

# Epistle 240

by George Fox

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*George Fox's Epistle 240 calls believers to focus on true worship and the transformative power of Christ, moving away from outward rituals and traditions.*

**Scripture:** Genesis 4:3, 1 Corinthians 7:14, 1 Corinthians 11:3, Galatians 6:15, Colossians 2:16, James 1:17, Jude 1:11, Revelation 14:6

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Spiritual Unity"

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## Description

George Fox preaches about the importance of staying true to the power of God and not getting caught up in outward rituals or worship practices. He highlights how various individuals and groups throughout history, like Cain, the children of Israel, and the Corinthians, strayed from the true worship of God by focusing on external observances. Fox emphasizes the need to focus on the life and power of God, rather than on temporary, earthly matters, and to seek unity, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Spirit. He warns against falling into disputes over trivial matters like food, drink, or outward appearances, and encourages believers to prioritize the new creature in Christ, faith working through love, and the eternal gospel.

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## Transcript

Friends,--All outward things, figures, types, shadows, and inventions, have been set up since Adam fell; which inventions Christ destroys, and the types, figures, and shadows of him he fulfils [Heb 9 - 10], and brings man up out of the fall, to the seed he was in before he fell; and so in the power of God, into peace, love, and unity, and into the everlasting fellowship. Cain differed from Abel in matter of worship [Gen 4:3-5]; Abraham from his countrymen and nation. Likewise in matter of worship, Moses and the children of Israel differed from the Egyptians and the Canaanites, and other nations, in matter of worship. Yet after the children of Israel were brought out of Egypt by the power of God, how soon after did they set up a calf [Exo 32], an outward thing? Therefore in the power of God keep over all things, and in his wisdom. And how soon Cora, Dathan, and Abiram began to offer a strange sacrifice [Num 16], after they were brought out of Egypt by the power of God; and went from the power of God, in which they should have offered; therefore in the power of God keep.

And how soon the children of Israel (when they multiplied and grew numerous,) offered out of the life of the law, and the power of God; then their sacrifices were like unto the cutting off a dog's neck, and blessing idols [Isa 66:3]: therefore keep in the life and power of God. And ye may see Daniel's religion and worship differed from Nebuchadnezzar's the emperor of Babylon, [Dan 3] and likewise differed from the

Chaldeans and Persians [Dan 6], as yours comes to differ now from all the apostates, gone from the apostles' and Christ's life and doctrine.

And there is the mystery of Babylon [Rev 17:5], as the Jews differed from outward Babylon; therefore keep in the power of God, that keeps you to the beginning. And also ye may see what differences there were among the churches in the primitive times, about meats, drinks, days, and times [Col 2:16], but the apostle tells them the kingdom of God stands not in such things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy ghost [Rom 14:17]. And they were not to judge one another about such things [Col 2:16]; for meats were for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God would destroy both them and it [1 Cor 6:13], and showed them that it was below christians to jangle about such things.

And also what jangling was there in the church in the primitive times about circumcision, which the apostle brings them off, and tells them, that circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth nothing, but a new creature [Gal 6:15]. Therefore mind that new creature, and the faith that works by love [Gal 5:6]. And how also there were janglings about baptism [1 Cor 1:13-17] and the supper [1 Cor 11:20-34], and about men, some for Paul, and some for Apollo [1 Cor 1:12, 3:4], &c. But the apostle directed them all to know Christ the seed, in the male and female [Gal 3:28f], and told them he preached Christ in them, and bid them examine themselves, and prove themselves, and to know him to be in them, otherwise they were reprobates [2 Cor 13:5]; and he brings them off from things that are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal [2 Cor 4:18].

Now these things which they jangled about, were things that were seen, and not eternal things, but temporal; for, if they did not come to Christ Jesus, the substance of those things, they remained in the reprobation from the life, truth, and substance. And also what janglings there were amongst the primitive christians, about marriage of believers and unbelievers, and the departing of the believers from the unbelievers; which the apostle told them, that marriage was honourable in all, and the bed undefiled [Heb 13:4]; and how that they should abide together, the believer with the unbeliever; and how that the believer sanctifieth the unbeliever, by which their children were not unholy, but clean [1 Cor 7:14]; and how it was better to marry than to burn [1 Cor 7:9]; though he spake to the same Corinthians of a state which was beyond that [1 Cor 7:1,7].

And likewise, also how there were janglings about ministers and teachers, about such as transformed themselves as into angels of light [2 Cor 11:13-15], and such as preached for filthy lucre [1 Pet 5:2/Micah 3:11], and such as served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies [Rom 16:18]; the apostle stops all such, and brings them to the life, and seed, and power of God over them all; and shows concerning marriage, how God made them male and female in the beginning [Gen 1:27, Mat 19:4]; which was the honourable marriage before the defiled state was.

And likewise what janglings there were, whether the woman should be covered, or the man should be covered, when they prayed or prophesied [1 Cor 11:3-17]; in which the apostle set forth a comeliness among them, of the man's being uncovered, and the woman covered; inasmuch as the man was the image and glory of God, and the woman the glory of the man [1 Cor 11:7]. Nevertheless, he would have them to know, that God was the head of Christ, and Christ was the head of the man, and the man was the head of the woman [1 Cor 11:3]; and the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman [1Cor 11:9].

And thus ye may see that these Corinthians were not come up to the state of Adam before he fell, and of Eve, by the apostles setting thus forth their states. And whereas it is said by some, 'that Christ is the head of the man,' &c. which head of man, (say they,) is the same that is head of the woman. Mark, now, if it be so, according to this interpretation, (which is wresting [2 Pet 3:16],) then Christ must be covered in the woman, when she prays or prophesies, and the woman must have power over Christ, and she be uncovered, then Christ must be shorn or shaven; which is ridiculous, and shows then a difference of Christ in the male and the female; which is not so, for God is the head of Christ, and Christ the head of man, as he was made, and man the head of the woman.

But as woman received the temptation, and likewise also the man, and so are both in the fall; now this was spoken as man was made before he fell, which as man comes up again out of the fall, and woman, Christ in the male and in the female is head of both. But now this was spoken to the Corinthians, (who were not come up to the state that Adam and Eve were in before they fell,) among whom this difference about covering or uncovering was, whether the man should be uncovered, and the woman covered when they prayed, &c.

Which was the comely order which the apostle set amongst them, and told them there should be heresies among them, that they that were approved might be made manifest [1 Cor 11:19], and looked upon them as heretics, who jangled contrary to his comely order and practice, which was, as said before, spoken to such as were not come to the state of Adam and Eve before they fell; for they that are come thither, to that state, by Christ, are come before outward coverings were; and them that are come to Christ, are come to the end of prophecy [Dan 9:24], to the seed Christ [Gal 3:16], the top-stone, in whom all things end; which top and corner-stone [Eph 2:20] is over all that laid that ends and changes.

So let your life be in that which never ends, nor never changes [Heb 13:8], and in whom there is no changing nor altering [James 1:17]. And who are come to this will not go back again into outward things. And also ye may see what jangling there was amongst such as did forbid meats, and drinks [Col 2:16], and marriages; and such got up into worshipping of angels [Col 2:18] and compelling ways, which after a time did separate, and apostatize from Christ, and the apostles, and so afterwards became antichrists [1 Jn 2:18], in an anti-liberty [2 Pet 2:19], and anti-freedom, to such as know all things good and blessed as they were in the beginning; which, who are there, are out of the state which Adam and Eve were in before the fall, where all the janglings are about outward things [1 Tim 1:6], which is in the fallen wisdom; . . . now ye that have seen the everlasting gospel Rev 14:6], and known the everlasting gospel preached again, which was among the apostles, and have been reaped out from among the apostates [Mat 13:30?], got up since the apostles' days; I say, live in it, and dwell in it; in which life and power ye see over to the apostles' days, by the spirit that gives to have an understanding of things; in which power of God [Rom 1:16] ye do not only see to the apostles' days, but over the Jews' law without, and its figures, types, and shadows, which were given to the sons of men, and of Adam after he fell, in the fall, which type out the life, that is to say, Christ, who redeems up out of the fall, which man was in before he fell, and up into the state of Christ, which shall never fall, unto himself.

And in this man seeth the blessed state, how all things were good and blessed, and how all the works of God are perfect, and he himself God's work, who set him in dominion before he fell, as he was in the power, image, and righteousness of God [Gen 1:27f]. . . . Now the janglings of the Jews against the christians were, about their outward things, in the first covenant, law, and first priesthood, that held up these things (in opposition to the christians) which God had commanded, not seeing him whom the true christians witnessed, who restored them out of all the changeable things, up into the state man was in

before he fell, and before those types, figures, and changeable things were, which since the days of the apostles, and also in their days, things were getting up, which the apostles judged; and setting up also by such whom the apostles judged and denied, and set forth orders and comeliness among the saints, and preached up the substance Christ, in whom there is no shadow, changing, nor variableness [James 1:17].

And that the heat of some spirits [Ezek 3:14?] got up so high about their outward things, that when they were not owned nor received, their sacrifices, and their will-worships, and their feigned humility [Col 2:23], and their observing of days, and times [Gal 4:10], and forbidding marriages, setting up their doctrines and traditions, which were not to be touched, tasted, nor handled [Col 2:21], they went enviously into Cain's way [Jude 1:11], and Balaam's [2 Pet 2:15], and got great men on their sides, and admired their persons because of their advantage ;Jude 1:16]. Such went from the voice of God, which brought them out of Egypt, as Core did [Num 16].

And all the envious spirits [James 4:5?] rose against them that were in the power of God in all ages, because they could not observe their outward things which they had set up to be observed, which they that were in the universal power of God, which was before the fall was, could never do; for their freedom stands in that; therefore is Cain wrathful [Gen 4:5] (against his brother,) who is the wanderer and vagabond [Gen 4:12,14] from God's voice, way, life, and acceptance.

. . . . . Adam and Eve lost their habitation [Gen 3:23f]; Cain lost his habitation not doing well [Gen 4:7,12]; Balaam went from his prophecy and his habitation not doing well; And all they that went from the apostles in Cain, Core and Balaam's way [Jude 1:11, 2 Pet 2:15], lost their habitations, and so came under a chain of darkness [Jude 1:6]. As likewise all they that are inwardly ravened [Mat 7:15] from the spirit of God, who are gone into outward things since the apostles' days, in the apostacy, have lost their habitation, and set up outward things to keep others out of their habitations, and then if they do not observe them, they are wrathful against them like Cain. And Core went from his habitation, from the power that brought him out of Egypt; and so such come under the chain of darkness, who lose their habitations, and they that lose their habitations [Jude 1:6], lose their first love [Rev 2:4]. . . .span class="page" id="p271">

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