

Epistle 343

by George Fox

George Fox's Epistle 343 calls believers to remain faithful to Christ and warns against the adversary's deception leading to division and disobedience.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 3:4, 1 Corinthians 15:47, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, 2 Timothy 1:10, Hebrews 11:10, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 1:5, Revelation 20:10

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faith Alone"

Description

George Fox preaches about the importance of staying true to the teachings of Christ and not getting caught up in divisions among believers, emphasizing the need to focus on the power of God's gospel for salvation and to keep faith in Christ alone. He warns against the deceptive spirit that led Adam and Eve astray, causing them to fall from God's grace, and highlights the ongoing spiritual battle to keep believers from falling into the same traps of disobedience and rebellion. Fox urges listeners to follow Christ's teachings, resist the adversary's attempts to lead them astray, and stay united in the spirit of Christ's peace, striving to be renewed into the image of God that man was created in before the fall.

Transcript

Friends, in the power and image and truth and wisdom of God, who are come under God and Christ's teaching, (the heavenly and spiritual man [1 Cor 15:47].) do not you strive about men, like the carnal Corinthians, that cried, I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos [1 Cor 3:4]. And they that do so, leave them to themselves, after you have admonished them to keep to the light, grace, and faith that comes from Christ; if they will not hear it, nor him, nor you, then I say, they must be left to themselves. And you, whose faith stands not in men [1 Cor 2:5], but in Christ, the author of it [Heb 12:2], and in his gospel of salvation, by which you are saved; which gospel is the power of God, your keeper [1 Pet 1:5]. Keep ye in the order of the gospel, (the power of God,) [Rom 1:16] all ye that are heirs of it; and in this power of God keep your men and women's meetings, the power of God being the author and authority of them; by which power of God, the gospel, you are saved, and have your liberty; and in it you are over him that would destroy you, and darken you, and keep you in bondage. In which power of God, (the gospel,) you see life and immortality brought to light [2 Tim 1:10]. So it is the gospel that hath brought it to light, and keeps life, and immortality, and an understanding up in you, above him that has darkened you from it. Now this is an everlasting and invisible power, in which you are all help-meets in the restoration, by Christ the heavenly and spiritual man, whereby you are brought into the image, likeness, righteousness, holiness, and power of God, that man and woman were in before they fell [Col 3:10, Eph 4:24]. And now the same spirit that

drew Adam and Eve from the image and likeness of God, and his power, and righteousness, and holiness, under pretence to feed upon that which God had forbidden them, (for they thought they should have been wiser than God had taught them,) would keep man and woman in the fall. Now they, by hearkening to that spirit, and eating of the forbidden fruit, fell [Gen 3:1-6] and lost the image of God [Gen 1:26f], and righteousness, and holiness, and the power in which they had the dominion [Gen 1:26,28], and were brought into the fall by hearkening to this false spirit, the adversary, who envied their happiness and prosperity. And so by their fall they came under another power, another image, another likeness, and another God, even the God of the world [2 Cor 4:4].

Now this adversary and deceiver appeared against man in paradise; and now men and women are deceived by him, and under his power in the earth; who creeps on his belly, and dust is his meat [Gen 3:16/Isa 65:25]. This same spirit, who is the adversary and destroyer, that led Adam and Eve into the fall, strives to keep men and women in the fall, and in the earth, and opposes them in their conversion, regeneration, and restoration.

And this was the same spirit that rose in Cain against Abel, and envied his acceptable sacrifice [Gen 4:3-8], and his righteous state, as it did Adam and Eve's prosperity in the ruling power, wherein they had dominion over all. . . . And that which led them into the fall, does strive to keep them in the fall, that it might be Lord, and not Christ Lord, who restores them; so the same spirit now would not have men and women to have dominion in the power of God, over all in the restoration, as they were help-meets together in the beginning [Gen 2:18]. And this is the adversary, the serpent, that led into the fall, and would keep in the fall, and there be head. But Christ, who is the head, and gives forth the order of his gospel, (for his people to live and walk in, and under his spiritual and heavenly government,) bruises the head of this adversary [Gen 3:15] to man and woman, and God's order, and government, and teaching; and Christ, (that does bruise his head,) is the head of all his people, that sits under his teaching, and under his order and government, which they are to walk in. So the same spirit is risen, that rose against Noah in the old world; yea, it is seen what the sons of God run into then, even that which grieved God [Gen 6:1-7], by following that spirit which led from God, (which led Adam and Eve also from God.) But Noah was preserved in the ark, over the floods, when the old world was drowned [Gen 7], but all God's people are preserved in Christ Jesus, over the floods of the world; and that spirit that led Adam and Eve into the fall, and to feed upon that which made them think they should be wiser than God had taught them. I say, they are preserved in Christ Jesus, (the ark,) over all the floods of the adversary, and from the judgments that God brings upon him, and them that follow him. And as Noah was preserved in the ark, over the outward floods that drowned the old world, so will God's people be preserved from the fire and brimstone [Rev 20:10], that is prepared for the wicked, and the devil and his angels [Mat 25:41].

And the same spirit is risen now, that led Nimrod to build Babel [Gen 10:10], a city to preserve him and them after the flood, but God did confound them and their work [Gen 11:1-9]. And so he will do all such builders. For you see how God did confound all the Jewish builders, yea, the wise master builders [1 Cor 3:10?], who rejected Christ the corner-stone [Psa 118:22], and his order, and his government, and his counsel.

And the great city Babylon, which this spirit and its followers have built since the apostles, is come into remembrance with God [Rev 16:19], which the same destroying spirit has built, that led Adam and Eve from God, and from the order he placed them in. So this same spirit, which hath led man and woman from the order the apostles were in, strives to lead people from it now, where it is risen.

And the same spirit that led Cain to kill Abel [Gen 4:8], who afterwards built a city [Gen 4:17], and the same spirit that led Adam and Eve from the command of God in paradise, leads from it now; but God will lay Cain's city waste, and there is no lodging in it for the saints, who seek another city, whose builder and maker is God [Heb 11:10].

And the same spirit is risen now, that arose in Pharaoh, and in Corah, Dathan, and Abiram; in Pharaoh, to oppose the people, and stop them from going out of Egypt, and walking in the law of God, in which they might worship God; which law of God was good, just, and holy [Rom 7:12], and went over all transgression and sin, which led into death, that it might reign; and not the Lord and his law.

And that spirit that led Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, [Num 16] who thought Moses took too much upon him, and busied himself too much, pretending that the people were holy; so would not have them go further, but there to have made a stop, and set down according to its will: but see how they were stopped, and what became of Pharaoh, how he was sunk in the sea [Exo 14:28], and the other into the earth [Num 16:32f].

And what became of them that opposed Aaron in his priesthood, their rods did not bud, yet they would have been teachers and ministers, but had not the fruit in the tabernacle in the morning, that they might see how to deal their bread to the hungry [Isa 58:7]; and therefore they whose rods did not bud, God's fire consumed them; for they have nothing to offer to God, but manifest presumption and rebellion: and see the end of such.

And the same spirit that rose against the prophets in the Jews, who resisted the holy ghost [Acts 7:51], and rebelled against the spirit [Isa 63:10], is risen now, and is the same spirit that deceived Adam and Eve in paradise, which led the people from God, and his law, and his prophets: but what became of these Jews, and what was their end? Some to the fire, some to the sword, and some to captivity; as you may read. And those that rebelled against Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, wandered in the wilderness till they perished, and came not to the good land [Num 14].

And therefore, keep under Christ Jesus' teaching, who is the prophet God has raised up, like Moses, whom all should hear and obey [Acts 3:22]. And the same spirit is risen now, that rose against Christ and the apostles. And Christ called them serpents [Mat 23:33], and of their father the devil [John 8:44], the destroyer, the adversary [1 Pet 5:8], who had deceived Adam and Eve by his false teaching; and envied their happiness, and led them from God.

So you may see how these Jews, high and low, were gone from God, and his law, and his command, by hearkening to, and obeying this spirit, which had led Adam and Eve to disobey God's command; and therefore they would not receive his son, nor his order, nor doctrine. And what became of all these Jews? was not their city laid waste, and they scattered over all nations, and they destroyed of the destroyer [1 Cor 10:10], who had denied Christ their saviour, that wept over them, and would have saved them from destruction [Luke 19:41-44]?

And such as came to John, and were baptized by him, and rejoiced in his light for a season, and many that followed Christ, and said he was a prophet; yet at last these turned from him that descended and ascended; and he told them that rejoiced in John's burning light for a season [John 5:35], God's mind was not abiding in them [John 5:38?], and that they had not seen his shape, nor heard his voice at any time [John 5:37]; and that they received honour of man, but knew not Christ the heavenly man, that received not honour of the earthly man [John 5:41], who received their favour one of another [John 5:44]: and such as said he was a prophet, when he said, they must eat his flesh, the heavenly bread that came down from

heaven [John 6:51], they forsook him [John 6:66]; for their minds turned downward, to feed upon that which was below.

And the same spirit is risen now, that rose against the apostles, as you may see in their epistles, in the Romans, Corinthians, and in Peter, Timothy, Titus, Jude, and John. Some got the form of godliness, and denied the power [2 Tim 3:5]; and some were enemies to the cross of Christ, the power of God [Phil 3:18/1 Cor 1:18]; others were getting another gospel than the power of God, which brought them under the curse [Gal 1:8f]; others were speaking the things of God, in the words that man's wisdom taught them [1 Cor 2:12f]; others their faith was standing in words, and not in the power of God [1 Cor 2:5/4:20]; others their faith was standing in Paul and Apollos, which should have stood in Christ 1 Cor 1:12f]: which grieved the apostles, for their faith should have stood in Christ, whom they preached: others with good words and fair speeches deceived the hearts of the simple [Rom 16:18].

And therefore, all they who preached faith, and made shipwreck of faith [1 Tim 1:19], were, and are still denied: and all such as preach God and Christ, and crucify Christ to themselves afresh [Heb 6:6], and deny God in their works [Tit 1:16], were then, and are denied. And all such as preach the light, and walk in darkness, and preach the spirit, (the fruits of which are love and peace,) [Gal 4:22] and are in strife and enmity, were never owned by God, nor Christ, nor good men, though they may be called christians. And all such as preach liberty, and themselves were servants of corruption [2 Pet 2:19], were, and are still denied. And all such as cry, Lord, Lord, and preach, Christ, Christ, and do not his will, enter not into his kingdom themselves [Mat 7:21]: and into it they can bring none, that do not go into it themselves: which kingdom stands in power, and in joy, and peace in the holy ghost Rom [1 Cor 4:20/14:17].

And all such as preach the word of God, and are not doers of the word, they are deceivers of their own souls, and they may deceive others with the good words [Rom 16:18]: and such cannot be reconciled to God, neither can they bring others to reconciliation with God.

So this spirit is but one; which spirit all along has wrought against the true spirit of God in all his people: and was in strife, and contention, and disquietness against the righteous in all ages; but it wrought its own destruction and the fall of them that followed it; as you may see through all the scriptures.

And therefore, all are to keep the unity of the spirit, the bond of the heavenly man Christ Jesus' peace [Eph 4:3/1 Cor 15:47], who renews man up into the image of God [Col 3:10], as man was in before he fell; and not only into that state, but up into himself, that never fell, where they know both his gospel order and his heavenly government, and are subject to it: he being the head [Eph 4:15], above all principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions [Col 1:16]: who is ascended above all, that he might fill all things [Eph 4:10]: who is over all, the beginning and ending [Rev 22:13], and lives and reigns from everlasting to everlasting, the Amen [Rev 3:14].

G. F.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net