

Epistle 262

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 262 calls for a return to the true essence of faith, worship, and fellowship as established by Christ and the apostles, emphasizing the need to condemn sin and be led by the spirit of God.

Scripture: John 3:19, John 16:13, Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 1:27, Hebrews 2:14, James 1:27, 1 John 3:8, 1 John 5:1, 1 John 5:4

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Victory Over Sin"

Description

George Fox preaches about the condemnation of sin by the light of Christ, emphasizing the need for sin to be executed and destroyed by Christ manifest in the flesh. He highlights the distinction between those led by the spirit of God, who are God's children, and those led by the spirit of the devil, who do the works of the devil. Fox discusses the loss of true elements like faith, worship, way, religion, image of God, praying, fellowship, sanctification, and belief since the apostles' days, urging a return to the true and living way of Christ for victory over sin and darkness.

Transcript

All Friends and people, that is to be condemned in yourselves, which hath led you from Christ, from God, and from unity in the light; I say, that is condemned by the light [John 3:19], and must be executed and killed, and stoned with the living stone, and run through with the living sword [Heb 4:12], and hammered down with the living hammer to pieces, and burnt up with the living fire [Jer 23:29], and so made an end of.

...

So Christ is manifest in the flesh, to condemn the sin that is in the flesh [Rom 8:3]; every one that witnesses Christ condemning sin in the flesh, that they through Christ, that condemns sin in the flesh, might become God's righteousness [2 Cor 5:21]; so they become another's. But the sin being uncondemned in the flesh, they are of the serpent, of the unrighteous one, of the ungodly one, who adulterated from truth, they are his. But the sin being condemned in the flesh, Christ is manifest in the flesh, so that they become Christ's; they are God's, and are in Christ, who destroys the devil and his works [Heb 2:14/1 Jn 3:8], that are out of truth [John 8:44]. And these know the new life, which God is served in [Rom 6:4/7:6]; and these know the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness [2 Pet 3:13]; and these know the old earth, wherein dwell unrighteousness. And these can bring forth things new and old.

For they that are led by the spirit of God, are the sons of God [Rom 8:14]; they that are led by the spirit of the devil, are the children of the devil, and his works they do [John 8:44], the works of their father; as they

that are led by the spirit of God, his works they do, the works of their father; and all they that quench the spirit of God [1 Th 5:19], and vex the spirit of God [Isa 63:10], and grieve the spirit of God [Eph 4:30], and hate the light [John 3:19] of Christ, and walk despitefully against the spirit of grace [Heb 10:29], and turn it into wantonness [Jude 1:4], and disobey the word of God in their hearts and mouths [Deut 30:14]; sure you all may see such are not the sons of God, and do not the works of God; though they may profess the scriptures from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations. Neither doth that birth know the scriptures, for they are known by the spirit of God, the holy ghost, which led the holy men of God to speak them forth [2 Pet 1:21]; by the same spirit are they known again. And Christ, who was conceived by the holy ghost [Mat 1:20], born of the Virgin [Isa 7:14, Mat 1:23], he is known by the holy ghost again, which led the holy men of God to give forth scriptures; which now leads into all truth [John 16:13]. And all them now, who despise revelations, inspirations, prophecies [1 Th 5:20], gifts, and talents, they despise the spirit of God and his gifts. Such are neither ministers of God, or Christ, nor his sons; but are the sons of him that is out of the true spirit that is of God, in the darkness, Babel, and confusion; who think they can do great matters with their languages [Gen 11:1-9], and with them make a trade of the scriptures; who cannot endure any people should come to the spirit that gave them forth; for none can walk in the spirit that quench it, and vex and grieve it. And none come into the church fellowship that grieve, and vex, and quench the spirit of God. For the fellowship is in the spirit, that is the bond of peace [Eph 4:3]; and none are led into all truth [John 16:13], but by the same holy ghost that was in the holy men of God, that gave forth the scriptures of truth. And all that are led by this spirit of truth, are led from the spirit of the devil, that is out of truth. And all that are led by the spirit that is out of truth, are the first birth of the flesh, and of that murderer, who will persecute him that is born of the holy spirit of God [Gal 4:29], which leads into all truth. But they that are led by the spirit that is out of truth, are out of both the Father and the son. And they that are led by the spirit of truth, are the sons of God; and here are both in the Father, and in the son, and in the truth, which abides for ever. And here the heir, the son, inherits his possession, his inheritance in the kingdom that never hath an end.

The true hope, the true cross, the true faith, the true worship, the true religion, the true way, true image, and true fellowship have been lost since the apostles' days, amongst those called christians, who are out of the life. And they that have lost the cross of Christ, which is the power of God [1 Cor 1:18], in which is the true fellowship, they have set up a wooden or a stone cross, &c. so false crosses, false christians. They that have lost the true hope, which purifies, as he is pure [1 Jn 3:3], they have set up a purgatory to cleanse them when they are dead. And others cry up a body of sin and death [Rom 6:6/7:25] on this side of the grave, with their hypocrite's hope [Job 8:13]; and they have lost the true ministry, and set up a false one, to preach up imperfection. And people were imperfect in old Adam before Christ came; for the law made nothing perfect [Heb 7:19]; but the true minister, Christ in you the hope of glory, doth make perfect, both in the apostles' days and now. 'Christ in you, the hope of glory,' said the apostle, 'whom we preach, warning every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus [Col 1:27f]'. . . .

And the true faith hath been lost since the apostles' days; the true faith which purifies the heart [Acts 15:19], which is the faith of God's elect [Tit 1:1], which faith gives victory [1 Jn 5:4] over that which separates from God; in which faith ye all please God [Heb 11:6]; which faith is the gift of God [Eph 2:8], and Christ is the author of it: every one look unto him for it, for the finishing of it [Heb 12:2], who is the author of it. In this faith have all the saints unity [Eph 4:13] in that which gives victory over the devil; for by the faith, which is the shield, do they resist him and quench his fiery darts [Eph 6:16]; and they resist him that would defile them and make them imperfect, and lead them into those things which would displease God. And all that are out of this faith, they cry, no victory while we are upon the earth; but they must have

a body of sin unto the grave, and a purgatory to cleanse them in; these are all in the error concerning the faith; these have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience [1 Tim 1:19]; these are all in the dead faith, and so cannot preach the true and living faith of God's elect. These are all out of unity; for the unity is in the faith, which gives victory over the devil. These are out of the just life; which just lives by his faith [Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17]. 'The life that I now live, is by the faith of the son of God; yet it is not I, but Christ that lives in me [Gal 2:20],' said the apostle. And all that walk in the faith of God's elect, which is the victory over the devil, walk in unity over the enmity.

And the true worship hath been lost since the apostles' days; yea, the worship that Christ set up above sixteen hundred years since, in the spirit and in the truth; yea, in the spirit of God, which was before the spirit of the devil was, who is out of truth; and in the truth, which the the devil is out of. In this spirit, and in this truth, God, who is a spirit, and the God of truth [Psa 31:5], seeks that men should worship him in the truth; and so every man and woman must come to truth in the inward parts [Psa 50:6], and to the spirit of God within themselves, if they be worshippers of God in the spirit and truth [John 4:24], which the devil abode not in [John 8:44]. And this is the standing and perfect worship, in which there is unity in the truth; for the enmity is out of it, and he cannot get into it. Glory be to God for ever! And men that have erred from the worship that Christ set up, above sixteen hundred years since, they are from the truth within, and the spirit of God. And by that unclean spirit they have worshipped images; they have worshipped the works of their own hands [Jer 1:16]; they have worshipped the dragon; they have worshipped the beast [Rev 13:4]; they have worshipped the creature [Rom 1:25]; they have worshipped angels [Col 2:18], persecuted one another about their worships, and they have persecuted the true worshippers. These are in the blind zeal [Phil 3:6], who have hated the light [John 3:19f]. . . .

And the true way is lost since the apostles' days, which Christ set up above sixteen hundred years since; who said, 'I am the way to the Father; and no man cometh to the Father, but by me [John 14:6].' So no one comes out of old Adam, but by Christ, the second Adam. No one comes out of darkness, but by Christ, the light; no one comes out of death, and from under the prince of death, the power of it, but by Christ, the life. So he is the way to God. No one comes out of unrighteousness, but by Christ, the righteousness; no one comes out of the wisdom below [James 3:15], but by Christ, who is the wisdom of God [1 Cor 1:24], which is from above [James 3:17]. And no one comes out of error and evil, but by Christ, the truth. So is he the door [John 10:9] and the way to God Almighty. And no man comes to the Father, but by him. No one comes out of captivity or prison, but by Christ the heavenly man. And so, they having erred from Christ, the way, they have set up so many ways in Christendom among them; and fall out about their ways one with another, enmity being among them. Now Christ is the way, which the unclean cannot walk in [Isa 35:8], who was before the unclean way was; for he is over all the unclean; and he is over all the perverse and crooked ways, and mountainous ways, and evil and unrighteous, and ungodly ways; he is over them all. And none come to this new and living way [Heb 10:20], Christ Jesus, but who come to the grace of God in their hearts; the spirit of God in their hearts. So he is the new and the living way, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the ending [Rev 1:8,11], set up from everlasting to everlasting. And all that be out of this new and living way, though they have all the scriptures, from the beginning of Genesis to the Revelations, yet they are dead, and under the power of death; which Christ the way destroys, through death, yea the power of death, the devil [Heb 2:14]; and was before death and his power was. Here is the new and the living way.

And the true religion hath been lost, and erred from, since the apostles' days. The religion that is pure from above, and undefiled before God, which keeps from the spots of the world, which is to visit the widows and

the fatherless [James 1:27]

And the image of God in them hath been lost since the apostles' days, that man and woman were renewed into by Christ; and therefore they have set up so many inventions of their own brain, and outward images, and likenesses, and worship them; for man and woman was in the image of God [Gen 1:27], before they fell. And when they fell from the image of God, they set up many images of God, and man, and other creatures, of things in heaven and things in earth. And when Christ came, he renewed man into the image of God again [Col 3:10], and into his likeness. . . .

And the true praying hath been lost since the apostles' days; for none can pray truly, but by the spirit of God, unto God, who is a spirit [John 4:24], or unto Christ, who is a quickening spirit [1 Cor 15:45]. And all they that have erred from the spirit [Isa 29:24], cannot abide to hear talk of it; and yet may have the scripture from Genesis to the Revelations, and make prayers, and say them over, and give them to others to say over; and so pray by the book, and that must help his infirmity; and so have ed from the spirit, and from the true doctrine of the apostles, who said, the spirit must help their infirmities [Rom 8:26]; and they must pray in the spirit [Eph 6:18]. So all that grieve, and vex, and quench the spirit of God, cannot pray in it to God, who is a spirit. But they think to be heard by their much babbling, and ask and pray, but do not receive [James 4:3]. And every one must come to the spirit of God in themselves, and to the light, and to the faith that purifies his heart [Acts 15:9], and to the spirit of grace and supplication [Zech 12:10]; and by this his mind is to be turned towards Christ, who prays to God, and asks in the name of Jesus, and in the power, and light, and spirit of Christ.

And the true fellowship hath been lost, and sanctification, and belief, and the righteousness since the apostles' days. . . . the world's fellowship is no mystery, the fellowship of bread, water, and wine is no mystery; but the gospel fellowship is a mystery [Phil 1:5/Eph 3:9], and none see it, but who come to the light of Christ, and to the truth in the inward parts [Psa 50:6]. For this is a standing fellowship, the gospel, the power of God [Rom 1:16]; and all fellowships out of it are imperfect and corrupt, where the body of death, and sin, and their purgatory are pleaded for, which fellowships below, men make, and are of men, and from men; but the gospel is not of men, nor by men, but of God [John 1:13?], and from Christ. So this fellowship is the church fellowship that is in God, and it is a pure fellowship, the gospel fellowship is, which gospel brings life and immortality to light, and expels away all that which darkens, and burdens, and loads the soul, mind, spirit, and heart. So this is glad tidings to the immortal soul, which comes by the immortal power up to the immortal God, where life and immortality comes to light [2 Tim 1:10], and to shine over him that hath darkened it. And they that say revelations are ceased, they may as well say, there is no gospel; and so have no Christ to preach, and are only ministers of the letter [2 Cor 3:6]; neither have they the secrets of God to preach, which are revealed to them that fear him. . . .

And the sanctifying belief hath been lost since the apostles' days; for he that believes is born of God [1 Jn 5:1]; and he that believes in the light, may become a child of the light [John 12:36]; every one that cometh into the world are enlightened by Christ [John 1:9], that they should believe in the light, as he commands them, and so become children of the light; and he that believes, overcomes the world [1 Jn 5:5]. And if there be no overcoming on this side of the grave, as the world's preachers, made of men, say, then there is no true believing on this side of the grave; and therefore the world is not overcome in them; and he that is their God, is of the world also. For 'he that believes, overcomes the world; for greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world [1 Jn 4:4].' So this greater overcomes the less, and he that believes passes from death, and sin, that brings death, and the devil the power of death: so becomes a child of light and of the day [1 Th 5:5]; and of the light which was before darkness was, or the prince of it; for this is the belief

that overcomes the world, that sanctifies the unbelieving husband, and the unbelieving wife, else their children were unholy, but now they are clean [1 Cor 7:14]. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

For this belief is greater than he that is of the world, which overcomes him that would defile; for this belief is Christ, which passes from death to life [1 Jn 3:14], it takes away the root of sin and iniquity, which is complained of in the scriptures, which they were born in, though they had the law which made nothing perfect [Heb 7:19], which took hold of their outward actions or branches; but this belief makes the root holy, and if the root be holy, the branches that spring from the root will be holy also [Rom 11:16]. . . .

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