

Epistle 261

by George Fox

George Fox emphasizes the importance of following God's law and Christ's teachings, rather than vain customs and seeking human honour.

Scripture: Jeremiah 10:3, Matthew 23:7, John 5:44, John 12:43, Acts 10:34, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Ephesians 4:15, Philippians 2:10, Revelation 13:4, Revelation 22:8

Topics: "Humility And Reverence", "Worldly Vs Spiritual"

Description

George Fox preaches against the customs and titles of the world, emphasizing that true manners come from avoiding evil words and following God's law, rather than outward gestures of respect. He highlights the importance of not seeking honor from one another, as it indicates unbelief and a love for worldly praise, contrasting this with the humility and reverence shown by prophets and apostles towards God. Fox stresses the need for Christians to have Christ as their spiritual head and master, serving and worshiping Him above all else, in contrast to those who worship worldly powers and seek vain glory.

Transcript

Friends,--To call men 'masters' or 'gracious lord,' and putting off the hat to them, and the man's scraping with his foot, and the woman's making a courtesy. These titles and fashions not giving and observing, doth not break the law of Christ, nor of God, which respects no man's person [Acts 10:34], but they are the customs of nations which are vain [Jer 10:3]; and the great manners and civilities that lie among Christians, are in saying you to one man, and the man's putting off his hat, and scraping with his foot, and the woman's bending her knees; and in these and such like things lie their civilities, their honour, and manners, and well-breeding, as they call it.

But the right manners are to keep people from evil words, which corrupt good manners [1 Cor 15:33], and God's law; and Christ respects no man's person. And man and woman in their not doing, nor scraping, and bowing, are not unmannerly, nor uncivil; for man was forbidden by the angel to bow to him, but to bow to God [Rev 22:8f], and to worship him, and to bow at the name of Jesus [Phil 2:10], who is called, the power of God [1 Cor 1:24], and the word of God [Rev 19:13]; for the angel said to John, he was his fellow-servant [Rev 22:9].

So servants were not to bow one to another; and if they do, is it not reprov'd by the angel, and reprov'd by Christ, the seeking honour one of another? For 'how can you believe, saith Christ, that receive honour one of another? [John 5:44]' John v. So it is a mark, that they are unbelievers, who receive honour one of

another; and they are like the Pharisees, that love the praise of men [John 12:43], and are called of men master [Mat 23:7], and like the heathen, that will be called 'gracious lords.'

For, saith he, you are all brethren, and have one master and Lord, Christ Jesus [Mat 23:10], and one Lord, who is the creator of all. For all things were made subject to man, and man subject to God; all creatures were to fear and dread man [Gen 9:2] and woman, but men and women were to fear and dread God. So all christians are to have one heavenly spiritual head, Christ Jesus [Eph 4:15], and heavenly spiritual master, and they all as brethren are to serve and worship him. And the prophets and apostles thoud God and Christ, kings and princes, and great men and women, as you may see in the scriptures, and they were never offended at it.

And you never read in all the scriptures of any that feared God, that were offended at any for saying thou to a single person, and standing with their hats on, (unless it were the Pharisees, that loved the praise of men,) as it is said in the book of Job, 'If I give flattering titles to men, my maker would soon take me away [Job 32:21f].' And so all their flattering titles, and loving the praise of men, and seeking honour one of another, comes from that ground that is out of truth, in the image of the beast and the dragon, who will be worshipped; but the angel would not be bowed down to by the servant of the Lord; he says, God must be worshipped.

So they that worship the beast and the dragon, receive the mark from the dragon [Rev 13:4,14:9]; he brands them and marks them with his spirit, (out of truth,) and then he receives honour from them, and the vain glory they give to him; but they who are sealed with the spirit of promise [Eph 1:13], have their Father's mark in their foreheads; these worship the living God, and are in his image and his likeness, that he made them in in the beginning, and in the spirit of Christ Jesus, and those are Christ's [Rom 8:9].

G. F.

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