

Epistle 359

by George Fox

Epistle 359 emphasizes the transformative power of the new covenant in Christ, highlighting the importance of spiritual nourishment and righteousness.

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:33, John 1:3, John 6:32, Acts 4:12, Romans 11:17, Romans 14:17, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Ephesians 4:10, Philippians 2:9, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "New Covenant", "Spiritual Nourishment"

Description

George Fox emphasizes the significance of believers being grafted into Christ, the source of life and salvation, and gathering in His name. He contrasts the old covenant with the new, highlighting that true nourishment for the soul comes from the heavenly bread provided by Christ, rather than from worldly sources. Fox calls for believers to be sanctified and clothed in the righteousness of Christ, which surpasses the old ways of the law. He stresses that the new covenant is about internal transformation and spiritual enlightenment, as opposed to external rituals. Ultimately, he encourages believers to rely on the Spirit of God for guidance and sustenance in their spiritual journey.

Transcript

Friends,--You that are believers in the light, which is the life in Christ, and are grafted into him [Rom 11:17] who is ascended far above all principalities, powers, thrones, and dominions [Eph 4:10/Col 1:16], by whom all things were made and created [John 1:3], all the children in the new covenant do gather together in the name of Christ Jesus, whose name is above every name [Phil 2:9] under the whole heaven, and in whose name they have salvation, and not by any other name under the whole heaven [Acts 4:12].

And at this name must every knee bow, and every tongue confess Christ Jesus [Phil 2:10f], to the glory of God the Father. . . . And being gathered in the name of Jesus, he is in the midst of them [Mat 18:20], the Prince of life and peace [Acts 3:15, Isa 9:6], and captain of salvation [Heb 2:10], and a prophet to open the book of conscience, and the book of the law, and prophets, and gospel, and his book of life to them, and a bishop to oversee them, and a heavenly shepherd to feed them in his heavenly pasture of life, and a heavenly King to rule in their hearts, and in his glorious kingdom, amongst them that are born again; and that seeth and entereth into his everlasting kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy ghost [Rom 14:17].

And all these children in the kingdom, and in the new covenant of grace, light, and life, cannot feed of any bread for their immortal souls that is made by man, which he hath leavened with the sour leaven; for that

sour leavened bread will make their hearts to burn, and the Jews were not to keep their feasts with leavened bread in the old covenant [Exo 13:3-7]; then much more the Jews in the spirit [Rom 2:29], in the new covenant, who have their bread from heaven [John 6:32], their unleavened bread, who in the new covenant do keep their feast with unleavened bread from heaven, and cannot feed their souls with any bread, but that which cometh down from heaven.

And this bread from heaven giveth life [John 6:33-58] to the soul, and is the staff of their heavenly life; this heavenly bread, as the outward bread is the staff of the natural life, in this world that must have an end, but the bread from heaven is the heavenly staff of life, that doth nourish up into a heavenly life, and a world, and a kingdom that is without end [Luke 1:33]. And such as feed on this heavenly bread cannot feed their souls with any bread below that which comes from heaven, for it doth not give them life.

So that they can neither touch, taste, nor handle that which is below, which perisheth [Col 2:21f]; for the bread of life from heaven doth not perish, but giveth life eternal; and this bread is sure [Isa 33:16?], and they that feed upon it shall hunger no more [John 6:35]. So all eyes are to look up to heaven for this bread of life, which giveth them life; and not below heaven; for neither are they to follow them that cry, 'Lo, it is here,' and 'lo, there [Mat 24:23;] or to drink of their cup that are whored from the spirit of God [Rev 17:2,4], nor to eat of their leavened bread; for they that do believe in the light [John 12:36], which is the life in Christ [John 1:4], are grafted into him the true vine [John 15:1].

So the believers do feel a living spring springing up in them to eternal life [John 4:14], from the fountain from whence it cometh. And so here all the true believers have the upper and the nether springs [Josh 15:19] in themselves; and such may drink freely and eat freely of the bread and water of life [Rev 21:6], and do hunger and thirst no more, but eat and drink that which is eternal, which nourisheth them up to eternal life, and so bear heavenly spiritual fruits, to the praise of the eternal God [Phil 1:11]; which plants he hath watered by his upper and nether springs, which trees or plants, their fruits are unto holiness [Rom 6:22], and their end is everlasting life.

So none of the children of the new covenant need go to the world for bread or water, to give them life everlasting, to keep them from the world's storms; or weapons to defend their church or worship, for they have them from heaven, and heavenly bread and water, and spiritual weapons and armour [Eph 6:11-17], and the righteousness of Christ, the fine linen [Rev 19:8], their clothing. Glory to the Lord for ever, who makes all his spiritually rich, and to be lenders and not borrowers [Deut 15:6], and givers and not receivers, who is more blessed than the receiver [Acts 20:35].

And the Jews in the old covenant were to wash their clothes, and to sanctify themselves when they did appear before the Lord [Exo 19:10], and so the children of God in the new covenant of life, light, and grace, who do appear before the Lord, are to be washed and cleansed, and sanctified, and to put on the righteousness of Christ, their fine linen that never will wax old [Deut 8:4]; and so to put off all the old Adam's garments, that he hath covered himself and his sons and daughters with in the fall and transgression, which will wax old and rot; but that which God and Christ doth put on and clothe his saints withal, is everlasting [Psa 102:26, Heb 1:11]. So man's righteousness and his filthy rags [Isa 64:6] must be put off, and they must come into the righteousness of Christ, and put it on, which doth exceed the righteousness of the law [Mat 5:20], if they do enter into the kingdom of God, which doth stand in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy ghost [Rom 14:17].

Now in the Old Testament it is said, 'The priests' lips are to preserve the people's knowledge [Mal 2:7]:' but the New Testament saith, 'that Christ is the treasure of wisdom and knowledge [Col 2:2f].' The Old Testament saith, 'that you must offer your sheep, goats, bulls, and heifers, and other creatures, which God commanded by the law in the Old Testament, for your sins and cleansing:' but the New Testament saith, that 'Christ is offered up once for all [Heb 10:10]:' and the Old Testament saith, that 'the blood of bulls and other creatures cleanseth from sin [Heb 9:13]:' but the New Testament saith, that 'Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin [1 Jn 1:7].'

And in the Old Testament it is said, 'You must carry your offerings, and first-fruits, and tithe, to the store-house [Neh 10:37/Mal 3:10]:' but the New Testament saith, 'Freely you have received, freely give [Mat 10:8]:' and forbiddeth bag or staff [Mat 10:10]. And in the Old Testament the priest was to light the candles and lamps in the tabernacle and temple [Lev 24:2,4], and to circumcise the men children: but the New Testament saith, 'Christ doth enlighten every man that cometh into the world [John 1:9] with his heavenly light:' which is the life in Christ the word; and the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord [Prov 20:27]: so he doth enlighten the candle and lamp in the tabernacle, and saith, 'Believe in the light, that ye may become children of the light [John 12:36]:' and Christ doth minister the circumcision in the spirit [Rom 15:8?], that putteth off the body of the sins of the flesh [Col 2:11], that came upon man and woman by transgression.

So that the children are the circumcision of the spirit in the new testament, and not of the flesh and letter, as they were in the old testament. And in the Old Testament it is said, that 'the priests put the Testament [Exo 25:16], and the law [Deut 31:26], and the pot of manna [Heb 9:4] into the ark, in the tabernacle and temple:' but in the New Testament, God poureth out of his spirit upon all flesh [Joel 2:28], and the holy ghost proceedeth from the Father [John 15:26] and the son into the hearts of his people [Gal 4:6?], to lead them into all truth [John 16:13], and reproveth the world of sin [John 16:8]; and the bread of life that they have from Christ, is in their arks and hearts, or in their temples; and God doth write his law in the hearts [Jer 31:33] and minds of his people.

So in the new testament they have the law written in the heart and mind, and the old they had in the letter and tables of stone; and in the new they have the testament and testimony, the spirit of Christ in their hearts, and the heavenly, unleavened bread in their hearts, which they do keep the everlasting feast with [1 Cor 5:8?]. And in the old testament, the clean and circumcised outwardly did eat of the passover, the lamb without blemish [Exo 12:5]: but in the new testament, the clean and circumcised in heart [Deut 30:6] do eat of the passover, Christ [1 Cor 5:7], the heavenly bread and flesh [John 6:35-58], and so do keep the feast of their passover in the new testament.

And the old testament had the outward temple and tabernacle, and outward lights: but in the new testament, the saints' bodies are the temples and tabernacles of God [1 Cor 6:19], and his light doth shine in their hearts, to give them the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ [2 Cor 4:6]. And in the old testament it is said, 'Do this and live [Lev 18:5]:' and the new saith, 'Believe in the light (Christ) and be saved.' And the old testament saith, 'Thou shalt swear, and perform thy oaths to the Lord:' but Christ saith in the new, 'Swear not at all [Mat 5:33f].'

And the old testament saith, 'Thou shalt not kill, nor commit adultery [Exo 20:13f]:' but Christ in the new saith, 'Thou shalt not be angry without a cause [Mat 5:21f], and thou shalt not lust after a woman [Mat 5:27f].' And the old testament saith, 'Thou shalt stand up and curse [Deut 27:13]:' but the new saith, 'Bless, and curse not [Rom 12:14]. ' The old testament saith, 'Thou shalt hate thine enemy:' but the new saith,

'Thou shalt love thy enemies, and do good to them that hate thee and despitefully use thee [Mat 5:43f].' So the new covenant and testament is not according to the old. And in many things besides these, it might be shown how one doth exceed the other in glory [2 Cor 3:9].

G. F.

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