

Epistle 232

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 232 emphasizes the importance of gathering in Christ, living in truth, and maintaining faith amidst worldly distractions and false teachings.

Scripture: Genesis 1:27, Genesis 18:18, John 7:38, John 17:5, Romans 12:14, Ephesians 4:24, Hebrews 10:25, Hebrews 13:8, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 5:9, Revelation 21:23

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Following Christ"

Description

George Fox preaches to all friends gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, emphasizing the contrast between those who have fallen from righteousness and holiness and those who remain in Christ, the one who never fell. He highlights the journey from the confusion of the fall to the blessed state in Christ, where safety and peace are found. Fox urges believers to walk in the light of the Lamb, avoiding false teachings and traditions, and to keep their focus on Christ who is unchanging and the source of life and peace.

Transcript

All Friends every where, who are gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, that never fell [1 Pet 2:22] nor changed [Heb 13:8], yea, into him that never fell being gathered ye will see over all the gatherings of Adam and Eve in the fall, from the garden of God, and the blessed state, and from the image of God [Gen 1:27], and the righteousness, and the holiness [Eph 4:24] that he was in before he fell; wherein all is in the confusion in the fall. The sons and daughters of Adam are broken into the many gatherings, being in the fall from righteousness and holiness, and the image of God, and the blessed state that they were in before they fell; and so are from the witness of God [1 John 5:9], the spirit and the light in their own particulars.

And so as Jacob's prophecy was on his death-bed to his sons, how that the gathering of all nations should be unto Shiloh [Gen 49:10], unto Christ Jesus, (mark,) to Christ Jesus that never fell, who was with the Father before the world began [John 17:5], in whom is the light, life, and peace, and rest in this gathering, and so the gathering is out of Adam in the fall, up into Christ, that never fell, and in him are safety and peace; and in this gathering you have every one a river, yea, of living water, in your own bellies [John 7:38], which river comes from the fountain; for all nations are blessed in him [Gen 18:18, Gal 3:8], Christ Jesus that takes away the curse that stood over all nations, and destroys the devil [Heb 2:14] the author of it; and spreads over the blessing again, and all are blessed in him, and therefore, bless and curse not [Rom 12:14].

And all they that are saved walk in the light of the Lamb, and so come to the holy city [Rev 21:23f], that comes down from God out of heaven [Rev 3:12], into which there is no unclean thing enters [Rev 21:27]; in which city there is no need of the sun nor moon, the Lord God and the Lamb is the light thereof [Rev 21:23]. Of this city, which fences out all bad, and unclean, and unrighteous, and the adulterer, and idolater, and the liar; and the power of the Lord God goes over all the bad; and they that come into this city are saved, (as I said before,) and walk in the light of the Lamb.

And therefore, friends, all know the blessed truth, which the devil is out of [John 8:44], which truth makes you blessed, through which you come every one to have a crown, and so to feed upon the tree of life, through which you come to live for ever; the leaves of which heal the wounded nations [Gen 3:22; Rev 22:2]. So you that have bought the truth, sell it not [Prov 23:23] for trifles, neither give it nor leave it; for that which the tempter will tempt you unto is out of the truth, to outward things; but consider all the faithful all along how they suffered, and by whom, and for what, in all ages since the fall, from the foundation of the world, since the Lamb hath been slain [Rev 13:8]; not joining to men in any thing which the sons of Adam have invented and set up, the sons of God nor the faithful could not join to.

They followed the Lord, his counsel, and his word and promises, and went through the great tribulations to the rest, as pilgrims and strangers [Heb 11:13] to all the sons of Adam's evil ways, religions, and worships; them that were in the worship of God, and in the way of God, Christ Jesus that never fell [1 Pet 2:22], saw over them all.

And take heed of the rough garments [Zech 13:4], and rough spirit of Esau's rough nature [Gen 27:11], but mind the plain Jacob [Gen 25:27], that supplants rough Esau [Gen 27:36]; and mind the constant truth, and take heed of the inconstant, and such as are given to changing, which the son gives not himself unto, for he ends the changings, the son Christ doth that never changes, and as every one hath received him, so walk in him that never changes; walk not in the traditions of the Jews that changed, nor the Gentiles, nor the apostate christians, but in him (as I said before, Christ Jesus,) that never changed, and the way, that never fell, nor never changed, nor never will change [Heb 13:8]; and then you will see over all the ways of the priests, the shepherds, the prophets, and the teachers of Adam and Eve's sons and daughters in the fall, that do change, and do fall and stumble, and are turned by every wind [Eph 4:14], you being in Christ Jesus that never fell nor never changed, in whom you have life, and peace, and rest.

For to preach Christ the way [John 14:6], the prophet, priest, and shepherd, that never fell, and people to receive him, they come out of all them that do fall, both prophets, and shepherds, and priests' ways; and this is opposite to them all, in which they took counsel against them that preached Christ the word [Acts 5:33], which was in the beginning [John 1:1] before the Jews' ways and traditions were, or the Gentiles', or the apostate christians', and he will be when they are gone.

So to preach Christ, is not to preach up the Jews' traditions, nor the Gentiles', nor the apostate christians', nor to follow the traditions of their forefathers, but to follow the word; neither receive them, nor them that preach them, and to follow that which lives, and endures, and remains for ever [1 Pet 1:23]. And this is the word that makes the Jews to grieve, and the Gentiles, and the apostate christians, to preach the word which was before their traditions were, and their inventions; and this is the word which makes wise men and wise women; and the word is the seed, which seed is sown in the field, and the field is the world, and there is stony, thorny, and highway ground, and good ground; [Mat 13:19-23] and so this is universal doctrine, the universal seed hits the stony, thorny, and highway ground, and falls upon all, only it is the good ground that brings forth fifty, sixty, or a hundred fold increase.

And such as are the highway ground, they are so full of the fowls, and of the air, that it takes it away; and such as are sown among thorns, they are so full of the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of richness, that the thorns choke it, and the cares of the world; they are such stony hearts that the seed hath not much earth, that when trials and persecutions come with their heats, it is scorched by the heat of the sun. And therefore be ye all warned of these natures, both of the stony, and of the thorny, and of the highway ground, and of the fowls, and of the air.

And, friends, keep down feigned flattery. Keep in the truth, that brings to plain-heartedness, that all may be the good ground, that you may abound in goodness, and righteousness, and holiness, for peace is sown to the righteous, and gladness to the upright in heart [Psa 97:11]; and see that you walk in the light [1 Jn 1:7], and the life, that it may be your life, that you may have treasure in your vessels [2 Cor 4:7?], that you may enter in with the bridegroom, having the oil in your own lamps [Mat 25:1-10], that you may inherit the life, that is above all the foolish talkers [Eph 5:4] which be out of the peace, (the second Adam [1 Cor 15:45,57,]) in whom the peace is, and the life; for they that be in strife about the body of Christ, are in Adam in the fall, and they are neither at peace in themselves with God, nor Christ, nor them that are in Christ; so whatever men or people profess, their end manifests them, and crowns them with death or life.

So, live in the word, which all ends in the seed; this keeps over all pretences in the substance, and over the airy spirits [Eph 2:2] that are out of the life, running up and down sowing dissention, tattling, and backbiting, and whispering [2 Cor 12:20], and setting one against another.

The seed Christ is over that spirit, and he hath little room in their hearts, for they are abroad in the fields, lifting up themselves higher than the world, but are worse to deceive the simple [Rom 16:18]. But truth, and the light, and the life is over all that, in which all keep your habitation [Jude 1:6]; for Adam lost his habitation [Gen 3:23f], and so his sons and daughters, who are in the disobedience, are in the fall; and the Jews lost their habitation from the love of God, and so they lost their authority, and were mingled among the heathen. And the apostate christians lost their habitation from the life and power that the apostles were in. And so have brought all christendom into heaps and sects about outward things, being out of the life and word, which was in the beginning before the apostacy and the fall were. So live in the word, in that you have life, and dominion, and authority over all that which Adam and Eve's sons and daughters invented; and also over all in the fall. In which word you have wisdom, as I said before, and there is a faithful witness, Christ [Rev 1:5], whose name is called the word [Rev 19:13], and he is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending [Rev 22:13], the amen [Rev 3:14].

And, friends, keep over all the bustlings, and wars, and strife, and the talkers of such things among the sons of Adam in the fall; you that be in Christ Jesus that never fell [1 Pet 2:22], in whom is the peace, who makes the first Adam's sons and daughters to break their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, that they shall not learn war any more [Isa 2:4]; for they that be there, are in the foolish state, but they that are in Christ are in the wise state, and have spiritual weapons [Eph 6:11-17], though accounted by the world foolish; yea, the wisdom of God is so to the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness [1 Cor 1:20, 3:19]. And so you that the Lord hath blessed in outward things for his truth, keep over them and out of them, serving the Lord who hath blessed you, lest you be entangled. So keep above them in the righteous life and conversation, that righteousness may flow to all men in all things; honesty and truth, and that which doth justice, and doing justly, that may flourish; for whose conversation is ordered aright, they shall see the salvation of God [Psa 50:23]; keep out of all heats and passions, and over the tempestuous spirits, the ground of which is uncleanness, all which are up and down, and sudden; which makes a mountain of wickedness and unholiness; and keeps out of the holy mountain, which they

that walk in the light of the Lord go to, and they are taught his ways [Isa 2:3,5].

Take heed of a false liberty in any thing to the flesh [Gal 5:13], but keep your first love and habitation in the power and truth of God; for the lowly mind, the humble, and meek, and broken, and contrite spirit and heart the Lord doth not despise [Psa 51:17], but exalt.

Keep out of the many words of the world, and take heed of a liberty of going into them, but keep in the power of the Lord God; over all, which was before all, and is over all, that your lives and conversations may preach to all men, and adorn the truth of God, and speak in the hearts of all men.

Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together [Heb 10:25] as the manner of some was in the beginning of the apostacy, which entered into the reasoning part, and so went from the exhorting daily [Heb 3:13], and the building, and the fellowship, and the communion of the saints in the spirit, and from the flocks, and the garden of God, which he waters with his water of life, and feeds with his bread of life [John 5:35]; and sets open his broad rivers of living water [John 7:38] to drink. And such as forsake the assemblies of the righteous; some for fear of the earth and sufferings, become quarrelling spirits, and so go out of the path of the flock's footsteps, and sit not down with the flock at noon-day [Song 1:7], in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [Eph 2:6]; for there the flocks meet, and there they have all a fountain, through which they are all of one soul, and mind, and judgment, and heart, and spirit, and come to be gathered out of all the separations, and sects, and fellowships, and gatherings, and meetings of Adam and Eve in the fall, and sit down in Christ Jesus that never fell [1 Pet 2:22], where the fulness is and the life; in whom there is no shadow, no variableness, nor turning [James 1:17], in him that is the way. But, Oh! the poverty, the shadows, the variableness, the turnings, the worships, and traditions, and the sects that are in the world among the sons of Adam in the fall! Oh! the riches that are in him that never fell, the peace and the life that was with the Father before the world began [John 17:5], the amen [Rev 3:14].

And, friends, take heed of the vain inventions and arts of the world, keep out of their rhymes and their verses, for they are the arts of men and stir up the light part, and lift up that that pertains to itself, that is stirred up that will turn in the end to the strife, or the earth. But you that live in the word of God that never fell, changes, nor alters, do not, but as you are moved by it, and that will stand and remain; in whom you may know a dwelling, life over death, and before it was; for the serpent that got into Adam and Eve by disobedience, they had dominion over all things that God had made [Gen 1:26]; yea, over the serpent: and he came and told her, 'they should be as gods, if they would eat of the fruit that was forbidden [Gen 3:3];' and they thought to have been as gods, and to be made wise; but the devil came to be god, and they came to be slaves. And so he got into Adam's heart, and Eve's heart, through their disobedience, through which they lost their dominion, and the serpent came to be god of the world [2 Cor 4:4], the deceiver. Now saith the Lord to the serpent, 'Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shall be thy meat all the days of thy life [Gen 3:14].' So you may see how the serpent got into Adam and Eve by disobedience.

Secondly. He ruleth in all Adam's sons' and daughters' hearts that are disobedient to the light, the truth, the power of God in themselves, and he darkens their hearts and minds, and makes them envious; and from him they have their devilish earthly wisdom [James 3:15], and all their invented arts and ways that are bad, that keep up, and stir up the fallen nature that is sometimes puffed up, and sometimes down, through which the earth is brought out of its course [Psa 82:5], and the bonds of civility broken. So here he that rules in the disobedient, and got into Adam and Eve's heart by disobedience, which is called the god of the world, whose meat is dust, goes upon his belly: now if this ruler, and this governor of the hearts of such as are disobedient, who is called the prince of the air [Eph 2:2], and so whirls them up into the air,

who got into Adam and Eve's heart by disobedience, and rules in his sons' and daughters' hearts by disobedience, if he goes upon his belly, how go they that he rules? Better than the ruler, think you? Must the ruled go better than the ruler?

Thirdly. . . . So it is no strange thing for him and his messengers to speak against the light in the heart, for he hath made the world like a wilderness [Isa 14:12,17], all wild and rough; he that got in by disobedience, and rules in the disobedient, it is not like that he would have people to obey the light nor life within them; he that is out of truth [John 8:44], who got into Adam and Eve by disobedience, rules in all them that are disobedient, going roaring up and down, seeking whom he may devour [1 Pet 5:8]. And so Adam came to be lost, and the Lamb came to be slain, from the foundation of the world [Rev 13:9]; and therefore comes Christ, the first and the last [Rev 1:11], to destroy the devil and his works [Heb 2:14, 1 Jn 3:8] in men's hearts, and sanctifies them by his blood [Heb 13:12], his life, which was the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world [1 Jn 2:2], and destroys the devil and his works, through death; and him that hath the power of death [Heb 2:14], and sanctifies and washes men and women, and presents them back again to God perfect [Col 1:28]. But the devil would not have men and women to own perfection, who hath made them imperfect, nor his messengers; but it is Christ that destroys him and his works, and saith, 'Be perfect [Mat 5:48],' and presents men and women perfect to God out of the fall, up to Adam before he fell; and not only there, but up to himself that never fell, the royal seed. And in him keep your meetings, and dwell in peace and love, that the fruits of the spirit [Gal 5:22] may abound among you; for the fruits of the flesh [Gal 5:19] are in the fall, where the spirit is grieved [Eph 4:30]; for there they be out of the quietness, and out of the rest and peace. . . . And so Christ comes to be manifest in people's hearts, and the son to be revealed, who casts out the strong man, which hath kept the house, and spoils his goods [Luke 11:21f, Mat 12:29], who got into Adam and Eve by disobedience, and rules in the hearts of Adam and Eve's sons and daughters, who are in disobedience [Eph 2:2]. And so Christ the second Adam must rule in people's hearts, who are in the obedience, as he doth in all that have power, and enjoy life.

And so be valiant and faithful for the truth upon the earth [Jer 9:3], serving the Lord in a new life, that is in Christ Jesus that never fell, out of the old life of Adam in the fall; for the old life is in Adam in the fall, where the spirit is grieved; and the new life is in Adam that never fell, who was born in Bethlehem. Beth is a house, and lathem is bread, where the fulness is, who will dry up the river Euphrates [Rev 16:12] with its froth, which hath run so up and down among the sons of Adam; that people may drink at him the fountain, the water of life [Rev 21:6], through whom you come to know the mighty God of heaven and earth, the upholder of all things [Heb 1:3], and creator of all things, to his glory and honour, being in Christ Jesus, by whom were all things, who is the top and corner-stone [Eph 2:20], in whom you all have life; in him live: and so farewell; that you may have the blessings of the Lord come upon you.

And, dear friends, keep your hands, tongues, feet, bodies, and hearts clean and open, out of all pollutions and uncleanness; for blessed are all you whose feet are guided in the way of peace [Luke 1:79], which is in the way of righteousness, through which the immortal life is lived in. And light words and jesting all avoid, and fables, and foolish talk; but live in the power of the Lord that is over all, through which you follow godliness and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord God [Heb 12:14].

And blessed be God the Father, who hath set Christ over all, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end [Rev 1:11,18], God's faithful and true witness, the amen [Rev 3:14]; in him have you the book opened, and in him you see all things unsealed [Rev 5:5,9], in him manifest in you, who is your life, who was with the Father before the world began, the amen.

For in this night of apostacy from the spirit and power that the apostles were in, hath all things been sealed up, and no man could open; but now is the lamb come again, that opens the sealed book [Rev 6:1]. And all Friends, keep out of all the vain fashions of the world, and over that unchaste spirit that invents new fashions daily, both in apparel and diet. Therefore keep chaste in the power of God over them all, that your lives and conversations may judge them in such things, who devour those things upon their lusts [James 4:3], which God hath given to the service of man.

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