

Epistle 187

by George Fox

The destructive spirit seeks to destroy the fellowship and worship of the saints, and to lead them into a life of disobedience and sin.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1, Matthew 13:6, John 4:24, Romans 16:18, 1 Corinthians 8:1, Ephesians 2:6, Philippians 1:5, Colossians 2:23, Hebrews 10:25, James 3:15, 2 Peter 2:18, Jude 1:16

Topics: "Christian Unity", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

George Fox preaches about dwelling in the love of God together to be built up, warning against enmity, discord, and worldly wisdom that lead to disobedience and questioning. He emphasizes the importance of standing faithful and not falling into janglings and disputes, which are the work of the devil. Fox urges believers to keep their habitation in the truth of God, shining their lights and having oil in their lamps to grow in Christ Jesus and experience unity, life, peace, and salvation.

Transcript

My dear friends,--Dwell in the love of God together, for that edifies you all [1 Cor 8:1], and by that ye are built up; and who go from that, pluck down with enmity, and discord, and wrangling, and quarreling, and disputing; and are puffed up with high-swelling words [2 Pet 2:18, Jude 1:16], and are large in their worldly wisdom, and earthly knowledge in a show, to tread upon the simple [Rom 16:18?]; and are of the great comprehension. Therefore keep over that spirit, for that will not stand to the end, although it would be lord; it is scorched, when the heat of persecution comes [Mat 13:6].

And therefore stand faithful. For that which runs into janglings, and disputes, and contentions, and questionings, is the disobedient. That was the devil's work in the beginning, which brought Eve out of her habitation [Gen 3:1-6, 23f]; and that is the work of his servants in the fall, to bring the innocent out of their habitation, to question, reason, and jangle with them, to bring them out of their habitation. They will say, they must not meet together, such as are gathered in the name of Christ Jesus [Mat 18:20], that never fell [1 Pet 2:22], who is above Adam, that fell.

And thus the devil would lay all waste, and make the world like a wilderness [Isa 14:17], and break down the bounds of the righteous gardens and plantations [Isa 61:3,11?], and would break them down into his wilderness, and lay them barren and waste. And so, when they are gone from the truth themselves, the devil is got into them, and would keep them from meetings, to draw others into the same, who are gathered into the name of Jesus, and are come to sit down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [Eph

2:6], and are found with the flock that lie down at noon-day [Song 1:7].

And so, that fallen spirit would bring the saints to forsake their assemblies [Heb 10:25], and would make them like a wilderness; if he cannot, he will throw dirt upon them, and backbite them, and prejudice them, and slander them, and speak evil of them, and strive to sow discord amongst them, and preach up some outward things amongst them, to bring them into an outward fellowship, from the immortal power and gospel fellowship [Phil 1:5], and fill them with earthly wisdom [James 3:15] and knowledge, and understanding, and carnal policy, with quirks, tricks, turnings, and windings, to over word and ensnare the simple, and to bring them into questioning.

And so, this spirit is to destroy, ruin, and lay waste, and to rob and beguile, and would destroy, if it were in its power, the saints' fellowship and worship, and if it were possible deceive the elect [Mat 24:24]. For sometimes it will come in the show of worship and feigned humility [Col 2:23], and other times with Esau's tears [Gen 27:38?]; but all the strength of it is set, to lead the innocent out of his habitation, and to destroy and devour him. And so, being adulterated from the true spirit, the true light, and the fellowship in it, it runs into all the secret evils, inward adultery, and outward adultery, uncleanness, and fornication; and being in the evil, darkness, and uncleanness, judges all like unto itself with its evil thoughts [James 2:4], and casts out its flood of evil speaking and wickedness upon the righteous and just, the saints of the Most High [Dan 7:18], whose garments are clean and pure.

And so, this spirit will cry down the saints' fellowship in spirit, and worship in spirit and truth [John 4:24], and their fellowship in the power which was before their forms were, or the devil either; and when it cannot get them down, and break their fellowship, to forsake their assembling together, (which is contrary to the apostle's doctrine, and the churches in the primitive times, before the apostacy,) and when they see they can neither break their fellowship nor worship, then they say, away with your forms; and cry down forms to such as be in the power of godliness [2 Tim 3:5].

And that spirit's work, that doth so, is to bring into such forms in time, which are out of the spirit, and truth, and power of God, in which the saints have fellowship and refreshment; in which God is worshipped in that which is above, and was before time. And that contrary spirit its work is, to bring into the many invented forms in the fall, and sometimes runs out of all right form into confusion, and out of all order of life, in which the saints of the Most High, that walk in the spirit, are, in the fellowship and power of life, having the order of life amongst them.

And therefore, all Friends, keep your habitation every where in the truth of God, and let your lights be shining [Mat 5:16], and your lamps burning, and have oil in your lamps [Mat 25:4], and salt in yourselves [Mark 9:50] to savour withal, that he may grow up into Christ Jesus, by whom all things were made, that were made [John 1:3]; that through him ye may know all things [John 15:15, 1 Jn 2:20]. And so, live in him, that destroys the enmity; and in him sit, in Christ Jesus, in whom ye have unity, life, peace, and salvation. .

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G. F.

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