

Epistle 228

by George Fox

George Fox warns against the dangers of high-mindedness and the fruits of the flesh, encouraging believers to dwell in the power of God and keep unity, life, love, and peace.

Scripture: Matthew 7:3, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 9:18, Galatians 5:19, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 4:30, Philippians 1:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-20, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Fruits Of The Spirit", "Unity in the Spirit"

Description

George Fox addresses his friends, urging them to remain grounded in the power of God and to avoid the pitfalls of judgment and division that arise from the flesh. He warns against high-mindedness and the tendency to focus on the faults of others while neglecting one's own shortcomings. Fox emphasizes the importance of unity, love, and the fruits of the Spirit, contrasting them with the destructive behaviors that stem from the flesh. He calls for a return to their first love and the true fellowship that comes from living in the power of God, encouraging them to reject gossip and strife. Ultimately, he reassures them that by dwelling in God's power, they can maintain peace and grow in their spiritual lives.

Transcript

Dear friends, who have tasted of that which is precious, and have felt the truth convincing of you; and also felt the power of the Lord God: I feel something amongst some of you that is not right; and how that such get up into the wise part, but are out of the power, and out of the life, and with that judge, and are beholding the moats in others eyes, whilst the beam is in their own eyes [Mat 7:3]. Oh! abuse not the power, in which is the gospel fellowship [1 Cor 9:18, Phil 1:5], which will keep all in unity, and grieve not the spirit [Eph 4:30], in which is the true fellowship, and the bond of peace [Eph 4:3].

Keep down high-mindedness, despise not prophecies [1 Th 5:20], and quench not the spirit [1 Th 5:19] in the least; for that is flesh and not spirit in yourselves that doth so. Judge not before the time that the Lord do come, who brings to light all the hidden things of darkness [1 Cor 4:5] in you; run not into outward things, that is the fleshly mind, that will run from one thing, and so be restless, and will not know what seat to sit in; after it hath been in one outward thing it will run into another, and call it, his growth in the truth, and fall a judging others; but that judgment is after the flesh, and their growth is in the flesh; for the fruits of it is strife, backbitings, whisperings, and leads to idleness, busy-bodies from house to house [1 Tim 5:13], slandering, scandalizing, vilifying, and are in lightness, out of the fear of God, in variance and sowing dissention, and these are the seedsmen of the flesh, and not of the spirit; and so feed one another with

that which burdens the seed, and quenches the spirit, and destroys the love and unity, which love you should grow in.

So the fruits of every birth manifesteth itself; the fruits of the spirit are love, and peace, [Gal 5:22] and truth, and plainness, and righteousness, and godliness. But the fruits of the flesh [Gal 5:19] are backbitings, whisperings [2 Cor 12:20], lyings, slanderings, scandalizings. And therefore mind what this birth hath brought forth, (and shame it,) that hath cried up outward things, and what it hath run into, and what it hath drawn you into, that are in it, and what it hath rent you from, and whether you are not come to a loss, and whether you are not gone into the flesh, and into the air, and lost your first habitations [Jude 1:6] of tenderness and compassion; for every birth knows its own, and is grieved when its own is judged, and that will never love plain dealing and righteous judgment, which are honest and true; but will have the false prophet's cushion and pillow [Ezek 13:20]; and can neither endure sound doctrine [2 Tim 4:3] nor judgment.

And therefore mind your first habitation and first love, [Rev 2:4] and that which did convince you, that you may all come into life and power, to sit down in the habitation of it, in love, and life, and unity, and let there not be a backbiter nor slanderous tongue, nor liar, nor whisperer, reproacher, nor a busy-body found amongst you; for if there be, it will leaven one another [1 Cor 5:6], and bring darkness and death upon you.

Therefore, as I said before, dwell in the power of God, in which you may keep unity, life, love, and peace; and in which power of God you may be drawn up out of satan's power, into the power of God, in which is my life, and in it is my habitation and dwelling, where I know the unspotted garment [Jude 1:23] hid from all the unclean beasts' tongues, lips, hands, and eyes; and blessed are all you that keep in the power, and have kept your first habitation; for you grow up as calves in the stall [Mal 4:2]; and such gad not abroad to change their ways; for the birth of the flesh would have some outward thing to feed upon, but the birth of the spirit reigns over it, farewell.

G. F.

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