil habits, evil employers, or whatever! Strangely, those bondages transform and dissolve.

The young George Fox had found *himself* powerless to overcome temptation and live the life of righteousness that he saw God called for, until that day when he famously heard the voice that said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.” [Journal (Nickalls ed.), 11; see Benson, *The Quaker Vision*, 31.] And then Jesus Christ gave him that power, and commissioned him to tell the world about it! Benson wrote, “this gospel that Fox preached . . . proclaimed that Christ

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has the power to teach *all people* what is right and what is wrong in God's sight, that Christ can enable us to do the right and resist the wrong, and that *he can unite us in a fellowship of disciples who learn together, obey together, and suffer together* ["The Power of the Gospel," 1, emphasis mine – JJE]. The keyword here is *power*. In words recalling Paul's sermon to King Agrippa in Acts 26:18, Fox said: **"The first work is to convince people of God's truth, and turn them from the power of Satan to the power of God."** [Richardson MS, 217, quoted in Benson, "Rediscovering the Teaching of George Fox," 13]. Whether you believe in Satan or not, there is a seductive power that seems to keep people stuck in a selfish, self-justifying, scapegoating life that makes evil things look good, worthless things precious, and the untrue true, and we can't see how deeply we've been dumbed down and hypnotized by it until something wakes us up from it. As Fox knew, the everlasting gospel *dispels* that power, the way light dispels darkness.

But, as I said when I likened the everlasting gospel to a door rather than a doctrine, we only get the benefit of *any* open door [cf. John 10:9, Rev 3:8] by walking through it by our own will and with our own feet. Many balk at this door, choosing *not* to walk through it, because it requires us to set aside *self-will*, and that frightens us. That means saying to God, "Not my will, but Thine, be done" [Luke 22:42], not just on a special occasion like losing a job, but permanently and forever, so that we learn to say, with Jesus, "I have no will but to do the will of Him who sent me" [John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38]. Of course, if we make this renunciation of self-will, God will still let us eat and sleep and enjoy ourselves as we need to, for it's a very easy yoke, [Matt 11:30] except when God overrules our wants and call us to a duty. *Even then God can make that easy.* And God's intentions for us are *always better* than our own could be, better for ourselves as well as all creation, so that it makes absolute sense to say to God, "I totally surrender my will and ask to live by Yours from this time forward." Do we still balk? We can always ask God: "Increase our faith." [Luke 17:5.]

This surrender of the will is what early Friends called "living under the Cross." Sometimes living under the Cross brought them hardship, but God faithfully gave them the courage and patience they needed to stand it. Paul wrote in 1

Corinthians [10:13 NRSV], "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it." When we're suffering for God's sake, we can ask God to lighten it to a bearable level, and many have reported that God complies. Meister Eckhart, for example: "if you suffer for God's sake and for his sake alone, the suffering will not hurt you and will not be hard for you, because God is carrying the burden." [Sermon 2, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, 180.]

In any case, I think those early Friends pretty much understood that living under the Cross, which meant living under the government of Christ, was a far better life than the life of self-will, which they looked back on as if it were government by the devil. Indeed Fox saw it that way.

The big thing about living the self-surrendered life under the Cross is, **Christ who calls people to it also empowers them to live it.** This means that **God doesn't require humans to do more than they can do, and then damn them, or possibly forgive them, for their inevitable failure.**— Did you all get that? Fox's *experience* just demolished Calvin's *doctrine*. I'm talking about the Doctrine of Total Depravity, which really goes back to Augustine, which holds that we fallen humans are all doomed to remain imperfect sinners till the day we die, so that "salvation" is something that can happen only after our death. This prevailed in the Puritan England of Fox's time. Rather, **the everlasting gospel empowers and saves us now.** When Jesus said "Go, and sin no more" to people, they could then go, and sin no more. [John 5:14, 8:11 KJV.] When He said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" [Matt 5:48 KJV], they could grow perfect.

As for that dreadful "Judgment Day" at the end of the world, which is what the angel of the everlasting gospel in the Book of Revelation is announcing to everyone [Rev 14:7]—Fox daringly asserts that it's already come and gone for those who have thus "entered into the joy of the Lord," and "into his rest," and "ceased from their own works." ["Concerning such as shall enter into the kingdom of God, and New and Heavenly Jerusalem, and such as shall not," *Works*, 6:266]

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The Everlasting Gospel Preached by George Fox, *continued from page 4*

In Worship

This possibility of sinlessness is important to remember today, because even though classical Calvinism has lost its hold on mainstream thinking, it's given way to a secular cynicism that can be just as discouraging: how many times have we been told, "sometimes you just have to choose the lesser of two evils?" – as if the God who calls us to do *no* evil is asking the impossible. Or how many people think, "We have to do evil, so that good can come of it," even though Paul made it clear that such reasoning was damnable? [Romans 3:8.] (If people didn't think that way, how could we have war?) This is the way of what New Testament writers called "the world," whose works, Jesus said, were evil. [John 7:7.] **The everlasting gospel allows us to walk cheerfully over the world.**

It's important to note that George Fox didn't encourage others to just be happy in their individual salvation, but gather in what he called "gospel order." **Fox preached a gospel that called a covenanted people of God into being.** Fox would not have considered himself its "founder," but saw himself as an *apostle*, sent by God, through whom *God* was doing the work. If Quakers today regret that we no longer *feel* like a covenanted people of God, let each of us ask ourselves whether we have walked through that door

yet that requires the laying down of self-will.

Does that make sense? Am I *answering that of God in you* with these words?

- John Jeremiah Edminster

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BOOK REVIEW:
On Living With a Concern for Gospel Ministry
 by Brian Drayton
 Quaker Printing of FGC, 2005
 ISBN 188830538X
 \$19.00 paperback, 196 pages

Fortunately, at Ohio Yearly Meeting, I was able to attend two remarkable workshops on Gospel Ministry led by Brian Drayton, the author of this book.

Over and over again, Drayton emphasizes that Gospel Ministry is given directly by Christ Jesus, and we receive it only if we open our hearts to the Living Presence. We need to wait patiently on Christ in order to receive this all-important message. Drayton warns us that we should not be tempted to quickly discern God's instructions. God, himself, will clarify our minds so that

we may be clear about His instructions. Sometimes, we are tempted to quickly assume the Lord's Ministry. In so doing, we may convey a confused message.

We need to pray patiently, in order to allow God to clearly reveal His message. Drayton emphasizes this need to patiently wait on the Lord for instruction and inspiration. He warns us that, when we pray for other people, we need to take care to discern when God is instructing us, so that our witness and prayers are from the Lord, and not a result of our own wishes.

I, too, have sometimes recognized the need for Gospel Ministry in my heart. No wonder this book speaks to my condition.

Fran Taber offers us a fine introduction to this work. May Friends avail themselves of the opportunity to read and study this book on Gospel Ministry.

- Arthur Berk
 Affiliate member of Rockingham Monthly Meeting

Christian Friends Conference - Western Region

Christian Friends Conference - Western Region

Palo Alto Friends Meeting

**Saturday December 8, 2018
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

The quarterly meeting of the Christian Friends Conference - WR will take place on Saturday, December 8th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Palo Alto Friends Meeting, located at 957 Colorado Avenue in Palo Alto. Lunch is brown bag (bring your own). Beverages and bagels will be provided in the morning.

Tentative schedule:

9:00-9:30	Set up and introductions
9:30-10:00	Bible reading in worship
10:00-12:00	Waiting worship upon the Lord
12:00-1:00	Fellowship over brown bag lunch
1:00-1:30	Business and open discussion/ announcements
1:30-2:30	Waiting worship upon the Lord
2:30-3:00	Clean up

Should Christ be born a thousand times anew,
Despair, O man, unless he's born in you!

-Angelus Silesius

God is a little lamb, you say. 'Tis true.
How helps you this unless you're his lamb too?
- Angelus Silesius

If any F/friend you may know now or in the future is looking for a sign from our Heavenly Father. . . He never fails. At a point, stress was getting to me. From nowhere I was lead to look again at the Holy Bible on "worry." I'll quote Weymouth's version, Luke 12:25: "And which of you is able by anxious thought to add a moment to his life?" and Matthew 6:27: "Which of you by being over-anxious can add a single foot to his height?" I read and accepted these words, slept soundly and within 48 hours, the cause of my stress was resolved. The words of William Cowper are right: "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

- Nigel Ruggles
United Kingdom

"[George] Fox understood Jesus--he who never fell like Adam--as both the advent and the fulfillment or embodiment of the new messianic age, of the Kingdom that was (and would always be) present in the *now*. This eternal now, so to speak was the spiritual 'place' where Jesus continually passed on his mantle to a new people, a holy 'nation' or Kingdom, a dimension with no new outer religion or personality cult. Consequently, the Friends would come to objectify themselves as 'they who are called Quakers' or 'a people in scorn called Quakers', internalizing the Hebrew idea that a kingdom was impossible until a 'nation' was formed. That is to say, while the world knew them as 'Quakers', what concerned Fox and the movement was their readiness as a chosen people or 'nation' to be at the command of God in ever walking the Way of peace until the fullness of time. The Kingdom, then, could never be a short-term event or experience because God alone [is] its eternal and ever-immanent inspiration." *The Early Quakers and the 'Kingdom of God'*, Gerard Guiton, 2012, p. 177, available from Charles Martin at <www.innerlightbooks.com>.

- Bruce Folsom

FOR SALE: ONE SOUL

What will a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:26

Nothing on earth compares to the gifts of God's love and forgiveness. If the pleasures of this world are preventing you from trusting in Jesus Christ, please think again. It's not worth the cost of your eternal soul.

**Rejoice, O Soul, the debt is paid,
For all our sins on Christ were laid; We've
been redeemed, we're justified
And all because the Savior died.**

**Jesus is the only fountain who can satisfy
the thirsty soul.**

**-Virginia Peacock
(Chestnut Ridge Monthly Meeting)
1936 – 2014**

A Brief Introduction to Early Friends (Quakers) and Waiting Worship

Continued from page 1

Through His Holy Spirit, during waiting, expectant worship, the first Friends taught that we can experience and communicate His presence, leading, and enabling without the use of professional clergy, human hierarchy, or outward ritual. (*What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.* [1 Corinthians 14: 26])

They believed we could be led in worship by waiting in Christ's Presence, to live simply as His Light in the world, and to respond to evil in His Light and Power rather than our own. (See 1 John 1:7 [above]; *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.* [2 Corinthians 10:4])

They taught that, as we obey Christ's leadings, the Kingdom of God becomes manifest. (*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.* [Matthew 6: 33])

Waiting Worship

In waiting worship, early Friends taught:

- We gather to wait upon our Lord in silence. (*The LORD if in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.* [Habakkuk 2: 20]). (*I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.* [Psalms 130: 5])
- We wait expectantly for His power and His life to fill us. (*Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.* [Psalm 27: 14] *He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.* [Isaiah 40: 29-31])
- We do not speak, or sing, or pray in our own will and words, our earthly wisdom, or at the time we have chosen. We speak what we

sense He is saying to us. (*For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.* [John 12: 49] *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.* [John 16: 13])

With Respect to Ministering During Waiting Worship, Friends Who Meet in This Way Have Found This Advice to be Helpful

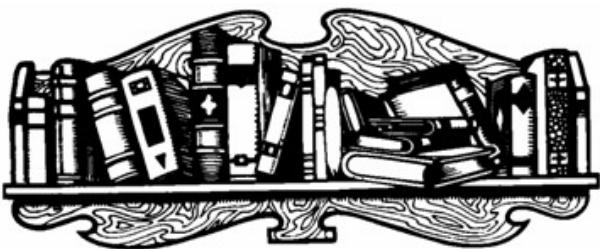
1. Let all who would minister abide in a simple and patient submission to the will of God for that Divine ability by which alone they may faithfully and effectively preach the Word. Remember that all acceptable worship and all Gospel ministry is performed under the immediate teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit. (*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.* [John 4: 23-24; 1 Corinthians 12 (whole chapter)])
2. Let all, in their spoken testimonies, be cautious of using unnecessary preambles, and of asserting too positively a Divine impulse—the baptizing power of Truth accompanying their words being the true evidence. (*My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.* [John 7: 16-18])
3. Let us remember that true courage dwells closer to gentleness than to criticism, and that judgment belongs to the Lord. Let there be constant self-restraint from any tendency, either to give cause for or to be drawn into disputation of any kind during meetings for worship. (*But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of* *continued on page 8*

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Return Service Requested

and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. [Isaiah 11: 1-2])

This information was adapted from “An Introduction to Early Friends (Quakers) and Waiting Worship.” The pamphlet was originally published as “An Introduction to Conservative Friends (Quakers)” and was gathered from Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) resources, especially the Ohio Yearly Meeting Book of Discipline. Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) is a small group of Friends that continues to meet in Christ-centered, expectant, waiting worship.



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all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. [James 3: 17, 18])

4. Let all be cautious of interrupting the solemnity of the meeting by too frequent speaking or by unnecessary additions toward the conclusion of their addresses. (*Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues. [Proverbs 10: 19]*)
5. Let all read the Holy Scriptures frequently, and be careful to seek for Divine Guidance in interpreting their meaning. (*His delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. [Psalms 1: 1-3]; Your word if a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. [Psalms 119: 105]*)
6. Lastly, dear Friends, let all dwell in that Spirit which alone can give ability to those who labor in the Church of Christ. (*The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom*