

Epistle 233

by George Fox

Epistle 233 emphasizes the critical role of faith in achieving victory, unity, and true worship, while distinguishing between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world.

Scripture: 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Faith And Victory", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

George Fox preaches about the importance of faith as the key to victory, access to God, and quenching the attacks of the enemy. He emphasizes that true faith pleases God, brings unity, and is the foundation of acceptance and victory. Fox contrasts the spirit of Christ, which does not persecute but offers salvation, with the spirit of the world that persecutes those who do not conform to man-made ordinances and religions. He encourages believers to dwell in the power of God, find stability and peace, and not be swayed by false teachings or distractions.

Transcript

Friends, this is the day of the trial of your faith [1 Pet 1:7], and therefore be faithful; for the faith is it by which you have victory [1 Jn 5:4] and access to God [Rom 5:2]; by faith all the fiery darts of satan are quenched [Eph 6:16], and by faith the mountains are subdued and removed [1 Cor 13:2]; and in this faith all your sacrifices are accepted of God, and that gives you victory and access to God; and in this faith you please God [Heb 11:6], and that gives you victory over that which displeased him; and in this faith you have all unity [Eph 4:13], which is the faith of God's elect [Tit 1:1]; the one faith [Eph 4:5], which keeps you in the oneness, and all the sacrificers, and worshippers, and religions that are not in this faith, are not one, their sacrifices nor offerings God hath no respect to, but they are like Cain's [Gen 4:5], that went from the presence of God [Gen 4:16], and persecuted about his religion [1 Jn 3:12], who built a city in the land of Nod [Gen 4:17], which signifies, wandering to and fro, and unsettled, and tossings to and fro, up and down.

And this is the city that all that persecute about religion live in, the land of Nod, tossings, wanderings to and fro; let them be of what profession or religion soever, heathen, Jew, or Christian, if they be persecutors about religion with carnal weapons [2 Cor 10:4], they are in Cain's land of Nod, wandering out of the faith of Abel, of the elect; in which faith God accepts the sacrifice [Heb 11:4], and these are in the land of the living; but Cain's land of Nod, where the envious ones are persecuting others about religion, in that land God has respect to none of their sacrifices nor religions.

The outward Jews had outward weapons to hold up their outward services, for which they had a command from God; but the heathens had no command from God to hold up their inventions; and Christ Jesus came to end the Jews' law and commandments, that held up their outward services, together with their outward weapons, and all outward things. And he who is the substance reigns, for all the types, and figures, and shadows were given to man [Col 2:17], after man fell, but Christ that comes to redeem man out of the fall, to the state that he was in before he fell, ends them all, and in him there is no shadow [Jas 1:17].

So he sets up a spiritual ministry, and spiritual worship, and a spiritual fellowship, and a church that is without spot or wrinkle [Eph 5:27], and a religion that is pure from above [Jas 1:27/3:17]; and this religion is ruled with spiritual weapons. And now, friends, here you may discern what is set up by Christ and his spirit, and what is set up by man. For Christ who ended the Jews' laws and commandment, who preached, and taught his disciples who were to go into all nations to preach the gospel [Mat 24:14], to gather people unto him, and to establish churches; he gave forth no command nor order, that those that would not hear them, nor receive them, his law, his commandment, his doctrine, should be persecuted, imprisoned, or banished; though he suffered, and was blasphemed, and persecuted, and his apostles, for publishing forth the truth; and he rebuked them that would have had men's lives destroyed, and said, that he came to save men's lives [Luke 9:54-6].

And the apostles, and the true church in the primitive times, before the apostacy, that were in the spirit of Christ [Rom 8:9] Jesus, walked in the doctrine of Christ, and his commands, and did not persecute any about religion, nor imprison among themselves, nor others about religion, though they had ordinances and commands amongst them for the utmost; and if they rejected the churches counsel, they were to be left as heathen, which was the utmost penalty [Mat 18:17]. And so here you may see, the spirit of Christ did not persecute any for not observing that which it gave forth and set up, which it received from God.

Now here is a distinction betwixt the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of fallen men; for that which man's fallen spirit sets up, which he hath invented, if others will not fall down to it, and worship it, he persecutes them. This is the practice of the heathen and Jews, that transgressed the law of God, and followed their inventions, who persecuted the prophets, and killed the just one [Acts 7:52]. And this is the practice of the spirit of all the apostatized christians from the primitive spirit which was among the christians, which was the spirit of Christ.

So that spirit that does set up ordinances commandments, ways, religions, worships, and persecute others because they will not observe them; this is the spirit of the world [1 Cor 2:12], that lusts to envy [James 4:5], and not the spirit of Christ. And also those are the works of men which they persecute about, and not the works of Christ, which neither he nor his apostles persecuted about. And so here is a clear distinction to you, that you may know what leads to the spirit of Christ, and what lusts to the spirit of envy; for the spirit of Christ does not persecute any that do not receive that which he sets up; but the spirit of the world doth persecute them that will not receive that which it sets up.

And in this you may try both fruits [Mat 7:16] and spirits [1 Jn 4:1] (as the rod of Moses devoured up all the magician's serpents [Exo 7:12]) of the lying signs and wonders [2 Th 2:9]; so shall the rod of Christ, who has all the power in heaven and earth given unto him [Mat 28:18], who will rule all nations with his rod of iron [Rev 12:5]. Christ's rod shall and will devour all the serpents and lying wonders of the spiritual Egypt and Sodom [Rev 11:8], yea, and all the serpents that be in all nations; for all nations are to be ruled by it.

And Moses' song was sung [Exo 15] when his rod had devoured the serpents, and the outward Egyptians in the sea : so the lamb's song [Rev 15:3] shall be known, as all the spiritual Egyptians' serpents are devoured by Christ's rod; and the spiritual Egyptians being overthrown in the sea, the Jews in spirit shall rejoice and sing the song of the lamb. The abomination that made desolation, that is spoken of by Daniel the prophet, which should come in after the daily sacrifice was taken away, and should continue one thousand two hundred and ninety days [Dan 11:31,12:11]; this abomination hath made desolate from the truth, light, life, and the power of God, true religion, and true worship, and true church and fellowship.

So the beast that John saw and speaks of, which must continue forty-two months [Rev 11:3, 13:5], and the whore, the false church, upon the beast [Rev 17:3]; which beast should be worshipped forty-two months; the time of his continuing; and the whore should sit in her scarlet, the false church upon the beast. The true church this time has been in the wilderness a thousand two hundred and three-score days [Rev 12:6]; which is now come out again, and the man child is come down from heaven to rule all with his rod of iron, and the lamb and the saints shall have the victory [Rev 17:14, Dan 7:22], who make war in righteousness [Rev 19:11], and are going on conquering and to conquer [Rev 6:2].

And so you followers of the lamb be faithful and valiant for the truth upon the earth [Jer 9:3], and heed not your native soil, but mind the birth that is born and brought forth from the womb of eternity, that separates you from your mother's womb, by which you believe in God, and fear not man, what he can do unto you [Psa 118:6, Heb 13:6]; neither look at the hills for salvation [Jer 3:23], for the Lord can make the rocks a standing pool [Psa 114:8], and the mountains streams.

And therefore dwell in the power of God, which was before the fall of man was; whose fallen spirit persecutes those who are come to taste of the power of Christ's resurrection and life, and in this power of God you will not be weary nor faint [Isa 40:31], which was before the fallen spirit was that doth assault you. And in this power you will have stability, content, comfort, joy, and peace. And keep over that spirit, let it not have power over you, that may receive the truth in a notion, and may be a little civilized by it, that is ready to join with every gainsaying core [Jude 1:11], and is ready to wander after every strange thing that is new, and so will follow strange flesh [Jude 1:7], who are uncleansed by the power of truth, and unestablished in it; and such often have their religion to seek, that live in questionings and disputings [1 Tim 6:4f] in carnal reasons [Rom 8:6f], out of the power of God, in which is the fellowship, the one thing, which is Christ the substance [Col 2:17], in which all stability is felt, which has little room in such hearts.

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