

Epistle 279

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 279 emphasizes the transformative power of Christ, the importance of faith, and the promise of eternal life for believers gathered in His name.

Scripture: Ezekiel 34:12, Matthew 18:20, John 1:9, John 6:53, Romans 8:17, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Ephesians 2:6, Hebrews 10:22, 1 Peter 2:25, Revelation 5:10

Topics: "Transformation in Christ", "Faith and Perseverance"

Description

George Fox emphasizes the transformative power of Christ, the heavenly man, who brings believers from death to life through His blood. He encourages the gathered friends of Christ to remain steadfast in their faith, highlighting the importance of being part of the congregation of the living, which is sustained by Christ as their shepherd and bishop. Fox warns against the dangers of returning to old ways and stresses the necessity of standing firm in the light and truth of the gospel, which empowers believers to overcome trials and tribulations. He reassures them that in Christ, they find eternal rest and a royal inheritance, urging them to keep their focus on Him amidst worldly distractions.

Transcript

All Friends every where, who are friends of Christ the heavenly man, by whom the world was made, and are become friends of God through Christ Jesus, who are quickened by Jesus, and made alive by him [1 Cor 15:22,45]], who were dead in old Adam, and are now made alive by the second Adam, and have drunk his blood, through which you have life [John 6:53f], and by which you come from among the congregations of the dead [Prov 21:16], who only talk of his blood and his flesh.

And now being gathered in the name of Jesus [Mat 18:20], who hath made you alive, in the name of him whose blood you have drunk, yea, even of the heavenly man's, which is his life; and so are come out of your native countries, religions, and worships, and left the old stuff behind, who are gotten atop of the old house, and will not go down again to fetch out any of the old stuff [Mat 24:17]. I say, ye that are gathered in the name of Jesus, the heavenly man, out of the old Adam, and are made alive by the heavenly man, keep your meetings in the name of Jesus.

Then it is he that is persecuted, if you be persecuted [Mat 25:42-45]; and he that suffers; for in all your afflictions and sufferings he is with you, who are made alive by him, and have drunk his blood, and so are come to be faithful witnesses of Christ Jesus, as all that are made alive by him are, and have drunk his blood; for they that have not drunk his blood, and are not made alive by him, are no true witnesses of

Christ Jesus. And therefore you that the Lord hath gathered, and sought and searched out, who have been scattered in this cloudy dark day [Ezek 34:12], (since the apostles' days of light,) and have been made a prey upon by the hireling shepherds [Ezek 34:8], and have been left to the wolves by the flying of the hirelings [John 10:12f], whom you thought had been true men, and now the Lord hath sought and searched, and found, and gathered you from their mouths, to whose mouths you have been a prey [Ezek 34:10]; and the Lord is known to feed you atop of the mountains [Ezek 34:14] with his heavenly bread [John 6:51], and he hath set one shepherd over you [Ezek 34:23], (the heavenly man,) who lives for ever, who is the shepherd over all the living, that are made alive by him; and so the Lord hath the glory of seeking and of gathering you out of the wildernesses, pits, graves, and ditches of old Adam and the serpent, and from his brambles and briars; and so Christ, by whom the world was made, is the rest of the living that he hath made alive, and is their shepherd, to feed them with life, and with the springs of life, and is the bishop of their souls [1 Pet 2:25], that doth oversee them, that they do not go out of the pastures of life, and from the springs of life, nor from the fold of life. It is a glorious pasture, to be fed atop of all the mountains, in the life, in the pastures of life, by the living shepherd, and to be overseen by the living bishop, and to be sanctified, and to be presented to God by the living priest, and to be counselled by the living counsellor to an everlasting inheritance, and to a kingdom, and to a world, that hath no end, by an everlasting priest, that sanctifies and offers you to God without spot or wrinkle [Eph 5:27], a perfect offering, who sprinkles your consciences and hearts [Heb 10:22] with his blood, that you may serve the living God, and not the dead works among the dead [Heb 9:14].

And now you having an everlasting preacher, whom God hath anointed to preach [Isa 61:1], and an everlasting minister, that ministers grace, and life, and salvation, and truth to you; an everlasting prophet that God hath raised up, who is to be heard [Acts 3:22]; all the living hear him, but the dead talk but of his fame. So none can silence or stop the mouth of them whom he opens, or take away your shepherd, your bishop, your minister, your preacher, your prophet, your counsellor, &c. And therefore let him have your ears, hearken to him, let him be set up in your hearts, who was set up from everlasting [Prov 8:23] to everlasting by the Father, whom all the righteous witness, Christ Jesus, who is your possession, being heirs with him [Rom 8:17], by whom all the living are made alive; and so in him live by whom the world was made, who was glorified with the Father before the world began [John 17:5]. So in Christ the heavenly man, you have rest, but in old Adam (the transgressor) you have no rest; there is the wilderness, Sodom, Egypt [Rev 11:8], Babylon, and confusion [Gen 11:1-9]. For God blessed Abraham in his obeying of his commands [Gen 26:4f], when he went from his native country, and relations [Gen 12:1f]; yea, and made him a prince [Gen 23:6]. So they that are redeemed out of kindreds and tongues [Rev 5:9], Christ makes as princes [Rev 5:10?], to overcome the prince of darkness.

And Abraham was to walk before God, who was perfect, and he was to be perfect [Gen 17:1]; so must all who are of the faith of Abraham [Rom 4:16]. Abraham saw Christ's day, and did rejoice [John 8:56]; but thousands now come to enjoy the day that Abraham saw.

The outward Jews did eat of the manna in the wilderness [Exo 19:14-35], and disobeyed and perished; but they that eat of the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, have life everlasting [John 6:54]; and this gives an eternal life, by which they come to an eternal possession, and to the land of the living [Psa 116:9], as the outward Jews came to possess the land of Canaan [Gen 17:8]. And so you that are heirs of Christ, the heavenly man, and are come to possess him, (whom he hath made alive,) stand fast, now is your time to stand; stand in the life, which was before death, or the king of it was; stand in the light, which was before darkness, or the prince of it was; and stand in the power of God, which was before the devil was; and sit

down in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [Eph 2:6], who was set up from everlasting to everlasting.

And therefore keep your faith in the Lord; for he is the same who hath given you dominion, through faith, over the mountains [1 Cor 13:2] of opposition, by which they have been subdued, and by which the fiery darts have been quenched [Eph 6:16]. And hath not this been fulfilled, 'in all their afflictions he was afflicted; and that the angel of his presence should be with them in their trials and sufferings [Isa 63:9] .' So the Lord hath a tender care of his sheep, his people, that the angel of his presence should be with them in all their trials. And therefore let your minds be out of all outward things, and visibles; and fear not the fleece, for it will grow again; and if the Lord should try you now, with the spoil of outward things, after he hath blessed you with them, to see whether your minds be with them, or with him: therefore now stand, having on the whole armour of God [Eph 6:11], and his righteousness [2 Cor 6:7], and your feet shod with the power of God [Eph 6:15, Rom 1:16], which was before the devil was; this will keep you from slipping; and having on the armour of light [Rom 13:12], to stand against darkness; and the breast-plate of righteousness [Eph 6:14, which is armour proof against the devil and his fiery darts; and keep the shield of faith Eph 6:16], and sword of the spirit, the word of God, and the helmet of salvation [Eph 6:17], that preserves the head in all battles with the devil and his instruments.

And thus with your heavenly armour and arms stand, and keep your possession of life, who are brought out of spiritual Egypt, Sodom [Rev 11:8], and Babylon, having one to go before you, the captain of your salvation [Heb 2:10], (Christ Jesus,) who was before Moses and Joshua were. And see how the children of God all along in the scriptures through faith had the victory; Daniel by faith, the three children by faith [Dan 3], Abraham by faith, Joshua by faith, and Caleb by faith [Num 14:6-8]; and the other spies, which had no faith, and the elders among the outward Jews and the people, how they fell through unbelief [Num 14]! But by grace through faith the just were saved [Eph 2:8], by faith they had victory [1 Jn 5:4], and by faith they pleased God [Heb 11:5f]; and therefore keep in the faith, and you will have the water of life, and the bread of life, from above [John 6:35-58]. And stand still in the faith, for the just live by faith [Rom 1:17]; and they that had not faith to believe, they perished. And Christ hath taught all how to believe, who hath enlightened every one that cometh into the world [John 1:9], he saith, 'Believe in the light [John 12:36];' which was a blessed doctrine of the heavenly man; for you believing in the light, you believe in that which makes manifest all things, all fruits, all creatures, all religions, and worship; for the light was before they all were, and will be when they are all gone. Therefore, believe in the light, saith the heavenly man, who teacheth what to believe in; for whatsoever is made manifest, is made manifest by the light [Eph 5:13]. So to believe in the light, that doth make manifest all things that are reproveable, therein you will become children of the light, and children of the day [1 Th 5:5], and sons of God, and daughters of God, and sons of Sion, and daughters of Sion, the heavenly Sion, the heavenly joy. And so herein you come to be of the royal family, above all the families of the earth, above all the households of the earth, a household of God [Eph 2:19], the workmanship of God [Eph 2:10], the planting of God, [Amos 9:15?] the building of God [1 Cor 3:9], the household of faith [Gal 6:10]; which are titles higher than all the titles among men in the world, in the creation; sons and daughters, and servants and handmaids, every man to enjoy something in the household. Every one to have an inheritance (of their own) of life, that they may offer to God of their heavenly substance, who are called a royal priesthood [1 Pet 2:9]; that is, a kingly priesthood over the devil, and over Adam, in a possession of a spiritual kingdom, and of a world that hath no end, and of a heavenly durable substance and riches [Heb 10:34/Prov 8:18] which are spiritual; and so to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God [1 Pet 2:5], who is a spirit [John 1:24].

So now the time of trying is; therefore all to stand, and see if there be any thing able to separate you from Christ [Rom 8:38f], who is from everlasting to everlasting, who is first and last [Rev 1:11], who makes an end of sin, and finishes transgression [Dan 9:24], and destroys the devil and his works [Heb 2:14/1 Jn 3:8], and is the top and corner-stone [Eph 2:20], the possession of all the righteous, the rest and sabbath of all the righteous, that have drunk his blood [John 6:53], whom he hath made alive [1 Cor 15:22]. So in Christ you shall bear no burden, for he destroys that which oppresses both man and beast; and in Christ you shall not go out to gather your meat, who is your sabbath and rest; but in old Adam there is no rest; in the second Adam the heavenly man [1 Cor 15:47], there is the rest; and in him, to wit, Christ the heavenly man, you need not go out to gather your meat.

And therefore now all prize the standing truth, and walk as becomes the gospel, the power of God [Phil 1:27/Rom 1:16], which was before the devil was, which destroys the devil and his works. And so stand fast in the liberty where-with Christ hath made you free [Gal 5:1]; yea, free from the devil and old Adam; for the freedom is in him, in Christ, and not in the devil who is out of the truth [John 8:44], nor in old Adam. Yea, Christ is able to deliver out of the six troubles, and the seventh trouble [Job 5:19], the perfection of trouble; he who is the perfection itself, so he is the deliverer [Rom 11:26] and mediator [1 Tim 2:5], and the intercessor [Rom 8:34], that makes peace betwixt you and God. So in Christ, (who is the deliverer,) is the peace and the rest, yea, an everlasting rest; he was set up over all troubles, and persecutions, and persecutors, who was before they were, glorified with the Father before the world began [John 17:5], and he will be when they are all gone, as I said before, all that have drunk his blood, and are made alive by him, have life; yea, a possession that will never have an end; but they that are dead in old Adam, are against Christ, who is the life, till he make them alive by believing in the light; and then they become the congregation of the living. And these are they that are gathered together by the Lord; and they that are not gathered together by the Lord, but by men, to themselves, they come to be scattered [Mat 12:30]. Now the congregation of the living, have drunk the blood of Jesus, that are alive by him, and so are gathered together by him, the heavenly man, and he is in the midst of them [Mat 18:20], to preserve them, and exercise his offices among them, as a shepherd, and a bishop, and a prophet, &c.

And these are the living members, who have a living head, Christ Jesus; and that saying comes to be fulfilled, 'Thy dead men shall live together, with my dead body shall they arise [Isa 26:19];' so come to live with Christ Jesus. And they are the congregation of the dead [Prov 21:16], that believe not in the light, nor drink the blood of Jesus, but death and destruction talk of him and of God [Job 28:22], and his prophets' and apostles' words; and they come to set their house upon the sand, and so are the fools [Mat 7:26f]; and then a storm arises upon the sea, and their house is presently in the sea again, and there they are drowned; the house sits so nigh the sea, that in a little storm they are drowned, they are so nigh the world. But the wise men set their house upon the rock [Mat 7:24f], and the rock is Christ 1 Cor 10:4], the life, who was before the world was, and will stand over all; and they that are built upon it, the storms and tempests cannot move their rock, nor their house. So here is the wisdom of the wise, who build their house upon him by whom all things were created, who is the rock of ages [Isa 26:4, KJV margin]. So in all storms they keep to their house, and they meet in him, and are gathered in him, and he is their head and counsellor, to order them; and in him they all please God; and in Christ Jesus are one another's crown and life; and so through him they have all a crown of life [Jas 1:12/Rev 2:10], who was with the Father before the world began. So in him sit down, over all the windy doctrines [Eph 4:14], that toss the chaff abroad in the world.

I say, in Christ sit down, in him who was before the world was, for out of him is all wearisomeness, but in him ye have rest [Mat 11:28?].

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